

Name: John Murray [sic: James]

Occupation: Confectioner, special constable

Home: Manchester

Date: 16th March 1820

Source: Trial of Henry Hunt, ending p.26

Summary: Went with *Shawcross* to the drillings on 15th August and was badly beaten up. His house hissed at by marchers as they passed on 16th.

Done by: RP

John Murray [James Murraray] examined by Sergeant Hullock . —Lives at Manchester went on the Sunday morning of 15th August last, accompanied by *Shawcross* and *Thomas Rimmer*, to White Moss, about five miles from Manchester; they went by the turnpike-road as far as Blackley; they got to the Moss by day-light; the people came in parties, some before them and some behind; to avoid them they turned out of the road; they crossed the Moss till they got to the men who were drilling; they were in detached parties, and there was a commander and a drill *Sergeant* at each quad. The man at the head gave the orders, and he heard the words "march, wheel, halt," from them, and the men obeyed the words of command; they might also have said, "eyes right and dress." He continued observing them not many minutes, and was close among them when at the corner; *Shawcross* was not quite so high as he was. The drill *Sergeant* at the head of one of the squads said to him, "fall in;" he said, he thought he should fall in soon: he then moved from them, and there was a cry of "spy" ran along the line and the answer received was, "Mill 'em, Mill 'em, d...n them, Mill 'em." They then shouted. "They are constables," and the answer to that was "Murder them; damn them, murder them." He then endeavoured to escape; they pursued, and overtook *Shawcross*, and were beating him.

Mr. Hunt—I submit, my Lord, that this is no evidence in the present case. It is evidence of an assault, for which the parties have been already tried and convicted. *Mr. Scarlett* well knows the effect of this on a Jury. *Justice Bayley* —I don't mean that anything should be given as evidence which I don't think is evidence. At present I have my doubts on it. The witness was here ordered out of Court.

Mr. Scarlett contended, that he could connect the illegal and outrageous acts of this assemblage on the Moss with some of the persons attending the meeting at Manchester on the ensuing day. *Justice Bayley* decided that the evidence was admissible.

John Murray, called again. About 25 or 30 men overtook him; they began to beat him with sticks He told them that did not look like Reform in Parliament, but like wilful murder. He said this was very different treatment to what nations at war gave to each other; and if he was an enemy, to take him prisoner. They asked him how they would be treated at Manchester, if they were taken prisoners: he answered, as prisoners and gentlemen, and not be murdered. They continued to beat him, till one of them called, "Kill him out and out, and put him in the pit, or let him go." Another observed, "He has had enough, if he has any more he'll die." They then held a consultation, and one asked him if he was willing to go down on his knees and swear never to be a King's man, or own the name of one again. He answered yes, thinking his life depended on it He did go down upon his knees and swore as they desired him; they standing round him with sticks, while one of the party administered the oath. Soon after they left him, and he then went to Middleton, not being able to get to Manchester; he got there in the course of that day, and the next day, the 16th he was confined to his bed.

In the forenoon he heard a noise; some bugles were sounded under his window, at which he could see what was passing in the street. At the sound of the bugles and the word "halt," the whole body halted; the streets were full; the ranks in the centre were in order; the people on the side mixed together in confusion; the ranks in the

centre appeared; about six a-breast. When the bugle sounded again, the word "march" was given, and they marched off hissing at his house. There were flags and banners, but he could not see the writing on them. No carriage appeared in the party; supposes there might be five or six thousand men, of those who were marching in line, besides the crowd on the sides, in which were men, women, and children. Did not observe any women in the line; there were boys of sixteen or seventeen years of age. Could not identify any of them, as being of the party of the day before at White Moss. About one o'clock came another large party of men, women, and children, with an open carriage in the midst, in which were *Hunt*, *Johnson*, and, he, thinks, another person. The carriage passed his house; did not exactly stop, but moved slowly. The mob hissed, and pointed at his house. The persons in the carriage, he is quite sure, looked up at the house; he believed they were standing up. "This body might consist of three or four thousand people, —men, women and children. The nearest road from Smedley Cottage to St. Peter's area, is five hundred yards nearer than the way by his house.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Hunt*—He is not employed at all by the police: he is a confectioner. He is a constable, but not paid; they are sworn in by the Magistrates annually. He went to White Moss in consequence of the alarmed state of the country, and of himself and family; he went of his own free will; he told several people he would go, and believes he did tell *Mr. Nadin*. He had not received any thing as wages; he received part of a collection which was made for the wounded (15l) for paying his doctor's bill. Never arranged with *Nadin*; the going was his own act and deed; he heard every day of the drilling; it was well known. He came to White Moss on the 15th of August at day-light. He could not speak as to the number of spectators at White Moss when the drilling was going on; there were not I looked on [?] when he was there; he did not hear the words "Make ready, present, fire." Some had sticks and some had not. *Joshua Pollet* was the first to whom he mentioned this. He was examined before the Magistrates, but did not think he recollected all then.

(Here a lady fainted in Court, by which some confusion was occasioned for a short time).

The examination proceeded—Witness was so seriously ill that he did not recollect every thing so minutely when examined on Sunday. He made the deposition in his own room before Mr. Norris and another gentleman, whom he believed to be Trafford. He stated then all he recollected; on his first examination, he forgot the words "treating the nation as an enemy," and had put them in; he does not recollect whether he swore to these words or not; he requested to have them all added to his deposition, and he believed, but was not certain, that they were taken down by Trafford; he could not positively say what day; witness could not say that he was a religious man; he went to church and chapel; he recollected no particular conversation with a man named Mayor, or Morton, or saying that he used any violent expressions in their presence, about the blood of the Reformers. He never said he would rather be rowed in a boat to his own house in the blood of the Reformers than walk along the pavement; he said he would sooner fight to his knees in blood, than submit to them; if he said any thing like it, it was at the Cock in Cock-gate; many people were at him there when he got in, but he recollected saying nothing about the pavement; did not well recollect what he said, but he said a good deal; would not swear that he did not make use of those very words; he knew a person named *Chapman*; went with him in a coach to Liverpool. Did not then say that if he had had the command of the troops on the 16th he would have put every bloody rascal of them to death. There were six passengers present, by virtue of his oath; he did not to his knowledge make use of any such language. He would not swear positively, he did not. He was sober when going in the coach to Liverpool. It was early in January. *Mr. Chapman* did not call him to an account about it. He got into a passion, because witness in the course of conversation said he would not, neither would he, believe Reformers on their oath. Witness knew the Spread Eagle in Hanging Ditch. He re-

collected going into a private room with nine others, where he (*Mr. Hunt*) was sitting. He did not recollect that a person, named *Button* or *Newton*, were present. This was about twelve months back. Witness did not recollect a door being broken open

By *Mr. Johnson*—Witness said, he knew *Robert Mayor*, but not much about him; he never said that he found a nest of money after his wife died, and went to spend it in Liverpool with bad women.

Re-examined by *Sergeant Hullock*. —He never was at the Spread Eagle but once; there was a meeting held that day in St. Peter's area; there was a great deal of speaking; *Hunt* was the leading character; he heard him speak; he was only about five minutes at White Moss, on the night he went to see the drilling; witness never offered himself for a special constable; he was one off and on for 2 years, he derived no emolument from it; he had served on the whole as a special constable about seven years.