**Name**: George Read

**Occupation**:

**Home**: Congleton, Cheshire

**Date**: April 8, 1822

**Source**: Redford v Birley, 443-448

**Summary**: Felt that the appearance of the meeting and the events preceding it (drilling etc) gave the appearance of an intention to start a riot, therefore military intervention was necessary. Saw stones thrown at the military from Windmill-Street, but did not see the cavalry attack the people either before or after this. Despite this, had moved through the crowd without any concern for his personal safety prior to dispersal of the meeting.

**Done by**: RM

*Mr. George Read sworn: examined by Mr. Serjeant Hullock*.

Q. Where do you live?

A. At Congleton in Cheshire.

Q. Did you happen to be at Manchester on the 16th. August, 1819?

A. Yes.

Q. Was you in a situation to see the different parties that march to St. Peter's Field that day?

A. I arrived there about eleven o'clock, and I saw, I believe, the first party.

Q. Did you observe—(I don't carry you through all the facts,) did you see any of the banners, any of the inscriptions?

A. The first banner was "let us die like men and not be sold like slaves," or to that effect.

Q. Was that the only inscription you remember?

A. Sometime afterwards, I saw many others, particularly a black flag, on which was, "equal representation or death."

Q. Do you remember, when the whole party had assembled, observing the number of banners, or the probable number of banners, that were unfurled about the hustings?

A. When the whole party had assembled, when Hunt was there, just about one, there were about twelve; I counted them at the time.

Q. Could you form any estimate as to the number of people altogether collected on, the field?

A. I could not, myself; I could not form any estimate at all.

Q. Did you observe whether the party that advanced had sticks or not?

A. I observed there were many sticks among them; my attention was not particularly called to that.

Q. Did you get near enough to hear Mr. Hunt speak?

A. When I first arrived, I was at some distance, but I worked my way, and at the time he began to speak, I got within perhaps a dozen yards.

Q. Was any allusion made by him to the meeting of the preceding Monday?

A. There was in the course of the speech, certainly, an allusion.

Q. What was it?

A. The allusion was, that the meeting had been stopped; but the only effect of it was, that the numbers had been doubled.

Q. Do you remember any thing more upon the subject that he said?

A. I believe he termed the mob that assembled "tremendous;'' I have a strong impression that he used the word "tremendous," "a tremendous, multitude."

Q. You think that was the expression that he used?

A. I believe it was?

Q. Do you remember any thing else that he said?

A. Not in relation to the numbers.

Q. In relation to anything else?

A. I heard him say "if any one attempts to interrupt you, put him down, and keep him down," or "keep him quiet,” or something to that effect: I don't know the precise expression.

Q. Did he accompany that expression by any action that you remember?

A. He was waving his arm about generally, and at that expression he put it down, as if to intimate the manner. It struck me particularly strongly.

Q. I pass over the intervening circumstances, do you remember the Cavalry forming before Mr. Buxton's door and before the house?

A. I do.

Q. Did you see them proceed from thence, after a short pause, towards the hustings?

A. After a short pause, they proceeded towards the hustings. I turned round towards them; seeing them advance, I pressed forward to get out of the crowd.

Q. By the change of your position, did you lose sight of the Cavalry, or did you still observe them?

A. I observed them for a considerable time in part of their advance, but I lost sight of them after they had passed me.

Q. How near had they got to the hustings when they passed you?

A. I was certainly more than halfway between the Magistrates' house and the hustings. I was nearer to the hustings by more than half way. I should say two dozen yards—twice the distance I first was.

Q. How near did the Cavalry pass you?

A. They passed very close indeed; I dare say within the distance of the outer circle there—about four yards.

Q. Up to that time you would see them distinctly?

A Certainly; my attention was fixed on them from regard to my own safety.

Q. At that time had you observed any blows or cuts given by the Cavalry?

A. Certainly not.

Q. Did you, at any time and when, see any sticks or brickbats flying in the air?

A. I saw stones thrown after the Cavalry had passed me.

Q. From whence did these stones appear to you to come?

A. When I was with my face to the Magistrates' house, they came from the rising ground on the right.

Q. That would be on the right flank of the hustings?

A. Facing the Magistrates' house.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—Towards Windmill-street?

A. Windmill-street, I believe it is called.

Q. Were there several?

A. There were many.

Q. Upon whom, and in what place, did these stones appear to light?

A. They lighted amongst the constables, and amongst the crowd.

Q. Were they amongst the Cavalry?

A. I did not see any particular effect on them.

Q. Were the Cavalry there?

A. The Cavalry had passed.

Q. Before you saw these stones flying, in the manner you have described, had the Cavalry made any blows or strokes on any of the people there?

A. I saw none before or after.

Q. Did you hear the report of any fire-arms that day?

A. Soon afterwards I did, nearer Deansgate.

Q. Could you ascertain from what place or part of the field those reports came?

A. They seemed to me to come from the Deansgate side, whether from amongst the mob or where, I cannot tell.

Q. From the manner in which these respective divisions or parties went to the field, and from their appearance after they had been assembled, in your judgment, was the assembly calculated to endanger the public peace?

A. Certainly so. I previously heard, and I previously disbelieved, the reports of military trainings, but by this it was confirmed.

Q What did the appearance arise from?

A. From the music and banners, from their manner of marching, and from the mottoes on the flags.

Q. You had previously disbelieved the reports concerning their trainings and drillings?

A. Certainly I had.

Q. Did the appearance which the mob then exhibited, excite in your mind any apprehension for the security of the public peace?

A. I conceived there would be a riot, and that Manchester, was in danger by it.

Q. In your judgment, from what you saw, could a warrant be executed by the civil power, unaided by the military?

A. I should certainly conceive not.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Blackburne*.

Q. From what part of the town did you come, with the party that was following Hunt?

A. I was not with the party at all.

Q. You were on the ground at eleven?

A. I was on the ground at eleven.

Q. And where did you take up a position?

A. I wandered about, and had afterwards left the ground and came on again. Then I took up a position near the hustings; then it was I saw Mr. Hunt.

Q. You had taken a position when you saw Mr. Hunt come?

A. I was about midway between the Magistrates' house and the hustings?

Q. How near had you got then?

A. Within twenty yards.

Q. You would get among persons who had their arms locked?

A. I was not among persons with their arms locked, bat there was a great crowd. I worked my way with great difficulty.

Q. You had no fear for your personal safety?

A. Not any.

Q. Your curiosity overpowered your personal apprehensions?

A. My curiosity overpowered my personal apprehensions.

Q. You rather wished to hear the great orator, than save yourself from any risk of any personal danger?

A. I did not know my personal safety was immediately endangered.

Q. From what you observed of the demeanour of the crowd, you did not think your personal safety was at all in danger?

A. Not immediately, at the instant.

Q. You had not observed them commit any assault or any insult to any body, had you?

A. None.

Q. And I think I understand you, that you remained in that position till the Cavalry came up, or were coming up?

A. I did.

Q. Did you remain in the same position until they had passed you?

A. I do not know; as soon as I saw them I endeavoured to work my way out.

Q. Which way?

A. From Mr. Buxton's house.

Q. The way they were coming?

A. Leaning to the right.

Q. Leaning towards Windmill-street. How far were you from the hustings when they did pass you?

A. I might be perhaps two dozen yards.

Q. Before you saw any stones thrown, they had passed you?

A. Certainly.

Q. Did you see any sticks raised?

A. I did not.

Q. And you were within two dozen yards, you think, of the hustings?

A. I was within that distance, I believe.

Q. Then the Cavalry had got near to the hustings themselves, before you saw any stones?

A. They might.