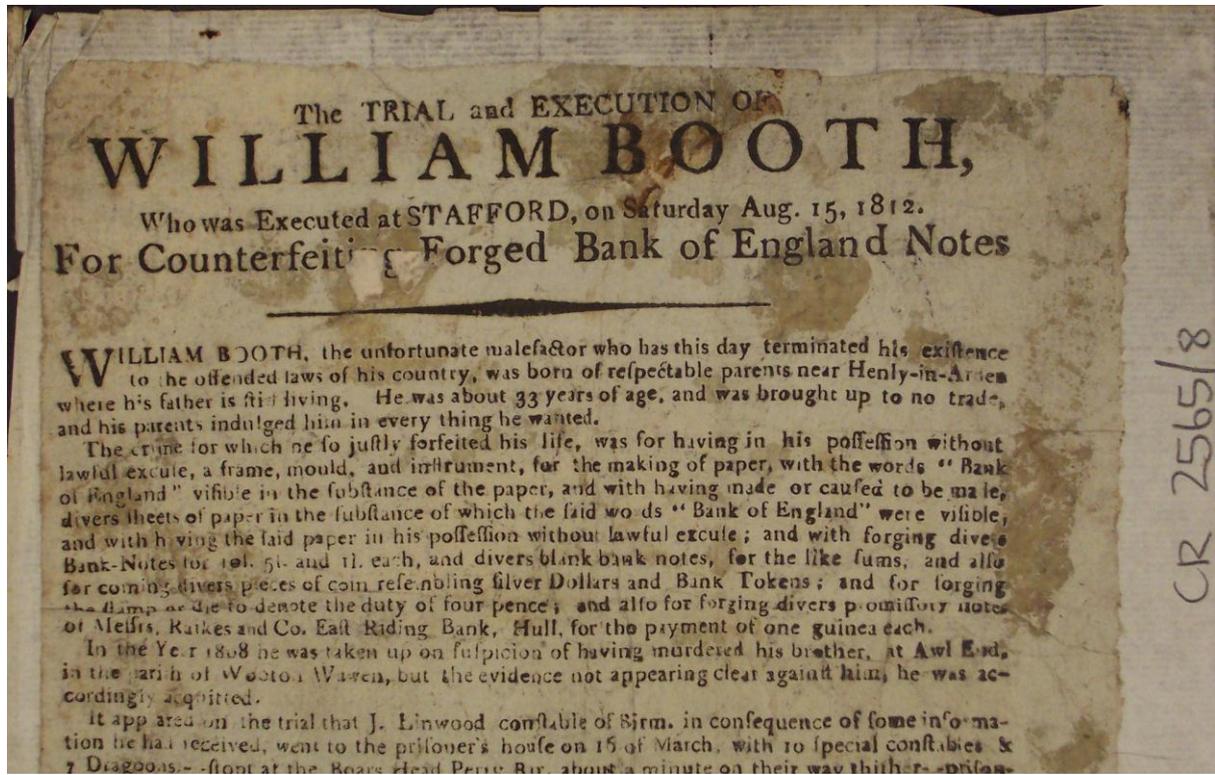


The Execution of William Booth

CR2565/8



Transcription (Paragraph 1 and 2)

The trial and execution of William Booth

Who was Executed at Stafford, on Aug. 15, 1812.

For Counterfeiting Forged Bank of England Notes

William Booth, the unfortunate malefactor who has this day terminated his existence to the offended laws of his country, was born of respectable parents near Henly-In-Arden where his father is still living. He was about 33 years of age, and was brought up to no trade.

The crime for which he so justly forfeited his life, was for having in his possession without lawful excuse, a frame, mould, and instrument, for the making of paper, with the words "Bank of England" visible in the substance of the paper, and with having made or caused to be made divers [several] sheets of paper in the substance of which the said words "Bank of England" were visible, and with having the said paper in his possession without lawful excuse; and with forging divers Bank Notes for 10l.

5l. and 1l. each and divers blank bank notes, for the like sums, and also for coming divers pieces of coin resembling silver Dollars and Banks Tokens; and for forging the Hemp Or die to denote the duty of four pence; and also for forging divers promissory notes of Messrs. Raikes and Co. East Riding Bank, Hull, for the payment of one guinea each.

William Booth

William Booth was born on Hall End Farm near Beaudesert, Warwickshire in 1776. Son of a church warden and farmer, he was one of eight children. In around 1799, he moved to Perry Barr and rented a farm named 'Booth's Farm', where he became prosperous fairly quickly.

He returned to Hall Farm for a visit in 1808, during which his brother, John was murdered. William was accused, but later acquitted at the Warwick Assizes due to lack of evidence.

In February 1812, William's servant Job Jones was arrested for using and possessing forged bank notes. Suspicion fell onto Booth, and his farmhouse was raided. As a result, he was found guilty and hanged for counterfeiting forged Bank of England notes.

Forgery

The surge in counterfeit notes at the start of the nineteenth century was a result of the Napoleonic wars. The Bank of England was no longer able to pay out gold in exchange for bank notes and low denomination £1 and £2 notes were issued in 1797 for the first time. These notes were easy to reproduce and in the first two decades of the 19th century, British banks were plagued by persistent forgeries.

William Booth's 200 acre farm allowed him the privacy to create his own mint, where he forged bank notes, royal stamps and coins.

On March 16th 1812, Constable J. Linwood plus ten constables and seven dragoons arrived to the farm to find it blockaded with three doors 'so that it was almost invulnerable to the attacks of any assailant'. The property also had iron bars fixed to the windows. Entry was gained through an unprotected garret window, and a room with a printing press and machinery to forge coins was found. According to the handbill, Linwood witnessed Booth take some papers from a rolling press that was fixed to a bench in the middle of the room, and put them in the fire.

Execution

Forgery and circulating counterfeited bank notes was a crime punishable by death. Possession of these notes was punished by transportation to Australia, and this was the fate of Booth's servant Job Jones.

Booth was executed on 15 August 1812. The handbill states that:

'The prisoner heard his sentence without dismay & at the conclusion bowed respectfully to the court.

Between 11 and 12 o'clock the Prisoner was taken to the usual Place of Execution, where after some time spent in prayer he was suddenly launched into Eternity'

According to a broadside from the time, initially the cord slipped and Booth fell eight to ten feet, leaving him motionless for a few minutes. On the second attempt he failed to drop his handkerchief (an indication that he was ready for his death), and asked to drop it again. In addition, it was also claimed that due to a re-drawing of a boundary line, Booth had to be re-buried. This inspired the nineteenth century ballad "Twice Tried, Twice Hung, Twice Buried".

References

Booth, John N., *Booths in History*

<http://www.executedtoday.com/2013/08/15/1812-william-booth-forgery/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/apr/03/bank-of-england-letters-prisoners-forging-bank-notes>

The TRIAL and EXECUTION OF
WILLIAM BOOTH,
 Who was Executed at STAFFORD, on Saturday Aug. 15, 1812.
 For Counterfeiting & Forged Bank of England Notes

WILLIAM BOOTH, the unfortunate malefactor who has this day terminated his existence to the offended laws of his country, was born of respectable parents near Henly-in-Arden where his father is still living. He was about 33 years of age, and was brought up to no trade, and his parents indulged him in every thing he wanted.

The crime for which he so justly forfeited his life, was for having in his possession without lawful excuse, a frame, mould, and instrument, for the making of paper, with the words "Bank of England" visible in the substance of the paper, and with having made or caused to be made, divers sheets of paper in the substance of which the said words "Bank of England" were visible, and with having the said paper in his possession without lawful excuse; and with forging divers Bank-Notes for 10l. 5s. and 1l. each, and divers blank bank notes, for the like sums, and also for coming divers pieces of coin resembling silver Dollars and Bank Tokens; and for forging the stamp of the to denote the duty of four pence; and also for forging divers promissory notes of Messrs. Kalkes and Co. East Riding Bank, Hull, for the payment of one guinea each.

In the Year 1808 he was taken up on suspicion of having murdered his brother, at Awl End, in the parish of Wootton Warren, but the evidence not appearing clear against him, he was accordingly acquitted.

It appeared on the trial that J. Linwood constable of Birm. in consequence of some information he had received, went to the prisoner's house on 15 of March, with 10 special constables & 7 Diagoons--sloop at the Boars Head Perry Bar, about a minute on their way thither--prisoner's house is also at Perry Bar apparently an old Palm house, and 2 or 300 yard from any other dwelling--he described the manner in which the house was blockaded, there being 3 doors, and the passage leading to the parlour, all very strong and fastened with solid square oak and iron bars and the windows were joined with wrought iron and also barred, so that it was almost impossible to the attacks of any assailant. The posse being unable to obtain admittance into the lower rooms by reason of the doors and windows being so strongly barricaded, & the windows of the chambers being also secured by iron bars, &c. so that they could not get in there Chippingworth one of the Birm. assistants to the constables, proceeded up a ladder in front of the house--Diagoons going up the ladder he saw the prisoner in the chamber over the parlour--he came up to the window--witness asked him if he would let him in--prisoner said he would just now--witness then broke the glass, and the prisoner went to the middle of the room, in the middle of the room, the papers appeared to be the size of bank notes--saw the prisoner put them into a fire. Witness then ascended the ladder to the garret window, and with much difficulty forced himself through it into the garret and others of his party followed. After he had entered the garret he jumped thro' a trap door into the room where Booth was when he went up the ladder, but Booth at the same time went thro' another trap door into the parlour below. Witness remained in the chamber, and found burnt paper in the fire place. 3 other persons came to him, & he broke the wall over the fire place, and took burnt paper out of the chimney--one was but very little burnt. The note was produced in Court and shown to.

John Ingle had been in the prisoner's employ since Christmas last. The prisoner occupied 200 acres of land. Since he came to prisoner the windows of the parlour & 2 chambers had been strengthened. Witness was taken to work in the house about ten days before prisoner was apprehended. Before that time worked in the barn. Recollects Dorothy Ingley coming to the house on the 14th--and that Eliz. Chidlow went and rapped at the parlour door, in consequence of Dorothy Ingley speaking to her.--Booth came out, and said, "Good woman what doest thou have you brought here?" Chidlow said the runners were coming. Booth said it was a d--d lie--they could not come there. Walked back into the parlour & called witness after him--gave him a small trunk (which was produced)--told him the things that were in it were done, and he must go and plant it on the far side the ground--the trunk was locked--he dug a hole in a field and buried it; he had been directed by the Prisoner to hide two copper-Plates on the Tuesday before he was apprehended; he wrapt them in a cloth and buried them in a ditch; same day he was ordered to hide a single letter which he hid in the track of a wheat sick. Booth was then in bed when prisoner was taken, which he hid in the track of a wheat sick. Booth was then in bed he had tumbled down a trap door that morning & hurt himself--witness was taken up on the Friday after the Prisoner. When he gave information, & discovered where the articles were concealed.

Joseph Chinn, head borough of Birm. proved the finding of the of the trunk and Plates. They were Notes of different value, and to a large amount. There were besides 13 blanks, with the bank of England water mark.

Wm. Bridges & Wm. Brewer Paper and Paper-mould makers to the Bank of England proved that part of the Bills found in the trunk were made from the mould which had been produced. The Prisoner's Counsel took several legal objections, which were over-ruled. The Jury with very little hesitation pronounced a Verdict of GUILTY. The Judge then passed sentence on Booth in the following words:--

"William Booth, you stand here to receive the judgment of the Court for two capital offences, of which a Jury have found you a Guilty: it is not necessary for me to speak of the other indictments against you. Under such circumstances with which you have been indicted, you can have little reason to expect that the mercy of the law will be extended to you: I can hold out no hope for that expectation, but I hope you will now do that which I greatly fear you have hitherto neglected--that is that you will, by humble and devout prayer and contrition, endeavour to prepare yourself for that great and dreadful day, when, before a judgment seat far more awful than any earthly Tribunal, you will be called upon to give an account of your actions in this world; the short interval that can be allowed to you between this time and that of your going into Execution the sentence which the law directs me to pronounce upon you, I trust you will employ in that preparation: it now only remains with me to pals that sentence which is,--that you William Booth, be taken from hence to the place from whence you came, and from thence to the place of Execution, where to be hanged by the neck until you are dead, and the Lord have mercy on your Soul!"

The prisoner heard his sentence without dismay & at the conclusion bowed respectfully to the Court.

Between 11 and 12 o'clock the Prisoner was taken to the usual Place of Execution, where after some time spent in prayer he was suddenly launched into eternity,

Taylor, Printer.