

palaeography

further practice

Document 35: State Papers: Informant on Dick Turpin, dated 23 February 1738/9

(Catalogue reference: SP 36/47 folio 88)

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about this oocument

Correspondence concerning Dick Turpin, dated 23 February 1738/9. (Catalogue reference: SP 36/47 folios 88)

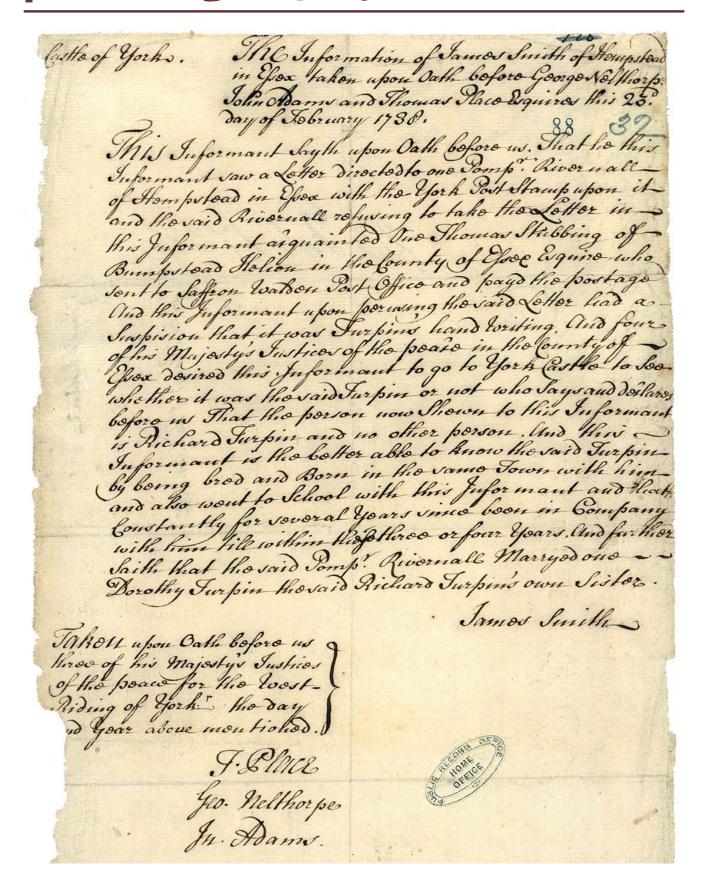
James Smith of Hempstead in Essex reveals the true identity of John Palmer, to be Richard (Dick) Turpin - the infamous highwayman. John Palmer, was committed to York Castle on suspicion of stealing sheep and horses.

Turpin was born at Hampstead in Essex. Having made a career of stealing livestock and robbing farmhouses he left Essex in 1737 to avoid arrest and settled in Yorkshire under the name John Palmer, a horse dealer. Turpin was actually stealing the horses on frequent excursions into Lincolnshire, and supplementing his income by highway robbery.

Please note:

- The document is written in a cursive mixed hand.
- Remember to transcribe ye as 'the' and yt as 'th[a]t.

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transcript

- 1. Castle of Yorke. The Information of James Smith of Hempstead
- 2. in Essex taken upon Oath before George Nelthorpe
- 3. John Adams and Thomas Place Esquires this 23[r]d
- 4. day of February 1738.
- 5. This Informant Sayth upon Oath before us. That he this
- 6. Informant saw a Letter directed to one Pomp[adou]r Rivernall
- 7. of Hempstead in Essex with the York Post Stamp upon it
- 8. and the said Rivernall refusing to take the Letter in
- 9. this Informant acquainted One Thomas Stubbing of
- 10. Bumpstead Helion in the County of Essex Esquire who
- 11. sent to Saffron Walden Post Office and payd the postage
- 12. And this Informant upon perusing the said Letter had a
- 13. Suspision that it was Turpin's hand writing. And four
- 14. of his Majesty's Justices of the peace in the County of
- 15. Essex desired this Informant to go to York Castle to See
- 16. whether it was the said Turpin or not who Says and declares
- 17. before us That the person now Shewn to this Informant
- 18. is Richard Turpin and no other person. And this
- 19. Informant is the better able to know the said Turpin
- 20. by being bred and Born in the same Town with him
- 21. and also went to School with this Informant and hath
- 22. Constantly for several Years since been in Company
- 23. with him till within these three or four Years. And further
- 24. Saith that the said Pomp[adou]r Rivernall Marryed one
- 25. Dorothy Turpin the said Richard Turpin's own Sister.
- 26. James Smith
- 27. Taken upon Oath before us
- 28. three of his Majesty's Justices
- 29. of the peace for the West-
- 30. Riding of York[shi]r[e] the day
- 31, and Year above mentioned
- 32. T. Place
- 33. Geo[rge] Nelthorpe
- 34. J[oh]n Adams.