

A History of Banks, Bankers, & Banking

in Northumberland, Durham, and North Yorkshire:

Illustrating The Commercial Development of the North of England,

from 1755 to 1894,

with Numerous Portraits, Facsimiles of Notes, Signatures, Documents, &c

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Campion, Margaret and Robert.

Founded 1800.

Partners.

Whitby.

Failed 1841.

Margaret Campion. Robert Campion. John Campion.

We have now to record the first and only instance that has come under our notice of a *Lady banker*. On January 2nd, 1800, Mrs. Margaret Campion, in conjunction with her son Robert, added the profession of banking to their other undertakings at Whitby. Mrs. Campion retired or died prior to February 15th, 1804, from which date Mr. Robert Campion carried on the business by himself, until some time after 1817, when his son John was added to the firm. In 1823 they are announced as in Church Street, their London Agents being Curtis & Co. One of their notes for £5 is dated 9th February, 1836, signed for Robert and John Campion, John Campion. Entered by William Campion. The banking was carried on until they suspended payment in 1841, and subsequently became bankrupt. Their books show banking transactions with the following firms (probably for the exchange of notes, as the Cheque system of the present day was then very little in use), Messrs. Simpson, Chapman, & Co., Clark, Richardson, & Co., Holt & Richardson, Jon. Sanders & Son, all of Whitby; Hutchinson & Place, Lumley, Smith, & Co., Smith, Elstob, & Co., of Stockton; Heaton & Morritt, R. W. G. & T. Moxon, of Hull; Pease & Co., Pease & Richardson, Richard Nightingale, Yarm; Raper, Swann, & Co., York; Sir Christopher Sykes, Bart., & Co., Woodall, Tindall, & Co., Bower, Dewsbury, & Co., J. Grainger & Co., Pease, Dunn, & Co., Malton; Jno. Tindall & Co., Scarborough; Wentworth & Co., Wilson & Co., Wilson, Tweedy, & Co., all of York; Geo. Clarke & Co., Boston; Robarts, Curtis, & Co., London.

The last-named firm for seven years (1812 to 1818,) are annually credited, "Clerks' Xmas gifts, £2 2s." showing a pernicious and humiliating practice that used to exist of augmenting the clerks' salaries by contributions from the customers of the bank.

In 1828 Messrs. Campion were receiving subscriptions for the Abolition of Slavery. They engaged in several other businesses, being general merchants, wine merchants, and manufacturers of sail-cloth on a large scale. They carried on each branch of this trade—flax-dressing, weaving, and bleaching. The spinning used to be done in private houses.

In 1807 Mr. R. Campion erected a spinning manufactory next his sail-cloth factory in Bagdale. In 1814 he substituted a larger factory with many improvements. "It contained 12 spinning frames, each having 30 or 36 spindles, besides

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carding frames and other ingenious machinery, the whole driven by an excellent steam engine of 12 horse-power. . . . A part of the work is allotted to the preparation of the yarn for making sail-cloth without starch or any substitute for it—an invention for which Mr. Campion received a patent in 1813."

A writer of the day says :—" The working of the Commission of Bankruptcy up to November 1st, 1842, shows these results : 'The parties were shipowners as well as bankers. The debts proved against R. & J. Campion in the latter capacity were £21,550, upon which a dividend of 1/3 in the pound has been paid; against J. & W. Campion as shipowners, £17,881—dividend 1/6; against the separate estate of R. Campion £23,348—no dividend; and upon the separate estates of J. & W. Campion about £6,000 each—dividend upon that of W. Campion 3/-, and upon that of J. Campion 2/4 in the pound.'"

I am not able to record what occasioned these reverses of fortune, but there can be no doubt that at one time the family were in a most substantial position. Looking through the records of Whitby for a series of years, the names of Robert and John Campion appear in connection with every public, literary, and philanthropic movement. Robert Campion owned the farm of Foulseyth, Trafford Hill Manor, his agent there being Richard Nightingale, and bills for considerable amounts were constantly drawn upon each other. He was lord of the manor of Easby, near Stokesley, and sometimes resided at Easby Hall, "a neat, modern mansion, standing near the site of the ancient hall, which was long the seat of the Lords Eure of Eure, the last of whom died in 1698."

In 1827, Mr. Robert Campion erected upon the highest point on Easby Moor a monument in memory of Captain Cook. The foundation stone was laid July 12th, being the anniversary of Mr. Campion's birth, and the same day of the month upon which Captain Cook left Plymouth upon his last voyage, 12th July, 1776. The work was completed October 27th, 1827, Captain Cook's birthday. The obelisk is 12 feet square at the base, and 31 feet high. The inscription is upon three cast iron plates, and records his birth at Marton, near Whitby, October 27th, 1728, and his massacre at Owhyhee, February 14th, 1779. The monument still forms a conspicuous landmark for many miles around the Cleveland Hills.

Robert Campion at one time was considered the most prosperous man in Whitby. He married Miss Jane Smales of Whitby. Her father was a substantial shipowner, and in spite of Mr. Campion's position he would insist upon his daughter's portion being settled upon her; this wise precaution proving most valuable in after years. To show the changing values of landed interests, I may state that Mr. Campion purchased from his sisters two shares of the Trafford Hill

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estate for £18,000, his own share being worth another £9,000. A few years ago, for the whole property £9,000 was all that was offered at an auction.

I am informed that eventually the Campion estate realised much better than was anticipated—16/- in the pound being paid.

Mr. R. Campion died December 10th, 1866, aged 93, and was buried at St. Mary's Church, Whitby.

After the failure, Mr. John Campion gave up commercial life, and entered the Established Church. He took his M.A. degree, and was ordained at Lambeth in 1845 by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1869 Lord Grimthorpe presented him with the living of St. James's, Doncaster, from which he recently retired, and is now living in privacy.

Since the above was written, the following account has reached me :—

"The death took place on Saturday morning, May 19th, at the advanced age of 91, of the Rev. J. Campion, formerly vicar of St. James', Doncaster. Mr. Campion was born at Whitby, on May 8th, 1803, and he was held in the highest esteem by his old parishioners, and, indeed, by all who knew him. He was made a deacon in 1843, and was ordained a priest in 1845 by the Bishop of Ripon. He was curate of Knaresborough from 1843 to 1847, curate of Christ Church, Doncaster, from 1845 to 1848, and vicar of East Acklam from 1847 to 1861. In 1859 he was appointed to the living of St. James', Doncaster, by Mr. E. Denison and Mr. E. B. Denison, and in January, 1890, he resigned the living, to which the Rev. E. H. Bennett was appointed. The rev. gentleman had been in failing health for several months. In October he caught a chill on leaving church, and had only been out on three occasions since, and then only for a short drive. Yesterday morning at St. James' Church, Doncaster, the Rev. H. Boulton, curate, briefly alluded to the death of Mr. Campion. He said they knew his work as vicar of that parish for over 30 years—his message to them was always the same, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and both in his life and in his message Jesus was the beginning and the end. In the evening the vicar, the Rev. E. H. Bennet, also made a passing allusion to Mr. Campion's death. The funeral will take place at Warmsworth on Wednesday afternoon. A memorial service will be held at St. James' Church at the same time." May, 1894.