

Elizabeth Dix per Lady of the Lake 1829 - HO17/77/13

ELIZABETH DIX - 1827

SOMERSET

STEALING IN A DWELLING HOUSE

SOURCE - HOME OFFICE PETITIONS - SERIES 1

SERIES - HO 17

PIECE NUMBER - 77

ITEM NUMBER - OM 13

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The King in the prosecutions of Walter Jameson against THOMAS WILTSHIRE and ELIZABETH DIX.

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To the Right Honourable His majesty's Secretary of State.

Sheweth,

The humble petition of several inhabitants of the Parish of Potterne in the County of Wilts.

That an unfortunate man THOMAS WILTSHIRE is now confined in Ilchester Gaol under sentence of DEATH. That your Petitioners have known the prisoner from his youth as a steady and industrious person - that his father died suddenly last winter and leaving him (his only child) and his mother, who has since been partly supported by the prisoner and now resides at Potterne.

That your petitioners have never known the prisoner to be guilty of any crime before, and they, would have investigated the circumstances of the case of felony under which he now stands convicted, but did not hear of his being in custody until after he was tried and sentenced to die - that your petitioners have heard that the prisoner THOMAS WILTSHIRE and his fellow prisoner ELIZABETH DIX would not have offended the Laws of their Country had there not been an improper intimacy subsisting between the Prosecutor and his servant the said ELIZABETH DIX which circumstance we understand had already been communicated to your Lordships, and that the verdicts of the prisoner WILTSHIRE at the Prosecutors House were encouraged by him at the time he (the prosecutor) was carrying on such illicit intercourse with his servant, the other unfortunate prisoner, which facts would have been shewn to the Court had they been known at the time of the trial, but we are informed they have been since disclosed to the Chaplain in Ilchester Gaol.

That your petitioners relying on the information given them of the above facts, most earnestly pray that your Lordship will be pleased to take the same into

consideration and use your influence with His most Gracious majesty, that the prisoner's life may be spared.

An your Petitioners will ever pray

Jerimiah [Ansty] Officiating Minister of Potterne.  
William White - Church Warden - Potterne  
R Hitchcock - Church Warden  
Thomas Biggs - Devizes

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THOMAS WILTSHIRE

The Lordship Justice states his Learned opinion that the Law in this case ought to take its course.

(By Keith; This was on the outside of the Petition no idea who from or to)

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Pottern  
4th September 1827

THOMAS WILTSHIRE was a honest and faithful prentice to me John Durnford of Potterne in the County of Wilts - Blacksmith  
THOMAS WILTSHIRE work for me 1 year and was honest and dutiful servant  
THOMAS WILTSHIRE worked for me some time and I never found him no other but a very honest and industrious lad - George North  
THOMAS WILTSHIRE work for me some time always found him strictly honest - Moses Glass  
THOMAS WILTSHIRE work for me at different times as a browered man from my son at Potterne and never found him any ways dishonest - John Durnford - Devizes Green Wilts.  
THOMAS WILTSHIRE worked for me as a junior Journeyman Whitesmith and I have known him for 7 years and I always found him a honest servant - John Slade.  
(By Keith; Many more but the Petition is torn and cannot be read)

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Bath  
7th September 1827

May it please your Lordship,  
I beg leave and respectfully to send your Lordship a copy

of a letter sent to the Chief Justice Best on behalf of James and Hannah Summers, the parents of the unfortunate widow ELIZABETH DIX now lying under the sentence of DEATH.

On [Wednesday] at the request of the parents and in company with the father, I visited Ilchester Castle and soon obtained permission to visit both DIX and THOMAS WILTSHIRE. I am happy to say that the facts we went to learn were elicited from DIX the day previous by the [Rev Ordinary], the Doctor was also present. The said ELIZABETH DIX has confessed to the Chaplain that she with child and the Doctor had corroborated it and that it is by HER MASTER the Prosecutor, Walter Jameson or THOMAS WILTSHIRE whom her master encouraged to come to his home even after he was robbed for he sent for him to come to his house to tea the evening before he was taken into custody. She says her Master also made her sware in the most solemn manner never to divulge the commission he had with her and it was with great difficulty the Clergyman could persuade her that a bad promise or one made under such circumstances was better broken than kept, she says she should have told the facts to His Lordship in Court but her Master sent word in to her NOT TO SAY A WORD ABOUT HIM AND SHE WOULD NOT BE HURT and during the time she was taking her trial he constantly looked at her not to say anything. Her Master also offered her a Guinea a week if she married THOMAS WILTSHIRE her fellow prisoner, and he did not have them apprehended for a fortnight after he had been robbed. Mr Jamison the Prosecutor told her he would marry her himself and would take her to France, and after they were committed he told John Stamp (a brother in Law of Dix) that if they could raise forty pounds he would forfeit his recognizance and not appear against them, the parents therefore most humbly and most respectfully submit to your Lordship and plead that their illicit intercourse and subsequent promises made by the Prosecutor and his anxiety after she was in custody that she should not be committed is evident proof of the liberty with which her Master allowed her to act, and hope this will operate and stay the execution if not to curtail them to a commutation of their sentence certain it is that WILTSHIRE was induced to participate by the familiarity the Prosecutor shewed to him and the manner in which he saw ELIZABETH DIX and her Masters act, therefore with all deference I most humbly solicit your Lordship will take these things into your most serious consideration and lay it before His Most gracious Majesty where your petitioners are assured justice will be administered with mercy.

I am authorised by the Keeper Mr Hardy to say that he regretted DIX had not made the disclosure previous to his writing to the Judges and if necessary Mr Hardy will confirm what I have here stated.

I remain your Lordships  
most obedient humble servant  
Charles Blatchley

City Weighing Engineer