

THE HADSTOCK RIOT -1795

Thomas Smith of Linton in the county of Cambridge Baker maketh oath and saith that on Tuesday the 17th Instant, he went as he usually does, to Hadstock in the County of Essex with a quantity of bread, about 60 Quartern and Half Quartern Loaves, of which he intended to leave 20 or so at a Shop in Hadstock aforesaid which he serves, and this Deponent saith that he was met in the Street in Hadstock aforesaid by several Persons, women and children, upwards of 40 as he supposes, & that one of such persons Alice the wife of John Swan of Hadstock aforesaid Labourer took hold of this Deponents Horse & having asked whether he had fallen in his price of Bread, he told her, he had no orders to fall from the Millers, & she then said, "By God" if you don't fall you shall not leave any Bread in the Town", & this Deponent then said he would leave no Bread in the Town, & he was then offered by the persons present, Eight pence a quartern Loaf, which he refused, & they then said that their Head Farmer Mr Smoothy told them that the market price was 9d a Loaf, and if the Baker refused that they could not be hurt, if they took it away, this Deponent then said he did not know what he was to give for the Flour but if the Flour was fallen, he would fall with the Bread this week, & let the Flour be fallen or not, they should have that Bushel, meaning the twenty Loaves he meant to leave at Hadstock at the rate of 19d the quartern Loaf, but, they, meaning the several persons about him, swore that if he would not let them have it at 9d a Loaf they would take it away, & before he could give any other answer, several Persons then about him took several of the Loaves off his Pads, & this Deponent then said that if they would give him the Bread back again, he would have his Horse to the Shop & they should have it at their own price, accordingly he went to the Shop attended by such persons the greater part of whom delivered up the loaves, but on counting the whole Quantity, he missed two quartern Loaves & three half Quartern Loaves, & having seen Jane Brown of Hadstock aforesaid singlewoman take some Loaves off his Pad, he suspected she had secreted them, on being charged with it by Mr (Spencer) she owned it, & fetched back three half Quartern Loaves and this Deponent saith that he then delivered to the different Persons about him the whole Quantity of Bread intended to be left at the Shop at Hadstock, except the two Quartern Loaves which were missing, at 9d a Quartern the price they had fixed, & they then went away, and this Deponent further saith that he saw Sarah the wife of Thomas Bye of Hadstock aforesaid Labourer take a Quartern Loaf, at the time the Loaves were taken from

his pad, and that by Reason of her not delivering it at the Time abovementioned he (asserted) she kept it & on his going home, he met her in the Road between Linton & Hadstock when she offered to pay this Deponent for the Loaf which he refused and this Deponent verily believed that if he had not complied with selling his Bread at the reduced price that the persons then assembled about him in a riotous Manner would have taken all his Bread

Thomas Smith

Sworn the 10th Day of  
November 1795  
before  
W Gritton

(This deposition was made at Littlebury)