

LONDON BANK ROBBERY 1854

The following article appeared in the Guardian newspaper, May 17, 1854:

Attempted Robbery in a London Bank - At the Mansion House, London, on Monday, Charles Roberts was charged before Alderman Farebrother with having stolen in the London Joint Stock Bank two Bank of England notes for £1,000 each, two for £300 each, two for £20 each, one for £50, and one for £10, and two for £5 each, a draft on the Bank of England for £31,000, the property of Messrs. Barnett, Hoare, and Co., bankers, of Lombard-street.

Mr. H. Tasker, clerk in the house of Barnett and Co., said, on Saturday last I was at the London Joint Stock Bank, at a few minutes after four o'clock, and had in my hand my leather note case. When I went in, there were in it, a cheque for £31,000 odd, drawn on the Bank of England, by the London and Westminster Bank, and several Bank of England notes, the total amount of which was £2,710. (Here the witness mentioned the numbers of the notes). While I was there a great many other persons were present. My case was open, and I was holding it in my left hand. I heard something said which attracted my attention to the presence of the prisoner, who stood near me. Some one called out, "Barrett, this man has got your notes." I immediately turned round and saw my parcel of notes on the ground. The cheque for the £31,000 was with them, and they were all crumpled up together. I picked them up. The prisoner was the nearest person to me; he was just at the side of me; and about a yard from him the parcel lay. These notes which I hold are the same. I took the prisoner into the private room of the bank.

Mr. H.L. Whitelock, clerk to Messrs. Sapse and Co. bankers, of Threadneedle-street, said: - I was in the London Joint Stock Bank at the time specified, and saw Mr. Tasker there. I saw his leather case in his left hand open. The prisoner was there. He was at first standing by the counter doing nothing. He walked from the counter when the amount of Barnett's change was asked for, and stood by the side of Mr. Tasker. He put his hat over Mr. Tasker's case, and with his left hand to took the parcel out of the case. I directly called out "He has got Barnett's notes." and I took hold of his wrist. I did not see the notes drop, but immediately afterwards I saw Mr. Tasker pick up a parcel from the ground. I saw the prisoner's hand in the case, and was about three yards from him.

Mr. S. Shepperd, a clerk in the banking-house of Smith, Payne, and Smith's: I was in the banking-house at the time, and my attention was attracted by hearing Mr. Whitelock calling out about Barnett's notes. I saw the prisoner drop the parcel of notes from his right-hand sleeve, and I saw Barnett's clerk pick them up. I was, when I observed this, about half a yard from the prisoner. - I did not see anything til I heard Mr. Whitelock call out.

Mr. G. Le Creo, clerk at Rogers and Oldings bank, in Clement's Lane, said: I was present. I saw Mr. Whitelock holding the prisoner, and I saw a parcel of notes drop from the prisoners right arm.

Jamieson, of the city police, said: I was called in upon the occasion, and I found the prisoner in the inner room. He was accused of stealing bank notes from Barnett and Hoare's clerk. He said nothing at all. I found 3s. 2d. in his possession, and also a ring.

Mr. Lewis: I am quite satisfied that anything I could say would not have the effect of preventing the alderman from sending this case elsewhere, and I shall therefore reserve the defense.

The Prisoner: I am not guilty. - The prisoner was then committed for trial. - *London paper.*

SOURCE: NP1064

I have not been able to determine which family H.L. Whitelock belongs to. If anyone has a family story about a Whitelock ancestor who foiled a London bank robbery, I would be interested in the details.