

OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS
GCSE

A952/22

HISTORY A
(SCHOOLS HISTORY PROJECT)

Historical Source Investigation
Developments in Crime and Punishment in Britain,
1200–1945

SOURCE BOOKLET

FRIDAY 15 JUNE 2012: Morning
DURATION: 1 hour 30 minutes
plus your additional time allowance

MODIFIED ENLARGED

Candidates answer on the Answer Booklet.

OCR SUPPLIED MATERIALS:

8 page Answer Booklet
(sent with general stationery)
Question Booklet

OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED:

None

DEVELOPMENTS IN CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN BRITAIN, 1200-1945

HOW FAR DID PEOPLE SYMPATHISE WITH THE REBECCA RIOTERS?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Rebecca Riots were a series of protests that took place in south-west Wales between 1839 and 1844. The rioters called themselves 'Rebecca and her daughters'. They were protesting about the tolls charged by the turnpike trusts to use their roads. Most of the rioters were poor labourers and farmers who resented having to pay high fees to use the roads to take their produce to market. They also had other reasons for protesting, such as the tithes (taxes) they had to pay to the Church. The authorities took firm steps to crush the disturbances which were threatening the peace of rural life. They used soldiers and policemen sent from London, but they found it difficult to track the protestors down.

How far did people sympathise with the Rebecca Rioters?

SOURCE A

Take Notice

**I wish to warn you, especially those sworn in as constables in order to catch Rebecca and her children. It will be impossible for you to keep the tollgates up at Llanfihangel. Watch yourselves. All your property shall be burned in one night if you do not obey this notice. Send away those villains who run the turnpikes. Is it reasonable that they can impose so much on the country, picking the pockets of poor labourers and farmers? All the tollgates that are on these three roads shall be destroyed. I am determined to have my way. As for the constables and the policemen, Rebecca and her children pay no more attention to them than the grasshoppers which fly in the summer.
Faithful to Death,
Rebecca and her children**

***A letter addressed to the people of St Clears,
Carmarthenshire, December 1842.***

SOURCE B



A cartoon about the Rebecca Riots from a London magazine, 1843. A wild mob of men dressed in women's clothing are hacking down parts of a gate with axes and saws. On the gate are written 'Church Rate', 'Union', 'Tithes' and 'Poor Laws'. A shocked man is looking out carefully from behind the door of the tollhouse. Over the door is written 'Robert Peel'. There is a man's face carved at the top of the gatepost.

SOURCE C



A nineteenth-century picture of 'Rebecca and her daughters' destroying a turnpike gate. It shows a man on horseback wearing women's clothing and carrying an axe in one hand and a flaming torch in the other. He is leading a group of men towards a gate. The other men are also in women's clothing and are on horseback carrying weapons.

SOURCE D

TO REBECCA AND HER DAUGHTERS, WELSHMEN

Do you think I can allow your riots to continue? I tell you NO. I have fought, and am continuing to fight your battles, until I can obtain justice for you and your children. However, I am the first man to keep the Queen's peace, and prevent anything like riot or disturbance. I have done enough already to convince the Government of the justice of your grievances. They have sent soldiers to keep the peace. THEREFORE I BEG YOU NOT TO MEET TOGETHER ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT. Your behaviour is childish and absurd. Why do you show stupidity when wisdom is required? The penalty for pulling down a tollhouse is TRANSPORTATION FOR LIFE.

A poster issued by the High Sheriff of Cardiganshire, June 1843. The High Sheriff was the government's chief law officer in the county.

SOURCE E

I am sorry to say our jury disgraced themselves most terribly in finding a Rebecca leader not guilty. This was in spite of him having been present when a tollhouse was destroyed. Two witnesses swore he was actively involved. He said, 'I did no more than the others,' who, however, pulled the tollhouse down between them.

From a letter written in July 1844 by George Rice Trevor, who was in charge of policing in Carmarthenshire during the time of the Rebecca Riots. The rioters had burned down haystacks on Trevor's own estate in Carmarthenshire.

SOURCE F

Enough has happened to convince me that the whole question of the Turnpike Trusts needs a proper enquiry. In general they are very badly run, and in many cases they charge double the toll permitted by law. I am strongly of the opinion that a proper enquiry would be of benefit to the public, and more than anything else would reduce the discontent felt so generally by the farmers.

From a letter written in June 1843 to the Government by the commander of the troops sent to Wales to deal with the Rebecca Riots.

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