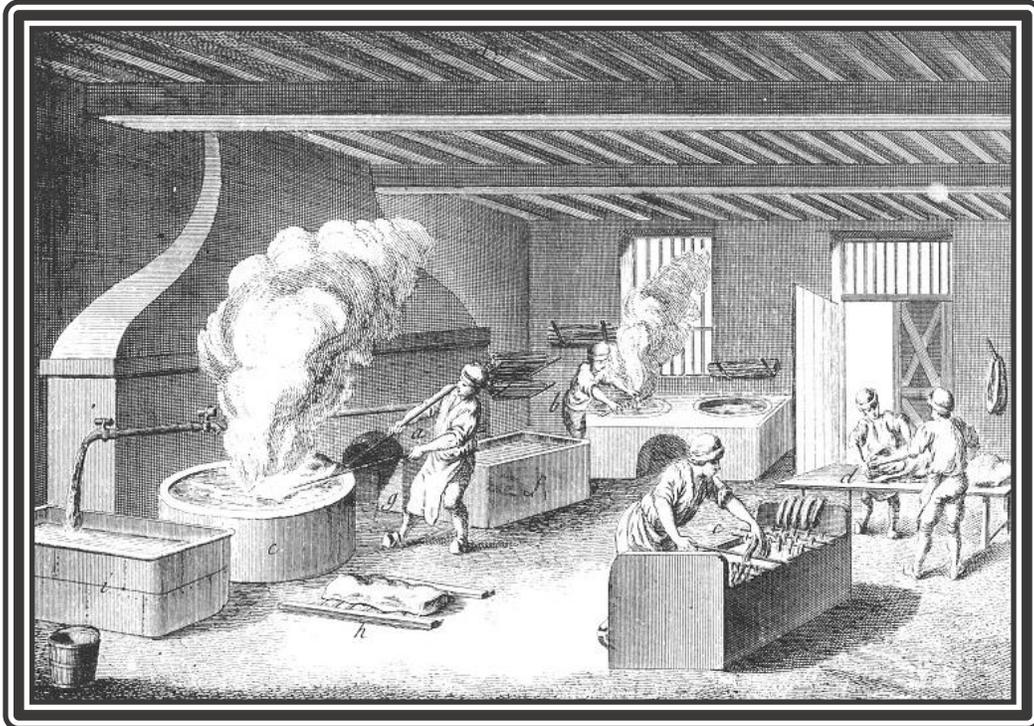


Edward Rainbow

Silk Dyer

1745 - 1827



Kate Stout
with Geoff Arnold

February 2023

Edward Rainbow Silk Dyer 1745 - 1827

by Kate Stout with Geoff Arnold

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Introduction

This book is about Edward Rainbow (1745-1827), who is the earliest Rainbow ancestor about whom there is detailed information. He was the great-great-grandfather of Kenneth Rainbow (“K.R.”). He was baptised in 1745 in Chiswick, was a silk dyer in the City of London until 1800 and died in 1827 in Chelsea.

For the children of Lorna Arnold, Hilary Semmens, Rosemary Guha, Ruth Smith, and Geoffrey Rainbow, this man is their 4-times great-grandfather. Here is a direct line for the Rainbows back to Edward Rainbow, a silk dyer.

Edward Rainbow to Current Family Members

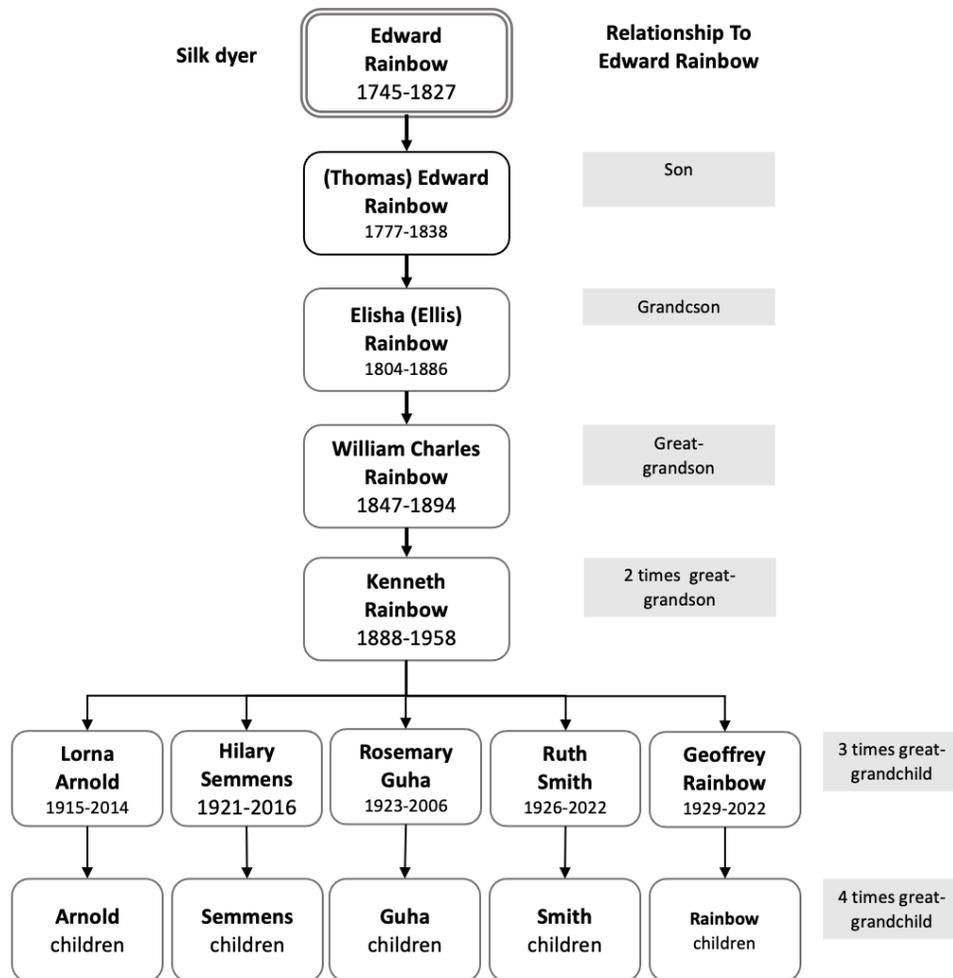


Figure 1 – Direct line from Edward Rainbow to current Rainbow family

Edward has fascinated me for over 10 years while I have researched his story. The fascination is because there is so much more information available about him than is typical for a working man of this period.

Information about English individuals in the mid-1700s to the early 1800s tends to be mostly church records of baptisms, marriages, and burials. The national census did not start until 1841, so for people living in England in the second half of the 1700s and early 1800s there is no convenient listing of who lived where, and with whom. The noble and wealthy tend to leave more clues about their family and history.

Many family trees for people of this period are simple lists of birth, marriage, and death dates and the locations where they occurred. Wills were not common.

Fortunately, there are exceptions, and the English passion for record keeping has provided glimpses of Edward's life. His apprenticeship contract with a silk dyer still exists. After completing his apprenticeship, he joined the Dyer's Guild in London, which has more information about him and those with whom he apprenticed later. He paid land taxes on the home he rented in the City of London (The City)^a and appeared in tradesmen's directories. He also had interactions with the legal system. Some were benign, such serving on a jury, while others were far more difficult, such as becoming bankrupt in 1776 and being charged with receiving stolen goods in 1800.

These records help create a more detailed picture than one can find for most people of the period. Unfortunately, they do not tell us much about the personal details of Edward and his family, such as how they lived each day, or their interests. There are also frustrating gaps in the known information. Except for the names of his parents, his ancestors are unknown. It is not certain who Edward married, and when. There is no clear information about one of his children. Despite some frustrations, researching Edward Rainbow has been a satisfying challenge.

I have tried a variety of approaches to connect Edward to one of the many Rainbow families in England but have not succeeded. I can hear the question "With a name like Rainbow, how hard can it be?" During my research, I discovered that there were far more Rainbows in England than one might imagine. There are references to three, and possibly four, other Edward Rainbows living in London during Edward's lifetime. Many records are brief, such as a baptism record saying "John, son of Edward and Mary Rainbow" with the parish name and a date, making it hard to know if this is the same John Rainbow who appears in another record 20 years later.

I (Kate) was the primary researcher and writer for this document. Geoff provided significant input to ensure accuracy, including many useful questions that led to new avenues of research. To keep this document readable, not every detail was included. Contact either Kate Stout (kate@katestout.com) or Geoff Arnold (geoff@geoffarnold.com) with questions, or to find out what additional information is available.

^a "The City" is used to indicate the specific area of London known as the City of London. The chapter [The City of London](#) discusses it in more detail.

Rainbow Name and Origin

Several family members shared the story that the Rainbows were descended from silk weavers who were French Huguenots, and that the original family name might have been Rainbeau, or Ranbeau.

After extensive research to prove or disprove this French descent, there is no evidence that decides the issue. Research was done using many spelling variations, including Rainbow, Rainbo, Raynebo, Raynebowe, Rambo, Rambeaux, Ranbow, Rainbeau, Rainbaux.^a

In Spitalfields, where many French silk weavers settled, there are birth and marriage records for people with the last name of Rainbeau or Rainbaux in the documents of the Non-Conformist French church. There were also variations of the name Rainbow associated with a church on Threadneedle Street in The City.

There were also plenty of Rainbows in England before Protestants refugees from France arrived in England. An exhaustive record search for the name Rainbow in the Greater London area before 1700 found at least five families, with birth dates as early as 1598. The records are quite fragmentary, so it was not possible to create good family trees for each.

In looking at Rainbows outside of London before 1700, there is a cluster of Rainbows in Warwickshire, specifically near Sutton-upon-Brailles. In addition, there were clusters of Rainbows in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Cambridge, Berkshire, Oxford, and Nottinghamshire. The earliest records were in the late 1500s. Few records survive from before then.

The ancestors of Edward Rainbow remain unknown, even though Geoff Arnold has a few DNA matches with descendants of some Warwickshire Rainbows. The DNA matches are just a clue - these possible shared ancestors are about 8-10 generations ago.

It remains unknown whether the family origin was French or English. There is no conclusive evidence to support either hypothesis. As to whether they were silk weavers, perhaps an earlier ancestor, when retelling the family story confused silk *dyeing* (Edward's profession) with silk *weaving*. Since silk weaving in England is often associated with Spitalfields and French Huguenots, that error could have led to an assumption of French ancestry.

^a The research on this question has been extensive. It included researching possible DNA matches and building trees for other Rainbow families in London and Warwickshire in the 1600 and 1700s. It is research that is not final – the digitalization of new records, or a DNA match could lead to new clues that might change the story.

Early Years

Edward was baptised in St Nicholas Church, Chiswick, on September 29, 1745. His parents were Edward and Elizabeth Rainbow.¹ He had three siblings. John was baptised in 1741, Mary was baptised in 1744.² There was also a sister Elizabeth, whose baptismal date is unknown.³

Little is known of Edward's parents. His father was a maltman in Turnham Green, part of Chiswick, who died before 1762.⁴ Maltmen produced malt for use in beer making. His mother Elizabeth may have lived until 1784, as there is a burial record for an Elizabeth Rainbow in Turnham Green in that year.⁵

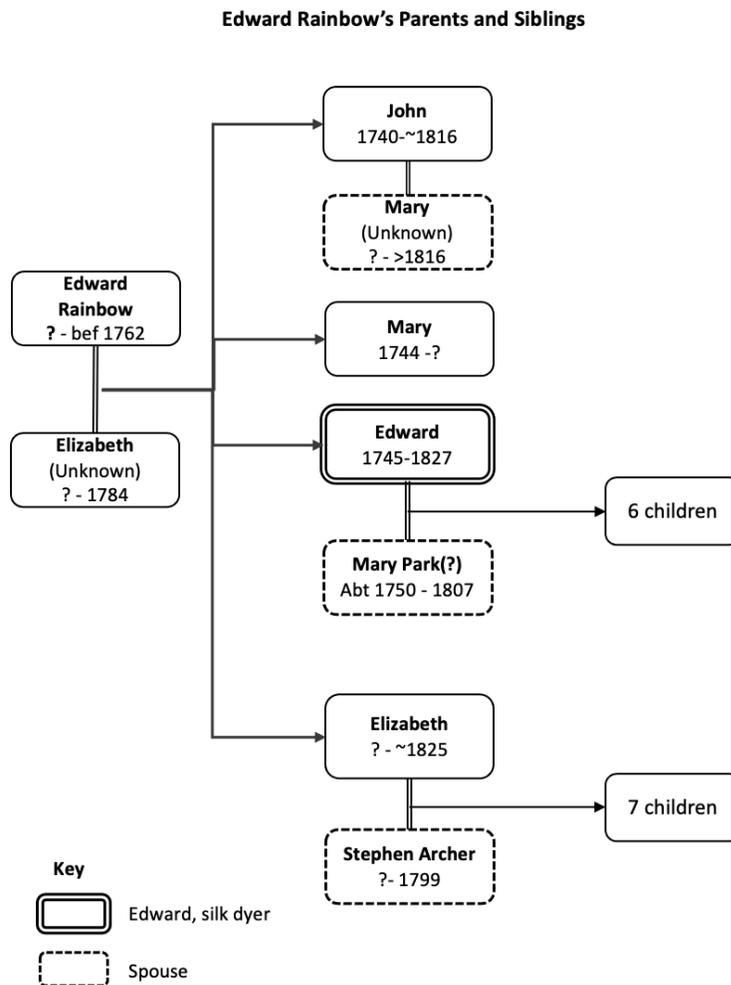


Figure 2 – Edward Rainbow's parents and siblings

There is no other information about Edward's childhood. At the age of 16, he became an apprentice in London to a silk dyer, Higgins Eden. Edward started his apprenticeship later than most. It was not unusual for people to begin an apprenticeship as early as 12 years old.

When Edward signed his apprenticeship, he agreed to work "faithfully" for his master for seven years. In addition, he agreed not to injure other apprentices, gamble, contract marriage, or to not "haunt Taverns or Play-houses". These were standard terms. His master paid for his housing, food, and other necessities.

Many apprentices paid a fee for their apprenticeship. Edward did not. His master, Higgins Eden, had many more apprentices than most dyers. Most dyers had one or two apprentices – Eden had seven.⁶ He often waived the apprenticeship fee, had a large business, and appeared to be financially well off.^a

Eden's business was in The City, on Thames St. near the base of Garlick Hill. Many dyers worked in the area, as the dyeing process required a lot of water, which the Thames provided. Edward was based in this area for the next 40 years of his life. During their apprenticeship, Edward and his fellow apprentices probably lived at or near the dyer's workshop. With eight young men serving as apprentices, there were probably several senior silk dyers supervising them, as well as servants, who cooked their meals and maintained the lodgings.



Figure 3 - Silk woven in a red and gold pattern

A silk dyer focused on dyeing silk rather than wool, linen, or fabrics. Most silk was dyed as thread, which was then woven into the elaborate patterns popular with the fashionable people of London. Other materials, such as linen, were usually dyed "in the cloth", after the material had been woven.^b

^a Higgins was a member of the London Common Council in 1757 and subscribed to help pay to produce several books, including one on trading with the American colonies. His son was described in the late 1700s as "Esquire", suggesting the family was well regarded and likely wealthy.

^b Silk dyers also took on other tasks such as cleaning clothing and hangings, re-dyeing fabric or clothes, and repairing embroidery and gold or silver decorative braids and ornamentation. They advertised their services through trade printed cards, some of which are now in a collection at the British Museum. See examples of the cards on the [ikfoundation website](#).

Dyeing was hard, dirty, wet, and complicated work. Silk was dyed in vats of hot water that had been coloured with natural materials, such as woad, indigo, saffron, and madder. Some dyes were extracted from plants by the dyers, while some dyes were purchased in a form that was ready to use. For example, cochineal, which produced a bright red, was found in South American insects, and was a costly dye usually made by specialists. It was often shipped from South America as an extract.

Dyeing was a multi-step process, submerging the silk in dye for hours or days, rinsing it, and dyeing it repeatedly to get a deeper colour or to create a specific shade. For example, there was no natural green dye - instead the thread was first dyed yellow, then dyed again with blue. This process was true of several colours. There were also baths of various chemicals to ensure the dyes were permanent, with some common materials being salt, iron, copper, and stale urine (which contains ammonia).

In London, silk dyers were members of the Dyers Guild, which was officially incorporated as a City Guild in 1472. There were several earlier associations and groups dating back to the late 1100s that supported the dyers. The guild ensured quality standards of the members and advocated for the needs of dyers to both the City of London and to Parliament. The guild tried to ensure that dyers who were not members of the guild were not allowed to work in London. By the 1700s, they were also involved in charitable works, such as providing housing for elderly dyers or their widows.^c

^c One of Edward's sons, also a member of the Dyer's Guild, left a widow, Lucy. She lived in a Dyer's Guild Almshouse for about 30 years, which is documented in UK census records.



Figure 4 - A Dyer's Workshop
Illustration from Diderot's *Encyclopaedia*

This illustration shows some of the steps in dyeing. The man on the right is working with a boiling vat. Two men on the left are hanging skeins of thread to dry. Skeins of thread sit in a dyeing vat next to the two, hanging from wooden rods. There are many large containers for dyeing, rinsing and setting the dye.

Family

Edward completed his apprenticeship in 1769. After completing an apprenticeship, dyers usually worked as a journeyman, working for another established dyer for several years. Most journeymen hoped to establish their own business. When Edward finished his apprenticeship, he was 23 years old.

We know that his wife was named Mary from the baptisms of their children. It is probable he married a woman from Southwark, Mary Park, in 1765, and they had their first surviving child Catherine in 1769. If these assumptions are true, then Edward was allowed to marry, and the couple had their daughter Catherine before he completed his apprenticeship. There must have been some unusual circumstances for Edward to receive permission to marry, such as a pregnancy.^a The evidence for Edward's marriage and first child is circumstantial. The details of the evidence are discussed in [Appendix A: Edward's Marriage](#).

Edward and Mary had six children, assuming Catherine was their child. She was born in 1769. Sons John and Edward were born in 1770 and 1772, but died young, both before their fourth birthday. They were baptised and buried at St James Garlickhythe, near his home.⁷ Joseph was baptised at St Thomas the Apostle in 1777,⁸ which was another parish a short walk from the home of Edward Rainbow. William Thomas was born around 1776,⁹ and the last child, Thomas Edward, was baptised in 1777.¹⁰ Thomas Edward was later known as "Edward" and was the ancestor of Kenneth Rainbow.

Edward and his family lived at 32 Queen St¹¹ from the early 1770s until 1800. Queen Street ran four blocks between Thames St and Cheapside, in The City, and was very close to the location of his apprenticeship. He rented the property, paying £14 a year (about £2006 now) in rent,^b with an additional £2 and 6 shillings (about £329 now) in land tax.

Edward had other family in London. His sister Elizabeth lived with her husband Stephen Archer and six children in a house at the edge of a large stable yard off Great Queen St,^c near Drury Lane.¹² Their parish church was St Giles in the Fields.¹³ A walk to visit the Archer family from the Rainbow house took about 35 to 45 minutes, being less than 2 miles away.

Edward's brother John Rainbow lived in East Smithfield,¹⁴ just west of the Tower of London and near St Katherine's Docks. Walking to his house from the Rainbows' home took about 25 minutes, being just over a mile away.

^a If the marriage was due to pregnancy, there may have been a miscarriage. There are no baptismal records for a child of Edward Rainbow and Mary 1765 or 1766 in the greater London area.

^b Calculating the modern equivalent of an historical sum of money is complicated and inexact. An item with a *price* of £1 in 1770 might cost around £145 in 2023. However, a task commanding a *wage* of £1 in 1770 would be worth well over £1900 today. The website <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/> provides a set of tools to understand this subject.

Approximate value will be provided in the document, based on values from 2021 (marked as now), the most recent model available. The estimate will be based on the year the money was used or discussed, as values also change between the 1760s and 1800.

^c Great Queen St and Queen St are in different parts of London.



Figure 5 - Locations in London near Edward Rainbow’s home

Map from 2022 map marked with **approximate** locations in 1800

1. Edward Rainbow house
2. St James Garlickhythe
3. Apprenticeship
4. Three Cranes Tavern
5. William Thomas Rainbow house
6. St Thomas the Apostle

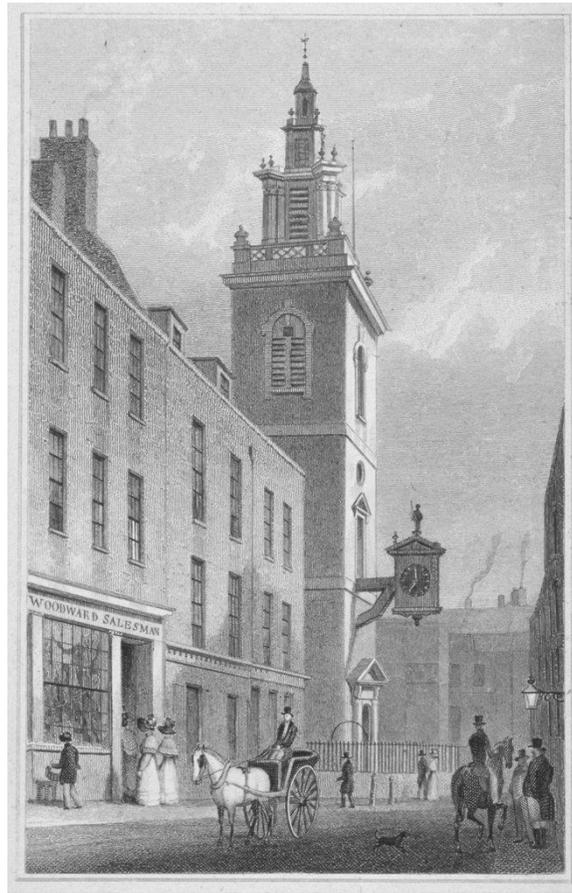
The City of London

The Rainbows lived within The City, a special area within greater London, with deep historical roots. Originally, it was bounded by the Roman Wall which encircled an area on the north bank of the Thames. Now the phrase refers to an area of roughly one square mile, with boundaries just east of the Tower of London, just north of the Barbican and Smithfield, and just west of St Paul's Cathedral.

During the medieval period, The City was granted special privileges by several kings that gave it more independence than most counties in England. The Lord Mayor and his council controlled The City. The City included many tradespeople and merchants and the guilds that represented them. Many of the Lord Mayors of The City were wealthy tradesmen.

The City was a densely packed area, with few open spaces. Most of the London banks were in The City, as was Smithfield Market. The Old Bailey Court and Newgate prison were in the centre of The City. On the southern edge of The City was the Thames, with dozens of wharves for the transfer of goods. These wharves were the principal places for delivery of goods in the 1700s. The large wharf complexes like the East India Docks and the Isle of Dogs, were not built until the 1800s. This meant that Queen St, where Edward and his family lived, was in an area filled with merchants and sailors, crews removing goods from the ships, and heavy wagons bumping along the narrow streets.

Most of the buildings in the area were less than 100 years old. The 1666 Great Fire of London destroyed many of the medieval buildings in the area, including homes, workshops, guild halls, and churches. The City lost 86 of its churches in the fire, of which roughly 50 were rebuilt. The principal architect for the rebuilt churches was Sir Christopher Wren, who also designed and supervised the building of St Paul's Cathedral. The Rainbow family's parish church, St James Garlickhythe, was one of Wren's designs.



**Figure 6 – St James Garlickhythe at the base of Garlick Hill
The church has a large clock.**

In the aftermath of the Great Fire of London, laws were made to control the rebuilding of The City.¹⁵ These laws included basic standards of what should be built, depending on the type of street where the building was located. They also required buildings to be built of brick or stone to reduce the chance of a fire spreading. Though we do not know exactly what Edward's home at 32 Queen St looked like, it probably followed the pattern of many other houses in the streets nearby.

The house probably had a basement, two or more storeys, with each storey being at least nine feet high, and a garret. The ground floor housed the kitchen and probably a common room for the family. If any goods were sold on the premises, the space for display and sales would have been on the ground floor. The first floor typically had bedrooms. There might have been further bedrooms on the second floor, and possibly storage for goods. A garret on the top might be used for servant's sleeping quarters and further storage.^a

^a There is an [image of Queen St](#) from 1818 on the *London Picture Archive* website because of copyright restrictions. Go to the website and view it. Edward's house may have been one of the narrow buildings or was very similar. To them.

The house on Queen St had a workshop behind the main building, where the dyeing was probably done.¹⁶ There may have been other outbuildings or storage areas.

Based on a London directory from 1786, we see a mix of tradespeople living on Queen St and on Garlick Hill, a street that ran parallel to Queen St. In these six blocks there was a sugar refiner, stationer, ironmonger, apothecary, insurance broker, and various types of merchants. Some places had trades that seem unusual now, including a lead and shot merchant, indigo and mustard makers, and a “drysalter”, who sold chemicals and dyes.¹⁷ Perhaps Edward visited the drysalter for dyes or for chemicals used to ensure the dye set into the cloth.



**Figure 7 – Buildings built after the Great Fire
Beaufort Buildings looking towards the Strand, 1765**

The house on Queen St was less than a mile away from Smithfield meat market and Billingsgate, London’s large fish market. The Poultry market was even closer, less than a quarter of a mile, about a 5-minute walk up Queen St and then right on to Cheapside St. There were often smaller markets near the main markets that sold other foods and household goods.

Food sellers also had stalls or shops. There was a fish stall near the Dog Tavern on Garlick Hill.¹⁸ There were also street vendors and hawkers, who moved about selling many kinds of food. Milk and butter were usually brought in from the countryside and sold by street vendors. Hawkers also sold prepared foods, such as sausages, gingerbread (a popular treat of the period), and meat pies.

The City had inns and taverns in abundance, serving a wide range of clients, from the poor day workers to well-to-do gentlemen. They were a place for socialising and conducting business, offering food and a variety of alcoholic beverages from beer and gin to mulled wine and flip, which was a strongly alcoholic egg-based drink.

One tavern close to Edward's house on Queen St was the Three Cranes, on Thames St. Though the tavern's sign showed three birds, the origin of the name was three tall wooden cranes on the wharf nearby that unloaded goods from ships. Queen St was in Vintry Ward, so named because the wharves in that area were the traditional location of the delivery of Bordeaux wines. Near the wharves of the area were large storage facilities for wine.

The Three Cranes tavern was well known and popular, referenced in a play by Ben Jonson in 1614.¹⁹ Diarist Samuel Pepys had a meal with some unlikeable relatives there in January of 1661.²⁰ By the time of Edward Rainbow, the Three Cranes was an ancient landmark. Perhaps he had a pint of beer there from time to time.

In imagining Edward Rainbow's life from 1762 to the early 1800s, we should visualize a densely populated urban setting. People on the street included street vendors loudly hawking goods from a barrow, tray, or cart. There were workers, bankers, and guild craftsmen. There were foul smells from manufacturing, debris, and waste in the streets. If your house was close to the Thames, as Edward's was, the river could produce noxious smells and offer up strange, discarded objects to the shore, including the occasional corpse. Horse drawn carts and carriages blocked the narrow streets.

The well-to-do were also in the area, purchasing silks and other luxuries, visiting a tavern or coffeehouse, or doing business at banks. The servants of the wealthy were also about, running errands, carrying messages, and shopping at the meat, fish, and food markets of the area.

Trade was the focus of most residents of The City. They manufactured goods, bought and sold food and raw materials, and ran services from inns and taverns to banks. Despite the large population, many people knew each other, interacting regularly. The connections were made through their parish, their guild, their extended family, and those they did business with, whether fellow tradesmen or customers.

Bankruptcy

By 1774, Edward had established his own business. He took on one apprentice in that year, and another in 1776.²¹ Edward also entered into a partnership with John Cocker, another silk dyer, who worked close by and worshipped at the same church as Edward. They had been apprenticed to the same master and had known each other for years. There are no details of their partnership, but they could have shared work, apprentices, or perhaps specialized in different aspects of the dyeing process.

In May of 1776, Edward was declared a bankrupt.²² The term bankrupt was used quite differently in 1770s England than it is used now, though it had a similar goal - the repaying of debts.

At that time, bankruptcy was only for people who were engaged in buying and selling, which included merchants and craftsmen. They had to be at least £200 in debt (about £28,660 now) and owed at least £100 (about £14,330 now) to one creditor.²³ In England in the 1770s there were around 470 bankruptcies a year, most of them in London. A bankruptcy was initiated by one or more creditors, not by the person who owed money. After the creditors filed a bankruptcy claim, it was reviewed by a government bankruptcy officer, and a Certificate of Bankruptcy was issued. A notice was posted in the *London Gazette*, which was an authoritative source of business-related announcements. This is still true today. Notices might also be posted on the door of the bankrupt person, alerting neighbours and others that he was in financial trouble.

Bankruptcy was seen as a disgraceful state. People tended to assume bad things about bankrupts - that they were spendthrifts, poor managers of money, or speculators. There was a growing awareness that some bankruptcies were based on bad luck, such as financial downturn, or a fire that had destroyed a workshop or goods, but in general, a bankrupt was treated with scorn and distaste.

The only information that we have about Edward's bankruptcy is the publication of some notices in the *London Gazette*²⁴ and other business journals. These notices are in a standard format and provide very little detailed information other than the status of the bankruptcy. There is no way to know the circumstances that led to Edward's debt, nor who his creditors were. There had been a severe financial crisis in 1772, with over 30 banks in Europe failing, which may have contributed to Edward's problems.

The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

From Tuesday May 21, to Saturday May 25, 1776.

Westminster, May 23.

THIS Day His Majesty came to the House of Peers, and being in His Royal Robes seated on the Throne with the usual Solemnity, Sir Francis Molyneux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, was sent with a Message from His Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their Attendance in the House of Peers: The Commons being come thither accordingly, His Majesty was pleased to give the Royal

acceptable to Me, as you have shewn, in the Manner of raising them, an equal Regard to the Exigencies of the Service, and the Ease of My People; and you may be assured, that the Confidence you repose in Me shall be used with proper Frugality, and applied only to the Purposes for which it was intended.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

We are engaged in a great National Cause, the Prosecution of which must inevitably be attended

Figure 8 - Front page of the London Gazette May 21-25, 1776, the edition which includes Edward's bankruptcy.

The notice of Edward's bankruptcy as it appeared in a list of bankruptcies.

WHereas the acting Commissioners in the Commission of Bankrupt awarded against Edward Rainbow, late of Queen-street, Cheapside, London, Silkman, have certified to the Right Hon. Henry Earl Bathurst, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, that said Edward Rainbow hath in all Things conformed himself according to the Directions of the several Acts of Parliament made concerning Bankrupts; This is to give Notice, that, by virtue of an Act passed in the Fifth Year of his late Majesty's Reign, his Certificate will be allowed and confirmed as the said Act directs, unless Cause be shewn to the contrary on or before the 15th of June next.

Figure 9 - Notice of Edward Rainbow's bankruptcy
The London Gazette May 21, 1776

Transcript

Whereas the acting Commissioners in the Commission of Bankrupt awarded against Edward Rainbow, late^a of Queen-Street, Cheapside, London, Silkman, have certified to the Right Hon. Henry Earl Bathurst, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, that said Edward Rainbow hath in all Things conformed himself according to the Directions of the several Acts of Parliament made concerning Bankrupts; This is to give Notice, that, by virtue of an Act passed in the Fifth Year of his late Majesty's Reign, his Certificate will be allowed and confirmed as the said Act directs unless Cause be shewn to the contrary on or before the 15th of June next.

^a Can mean recently or formerly. Land tax records show Edward was on Queen St. in 1776.

After the initial step of posting the bankruptcy, creditors attended meetings to provide details of what they were owed. Edward was required to provide an inventory of all his assets and debts. These meetings sometimes took place in Guildhall, or in local coffee shops or taverns. Amusingly, the Rainbow Coffeehouse was a popular meeting place for such events. It made searching for information about Edward Rainbow much harder! The Rainbow Coffeehouse had no association with any Rainbow family.²⁵

Once all the debts and assets were determined, the Commissioners determined what each creditor would receive. Naturally, some creditors felt their claim should be paid before other claims, so the assignment of assets was frequently a long and argumentative process. When the process was complete, agents^b were appointed to gather the assets and repay the creditors. The agents were responsible for selling household items, assigning any income the bankrupt had, and distributing payments to the creditors.

With this process in place, what happened to Edward and his family? They probably lost nearly everything they owned. Personal possessions, from clothes to cooking pans to beds, were taken and sold. If Mary, Edward's wife, had any money or possessions that were her own, such as a family Bible or a piece of jewelry that had been her mother's, those items were also taken. All the tools and materials for the silk dyeing business were taken to pay the debts. The agents' goal was to collect everything that they could to repay the creditors.

Completing Edward's bankruptcy process took four years, from 1776 to 1780, when there was the final distribution of assets to creditors.²⁶ Under the terms of bankruptcy Edward could continue to work and run his business, though he had to raise money to restock what he needed. Perhaps he worked for another dyer, such as his partner John Cocker, and earned a wage. Sometimes bankrupts were allowed to keep a small amount of the assets, less than 3%, to help the family.

Land tax records show the Rainbows were living on Queen St in 1776 and in the spring of 1777, but in December of 1777, when their next child, Thomas Edward, was born, he was baptised in the parish of St Marylebone, three miles away from Queen St, or about an hour's walk.²⁷ There are no land tax records for Queen St in 1778 or 1779, but in 1780 Edward paid land tax on the Queen St house.²⁸ The family may have moved out of Queen Street after the bankruptcy or Edward may have lodged near Queen St and the rest of the family moved, possibly to be with friends or relatives.^c

^b Legally referred to as assignees. Sometimes the creditors appointed themselves as agents.

^c One member of the parish of St Marylebone was a man called Robert Rainbow. In 1800, Edward's son William Thomas married Robert's daughter Lucy.

Middle Years

Edward continued in silk dyeing, and his dyeing business appeared in business directories of the time. In January of 1781, Patrick Norris, one of Edward's apprentices, tried to steal sewing silk from the Rainbow house. Norris was tried at the Old Bailey, and Edward and his partner John Cocker testified that Norris had taken sewing silk worth £3 (about £400 now). Norris was very drunk when he took the silk, and several other apprentices substantiated the story. He was found guilty and imprisoned for 6 months. He did not complete his apprenticeship with Edward. A transcript of the trial is in [Appendix B: 1782 Apprentice Trial](#).

A few months later, in May of 1781, Edward and his partner Cocker dissolved their partnership, with any debts due to be paid to their joint business going to Cocker.²⁹ The reasons for ending their relationship are unknown but might have been related to Edward's bankruptcy. Cocker also became a bankrupt in 1784.³⁰

Edward served on a jury in April of 1782, and on an inquest in 1796, suggesting he was a man of "good repute".³¹ The jurymen who heard trials were typically well-known men of the community. They might be merchants, master craftsmen, and other respectable people with a trade or income. The lower-class workers, day laborers, porters and other men without property did not serve on juries.

In 1782, Edward apprenticed his nephew Stephen Archer, son of his sister Elizabeth.³² Stephen did not join the Dyer's Guild, so he was unlikely to have completed his apprenticeship. In 1783, Edward took on a new apprentice.³³ Edward's sons were probably working in the dyehouse as well.

There were three ways to join a guild. The most common way was through *apprenticeship*. The second was an application through *patrimony*. If the son of a guild member applied for entry into the guild of his father, he usually was granted entry. The assumption was that his father had taught him the skills of his trade, and no specific apprenticeship was required. Edward's son, William Thomas, was admitted to the Dyer's guild in 1799 by patrimony.³⁴ In documents from the 1800s, his son Edward was also referred to as a dyer, but there is no documentation for his entry into the Dyers' Guild. Joseph, another son, was apprenticed to a fishmonger in 1791.³⁵ He was still working as a fishmonger as late as 1837.

The third way of entering a guild was through *redemption*. The applicant would pay a large fee to the Guild, and if his application was approved by the members, he became a guild member. This approach was originally intended for tradesmen who had learned their craft elsewhere, such as France or Holland, but who had now moved to London. By the 1700s, it was also used by wealthy men who sought out the privileges of being a guild member. Some guilds were treated mostly as social groups, or as one author put it, "little more than gentleman's clubs".³⁶

In 1787, Edward's brother John entered the Company of Wheelwrights, paying a fee of 46 shillings and 8 pence (about £315 now).³⁷ John was 47 years old when he entered the guild. It is unlikely that he was seized with a desire to make wheels at that age, and so he probably joined for the social benefits of guild membership. Nothing is known about John's occupation, but based on his will, which was probated in 1816, he was a well-to-do man.³⁸ He had properties in three different locations for which he collected rent, established an annuity of £50 (about £4,072 now) for his wife, and bequeathed about £200 pounds (about £16,290 now) to be distributed among six people.

The years 1799 and 1800 contained several significant events for the Rainbow family. In 1799, Edward's son William Thomas became a member of the Dyers' Guild. He was 22 years old.³⁹

In the following year, 1800, two of Edward's sons married. In April, Joseph Rainbow married Amelia Mullins in St George the Martyr Church.⁴⁰ He was 24 years old, and she was 20. Two months later, William Thomas Rainbow, age 23, married Lucy Rainbow. Lucy was the 18-year-old daughter of Robert Rainbow (no known relation to Edward) and his wife Ann.⁴¹ Edward rented a house for the couple on College Hill St, one street away from his home on Queen St. As a new member of the Dyers' Guild, William Thomas worked in the family business.

On July 10, 1800, Edward's wife Mary was run over by a carriage, and was seen by a surgeon.⁴² It is reasonable to assume she had some serious injuries. Her accident was probably overshadowed by the events of the next few days when Edward and William Thomas were accused of receiving stolen silk.

Theft

In July of 1800,^a Edward and his son William Thomas were charged with receiving stolen goods, about 271 pounds of valuable silk.⁴³ In William Thomas' house, bundles of silk were found that matched silk that had been stolen on July 11 from a silk merchant. There were money transactions that linked Edward to the purchase of the silk from the thieves. The two Rainbow men were taken to Poultry Compter, a gaol less than a quarter of a mile from the family house on Queen St.

The information in this chapter and the next is based primarily on the trial transcript, which is available on [The Old Bailey](#) website. The full transcript is also available in [Appendix C: 1800 Silk Theft Trial Transcript](#).^b

At about 6:15 on the morning of July 11, 1800, a silk merchant named James Lambe was awakened by an anxious servant. Lambe had two business partners, Edward Haycock and Thomas Lambe, who lived in the same house. Lambe's house was in The City, not far from St. Paul's Cathedral. Like many merchants, his home was also his place of business, and silk was stored in his cellar.

Going to the main part of the house, James Lambe discovered that the rear door had been forced open and the lock on the cellar door had been broken. A window which was locked each night had been opened, and there were footprints on the windowsill. When Lambe searched the cellar, he discovered a large quantity of silk was gone.

Lambe described the missing silk as being in large bundles about three feet wide and four and a half feet high, each wrapped in hemp bags. There were five of these bundles, three of which weighed over 100 pounds. In total, about 444 pounds of silk was taken. The value of the missing silk was estimated at £696 (about £60,000 now).^c

A grocer who was a neighbour to the silk merchant Lambe was awake early on that morning. Sometime between 4 AM and 5 AM, he saw a green cart parked at the end of Lambe's street. There were two men with the cart, one in a blue coat and one in a light-coloured coat.

Another early riser, a jeweller, connected the large bags of silk to two men named John Price and John Robinson. The jeweller had a window overlooking John Price's home. Around 5 AM on the morning of the theft, he saw John Price and another man in Price's yard. A few minutes later John Robinson arrived in a green cart, and the three men unloaded five bags of goods that the jeweller said were "soft". Price's home was less than a mile from the place of the theft, and it would have taken less than a half an hour to travel from the silk merchant's house to Price's yard.

By the next day, investigators were focused on Price and Robinson. They searched Price's home and found some knives, forks, and tablecloths. The investigators believed these items were stolen. They also found a drill which might have been used in the break-in, and some wet bags, which may have been the hemp bags in which the stolen silk was wrapped.

^a The arrest was on July 14th or 15th.

^b Since the text is available as an appendix, there are no endnotes for each fact stated in this chapter and the next.

^c There are discrepancies between various records for the weight and value of the silk. The weights and values given in the trial charges are used in this document. Even within the trial testimony, there are discrepancies; the key point is there was a large quantity of valuable silk stolen.

Price arrived while the investigators were still at his house. One of the investigators described what happened next:

I immediately took him into his own house; I searched him, I observed his left-hand come quick from his pocket; I immediately seized his hand, and found it clenched very tight, I got his hand open; says I, Jack, what have you got in your hand, I must see; upon that I opened it by main strength; and in his hand I found a Banknote of fifty pounds. (About £4,295 now.)

The £50 banknote was from a private bank, Walpole and Co. Robinson then arrived at Price's home. He had £65 in his pocket, which he claimed he made as a private soap maker. Private soap makers manufactured and sold soap without paying the required high taxes on their soap. In total, the investigators took £115 (about £9,878 now) from the two men. For comparison, Edward Rainbow paid £14 in annual rent.⁴⁴

The men were arrested for the theft of the silk, and were taken to Poultry Compter. The gaol housed debtors as well people arrested for drunkenness, prostitution, and other minor crimes.

After the arrests, the neighbour who was the grocer who lived near Lambe's house and had seen a cart in the early morning was asked to look at Price and Robinson to see if he could identify them. On viewing the men, he said that he had only seen their backs, but noted that that Price's coat looked similar to the light-coloured coat he saw on one of the men near the green cart parked by Lambe's house.

The jeweller who lived near Price, and had seen the arrival of a green cart on the morning of the theft, reported that later that same day he saw:

[A] genteel man in black, with his hair powdered, go backwards and forwards two or three times in the afternoon before the first bag went away.

This might have been someone organizing the sale of the silk. The jeweller also testified:

About four o'clock I observed Price go out with a white apron on, like a porter, and Robinson, and this other man ...in their shirt sleeves, each of them with one of those bags upon their shoulders....

A neighbour who lived next door to the Rainbows also provided some interesting details. He said that he had seen William Thomas Rainbow arrive at the Rainbow home in a hackney carriage on the afternoon of July 11, the day of the silk theft. William Thomas pushed a bale of goods out of the carriage. No one gave evidence to show what was in this bale of goods.

The money that the thieves had with them when arrested became a vital clue that eventually linked Edward Rainbow to the silk theft. Much of the paper currency of the period consisted of banknotes issued by private banks. Bank clerks recorded the transactions when receiving or dispensing banknotes, including the unique serial number on each banknote.



**Figure 10 - Example of a banknote from Gloucester Old Bank
Its serial number is 662**

The £50 note that Price had when he was taken into custody was issued by Walpole and Co. and had the serial number 2625. According to Walpole and Co., the recipient of this note was Joseph Frith, who had received it on July 11, the day of the robbery.

When John Robinson was arrested, he had £65 in notes issued by the Bank of England.⁴⁵ The bank had given three of these notes to a customer who gave his name as “John Rogers”. “Rogers” had given the Bank of England clerk a £100 note from Walpole and Co., and had received several £20, £10, and £5 notes in exchange. The serial number of the Walpole and Co. banknote presented by “Rogers” had also been issued to Joseph Frith on July 11th.

Investigation showed no one named “John Rogers” was known at the address that was given during the exchange. Investigators assumed that since Robinson had notes from the Bank of England that were the same as those given to “John Rogers”, Robinson had used an alias, using a name with the same initials as his own.

Thus, both robbers had notes that could be traced to Joseph Frith. Joseph Frith was a schoolmaster and a friend of Edward Rainbow. Edward stated at the trial he had borrowed £200 (about £17,180 now) from Frith. On July 11, the day of the robbery, Frith obtained £150 from Walpole and Co., and then wrote the name of the bank on the banknotes. Frith then gave £150 in banknotes to Edward Rainbow, along with another £50. When Frith was shown the two Walpole and Co. notes (one in Price’s possession, the one exchanged for small notes at the Bank of England), Frith testified that it was his handwriting on the two banknotes.

The timing of events is important. Frith withdrew money from Walpole and Co. and gave it to Edward Rainbow on July 11, the same day as the robbery. Price and Robinson were taken into custody the evening of the next day, July 12, making it unlikely they had received the banknotes by some coincidence.

The next page has a diagram showing the transfer of money from Firth to Edward Rainbow to the thieves.

Money Flow to the Thieves

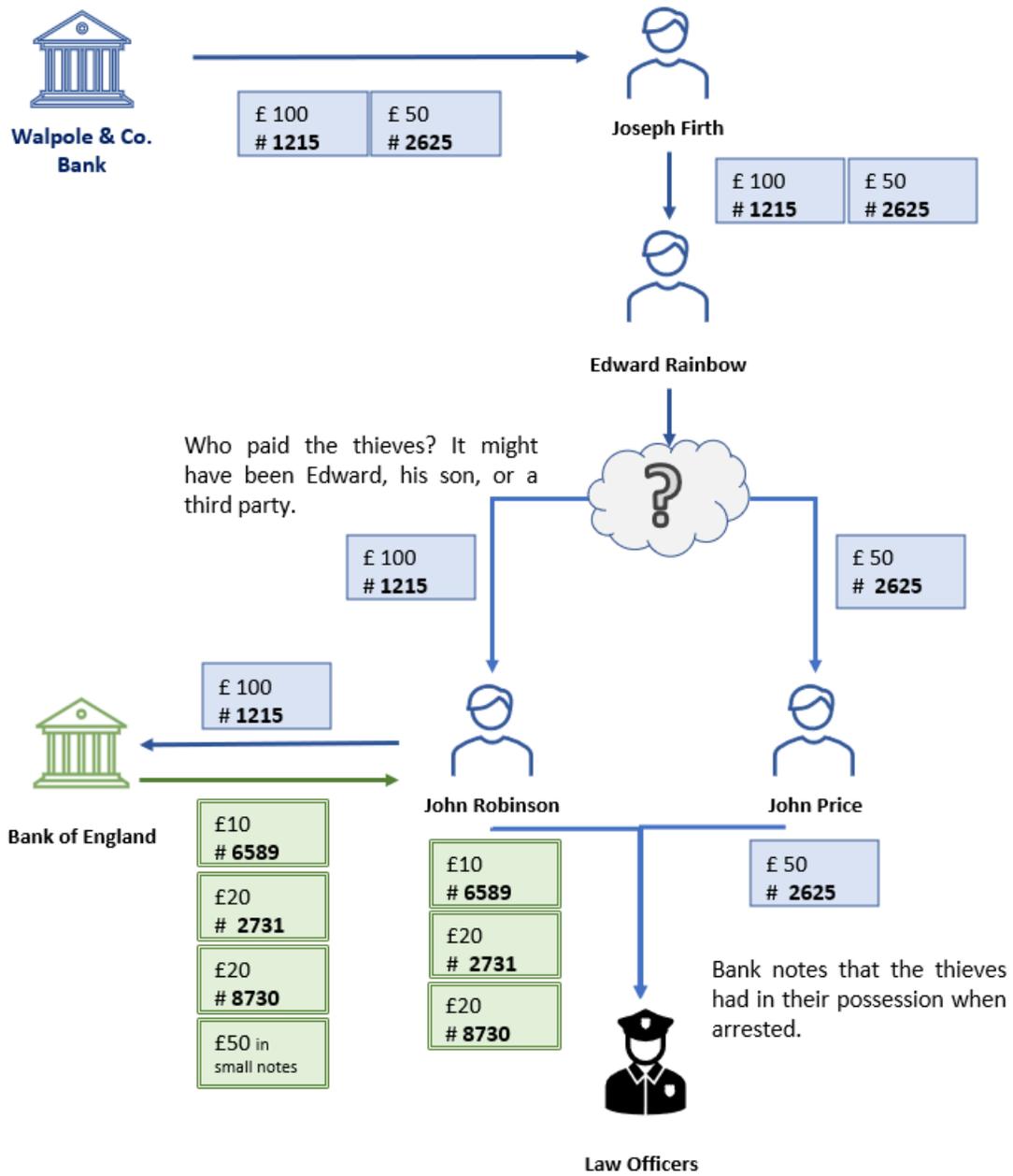


Figure 11 – Money flow to the thieves

Those investigating the theft called on Edward Rainbow to ask him about his involvement. At first, he denied any knowledge of the banknotes or the silk. When asked about whether he had any £50 note recently, Edward said he knew nothing about that. When he was reminded that he received some money from his friend Mr. Frith, he then recalled that he had gotten a £50 note from Mr. Frith, as part of the £200 Mr. Frith lent him.

Edward said that a man named Burdett had showed him a silk sample, and that he had given Burdett £200 to purchase the silk. The investigators asked Edward to show them the silk and he replied he had not received it yet.

An investigator commented at the trial:

I told him [Edward] I thought it a little mysterious that a man like Mr. Rainbow should pay £200 without seeing the quantity of silk or the quality... he strictly denied, upon his honour, that he had received the silk.

After further questions Edward changed his story. He said he had some silk, and that his son William Thomas should take the investigator to William Thomas' house, where it was stored. The house was empty except for a caretaker. Edward had rented this house for William Thomas and his new wife, but they had not yet moved in. William Thomas took the investigator to his house, which was located on the next street. William Thomas led the investigators upstairs and unlocked a cupboard, where about 271 pounds of silk was stored.

When the silk was examined by John Lambe and his two partners, the victims of the theft, they identified one silk bundle as definitely part of their stock because it was "peculiar" and was in less than excellent condition.

Edward and William Thomas were also taken into custody and brought to Poultry Compter.



Figure – 12 Silk theft locations

Map based on 2022 map marked with **approximate** locations in 1800

1. Silk theft at James Lambe's house
2. Price's house
3. Edward Rainbow house
4. William Thomas Rainbow house
5. Poultry Compter (gaol)
6. Newgate Prison
7. Old Bailey

Trial

Poultry Compter was a dirty and brutish place. Death from contagious disease was a constant problem because of overcrowding and filth, and there were frequent petitions to the Government for improvement of the conditions.

A prisoner was responsible for paying for all his needs, including food and drink, bedding, clothing, and medicines. The sheriff and his staff provided these items for a fee, or the prisoner's family could also deliver them. Each approach had problems. The sheriff could demand ever-rising fees for common items of low quality. On the other hand, food handed over to the gaolers by the family might not make it to the prisoner if the guards were hungry. A wool coat might also "get lost" on the way to its intended owner. Since Edward's family was a short walk away, it is possible that they brought him and William Thomas food regularly.

On August 28, 1800, about six weeks after his arrest, while he was still in gaol, Edward signed a Deed of Trust, turning his assets over to a pair of merchants, the Favencs.⁴⁶ A Deed of Trust transferred the legal management of a person's property to a trustee while he was unable to manage it. A common model for this was that the person received a sum of money, essentially a loan, from the trustee, with the property as collateral. When the money was repaid, the property would be returned. Edward may have needed money quickly to cover expenses, as he and his son were unable to work. They may have needed ready money for defence in their case and for the costs of being fed and sheltered in the gaol.

On September 12 Edward and William Thomas, along with the accused thieves John Price and John Robinson, were transferred to Newgate Prison in preparation for their trial.⁴⁷ The charges against them were serious, and all four could be hanged for their alleged crimes. There is a brief description of Edward in these records. He was described as having grey hair and grey eyes, being about 5 foot 6 inches tall.

The trial was held in the Old Bailey on September 17, 1800, in front of a jury. Generally, trials were quick, the assumption being that if someone was being brought to trial, it was probable he or she was guilty. Trials were held quarterly, and a group of twelve jurymen heard many cases over the session, which was usually four to five days long. Jurymen were men with money, at least £100 in property, or £50 in leasehold.⁴⁸ Such men were typically not lenient in cases of property theft.

There were about 145 trials held on September 17 at the Old Bailey, being heard by three juries. The transcript of this trial was much longer than most other trials that day. Many of the trials were quite quick and generated very short transcripts – 86% of the transcripts were two pages or less. The transcript for the trial of Edward Rainbow and the other men was 15 pages long.⁴⁹ The stolen silk was in this case valued at £696, and there was far more testimony and evidence than most trials.

Many of the trials were for the thefts of items worth less than a pound. The crimes were often crimes of opportunity, stealing a silk handkerchief, sheets from bed at an inn, or a silver spoon. In [Appendix B: 1782 Apprentice Trial](#) there is brief trial transcript about the theft of some silk thread by one of Edward Rainbow's apprentices. Many of the trial transcripts were like that of the apprentice.

At the trial, the prosecution linked together testimony about John Price and John Robinson to show they were the likely thieves. The appearance of a green cart near the scene of the crime and that a

green cart was seen in Price's yard with bags that looked "soft" on the day of theft strongly suggested their involvement. Both men were carrying large sums of money, which also suggested that they were involved in something illicit. Robinson's claim that he had made £65 pounds as a private soap maker was inconsistent with the profit someone could make by selling soap, nor did anyone testify that that he made soap. The connection between the thieves and the Rainbows was further supported by the money trail of banknotes from the Walpole & Co. bank to Frith to Edward to the robbers. There is little defence recorded in the trial transcript for the two accused thieves.

The discovery of silk at William Thomas Rainbow's house, which could be identified as part of the stolen goods, linked the Rainbows to Price and Robinson. At the trial, Lambe, the silk merchant, testified.

Q. Be so good as look at that silk are you able to say that that is a parcel of the silk taken from your house?

A. (Lambe) Yes, I am. ...I firmly believe it is the identical silk; I saw the other bags ... but I cannot speak to them so positively as I can to this.

There was additional evidence. At the trial, Edward's servant testified he moved the silk from Edward's house to William Thomas' house on Edward's instructions. This confirmed that Edward knew about the silk.

When Edward testified, he blamed a sheriff's officer named Burdett for his possession of the silk. He claimed that Burdett offered to sell him smuggled silk, which had no import taxes paid on it. Burdett did not appear at the trial, as he had fled and could not be found. Without him, there was no one to confirm or deny Edward's account.

Edward claimed:

I never had the smallest suspicion of it [the silk] having been stolen; I never had my name called in question before.

The core of Edward's defence was that Burdett was the real villain who had acquired the stolen silk and sold it to Edward by misrepresenting it as *smuggled* silk. Thus, Edward confessed to a crime with which he *was not* charged; being in possession of smuggled silk. This defence strategy was strangely logical. The penalty for having smuggled silk was a large fine, while the punishment for receiving stolen goods was death. By claiming he had committed a lesser crime, and trying to blame Burdett, Edward probably hoped to avoid a possible death sentence.

Britain had fiercely protected its silk industry with tariffs. Since the early 1700s, an ever-changing body of laws governed the collection of tariffs on foreign silk imports. Since silk was easily transported and selling it was highly profitable, smuggling was common. Sailors and merchants of the East Indian Company often hid parcels of silk on their voyages home, looking to supplement their income. French and Italian silks were shipped in small boats to the many smugglers' coves on the coasts of Britain. Edward's claim that he thought he was getting smuggled goods would have sounded plausible to the jurors.

The rest of Edward's defence was based on his good character. Twenty-four people were called to testify to Edward Rainbow's good name. It was claimed that there were another 180 people who were also willing to testify for him. The schoolteacher Frith, from whom Edward had borrowed the money to buy silk, was questioned about Edward's character.

Q. If you had not the highest opinion of Mr. Rainbow's integrity you would not have lent him the money?

A. (Frith) Certainly not; I have known him fourteen years; I should as soon suspect you now to be guilty of the foul crime of murder, as Mr. Rainbow be guilty of any thing dishonourable.

Edward's son William Thomas gave a simple defence, that as he was a loyal son and employee, he did what his father told him to do. He said:

I served my time to my father, and have been servant to him ever since; I could not conceive, nor do I believe that my father was a person who could do that which was wrong, or which could implicate him, who must be the dearest to him, his son. ... I was only his servant, and acted under my father's direction...

Several people were asked to testify that William Thomas was his father's "servant".

At the conclusion of the evidence, the jury discussed the case for a half hour and then returned the verdicts.

John Price and John Robinson were found guilty of the theft of the silk and sentenced to hang. They were imprisoned in Newgate Prison and were hanged several weeks later, on November 12, 1800.

Edward Rainbow was found guilty of receiving stolen goods and sentenced to 14 years of transportation. William Thomas Rainbow was found not guilty.

In view of the evidence, the convictions seem to be justified. William Thomas was fortunate that the jury accepted his claim that he was simply following instructions from his father.

Aftermath

William Thomas was released on the day of the trial. Edward was returned to Newgate Prison. Eleven days later, he was moved from Newgate prison back to Poultry Compter. While a still a harsh place to live, conditions in Poultry Compter were less severe than in Newgate.

Although Edward had been sentenced to transportation for 14 years, he was never sent to Australia. Instead, he was pardoned nine months after his conviction.⁵⁰ The most probable reason was his age. Edward was 55 years old at the time of his conviction. In general, those who organized transportation wanted to send healthy young men and women to Australia as indentured servants. The men were often assigned to hard labour - clearing land, digging mines, or building roads. Anyone over 50 was considered far too old to be sent.

This was probably why Edward was not quickly transported. It does not explain why he was pardoned, rather than being given an alternative sentence. There was a pardon process, and Edward's friends, family, or fellow guild members may have petitioned for his release. They may have argued that one impulsive mistake for a man who had an otherwise good reputation should be absolved. Whatever the reason, he was released from Poultry Compter in July of 1801.

Sometime in 1801, Edward and his family left their home on Queen St.⁵¹ The rental of the property on College Hill St for his son William Thomas was also discontinued in the same year. Where Edward and his wife lived after leaving Queen St is unknown. They may have lived with one of their sons, or with other family members. This must have been very hard for the family. Edward had lived in this area since his apprenticeship in 1762, almost 40 years before.

Edward was unable to redeem his property that he had signed over by Deed of Trust to the Favencs.⁵² As a result, Edward lost all of his tools, vats, and other equipment that let him and his son William Thomas work as silk dyers. If William Thomas did continue working as a dyer, it would have been as a journeyman. The Favencs paid off Edward's creditors for many years - the last payment was made in 1806.⁵³

It is unclear why Edward decided to buy stolen goods. Perhaps he really did not know the silk was stolen and thought it was only smuggled. He may have dabbled in illegal schemes for years. It is also possible that this was his first foray into crime. He seems to have had a good reputation, with so many people willing to testify on his behalf at the trial. Edward's trial and conviction changed his life forever. He lost almost everything he owned, and his personal reputation was irreparably damaged. He was 56 years old when he was released.

It is possible that Edward was under financial pressure. Two of his sons had married that year, and he had just rented a home for one of them on College Hill St, near his own home. A new style of women's dresses in muslin (what would now be called Regency or Empire style dresses) was increasing the desire for finely woven cotton, which reduced the demand for silk. Reduced demand for silk may have put stress on Edward's business.



Figure 13 - Muslin dress, made of cotton, not silk

Edward's wife Mary died in 1807 and was buried in the parish church the family had attended for many years, St James Garlickhythe.⁵⁴ Edward Rainbow died in 1827, 82 years old. He was buried at St Luke, Chelsea.⁵⁵

The final years of Edward's life shows how hard it is to put together the story of a working man in this period. While there are some records that point to key events in Edward's life, such as bankruptcy and an accusation of theft, we do not know what happened next.

Similarly, the kind of records that are available do not tell us much about Edward as a person. Was he a cheerful person with a good sense of humour or a stern and strict master? Was he a clever businessman or was he lured into bad investments by others? We do not know anything about his relationships with his siblings, wife, or children.

I do think there are hints that he formed friendships. In the 1770s, he had a partnership with John Cocker, with whom he was an apprentice. In 1800, Joseph Frith was willing to lend him the large sum of £200 on very short notice. Many people were willing to testify that he was a good man at his trial.

There are limits in genealogical research on what we can know. Edward's life is certainly a good example of those constraints. What is known gives us a glimpse into the life of a guildsman in London in the latter half of the 1700s.

Epilogue

What happened to Edward’s children? His first two sons, **John** and **Edward**, had died young, in the 1770s.

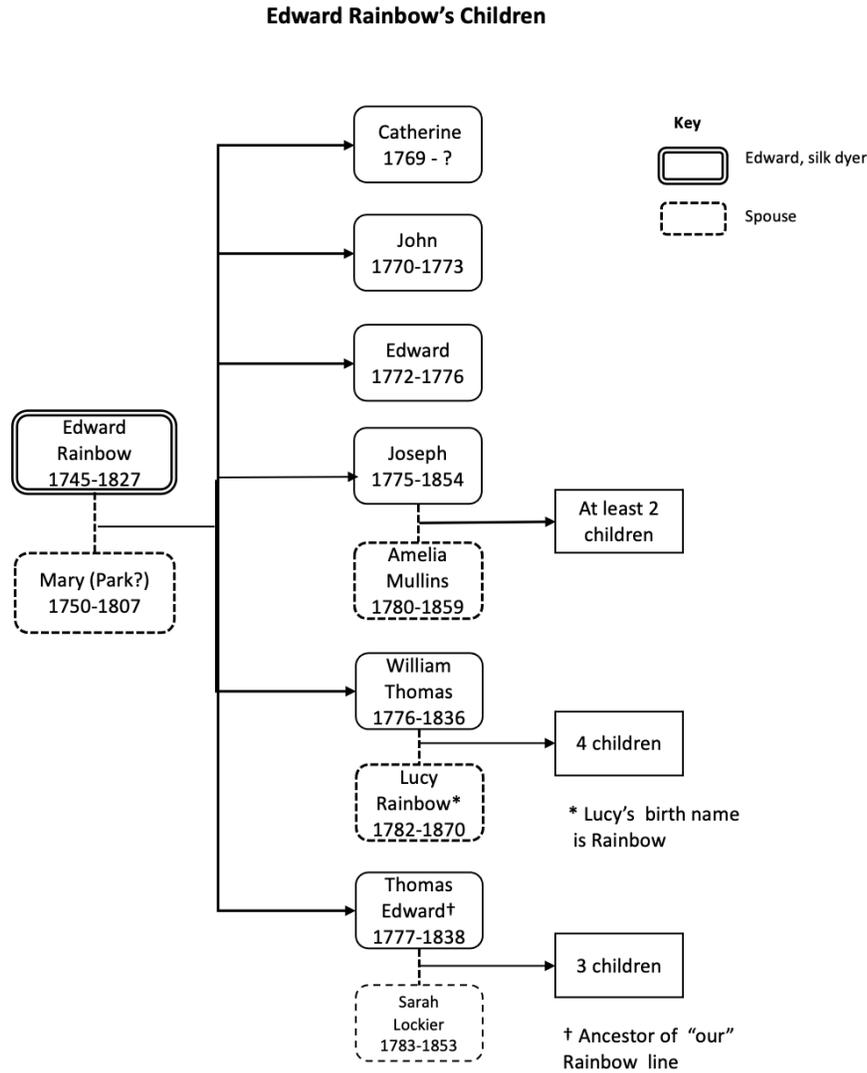


Figure 14 – Edward Rainbow’s children

Catherine Rainbow may have been Edward’s daughter. See [Appendix A: Edward's Marriage](#) for a fuller discussion. There are no marriage or burial records for her. The only information about Catherine is that she is mentioned in her uncle John Rainbow’s will, in which he left her £25 (about £2,036 now), and she is described as the daughter of Edward and Elizabeth Rainbow, late of Queen St. The will was probated in 1816.

Edward's son **Joseph** married Amelia Rebecca Mullins (1780-1859) on April 16, 1800, in London, several months before the silk theft. They had two children. He had apprenticed as a fishmonger and continued in that trade until at least 1837.⁵⁶

He died in 1854 and was buried in Norwood Cemetery, Lambeth. His wife Amelia was buried in 1859 in the same cemetery.⁵⁷

William Thomas, who was accused of receiving stolen goods with his father, had four children with his wife Lucy Rainbow (1782-1870). They had married just before the silk theft incident.

William Thomas lived in Chelsea after 1813.⁵⁸ He was a linen draper (a dry goods merchant). He went bankrupt, with the process starting in 1815. He was buried at St James Garlickhythe, the family church from his childhood, on April 7, 1836, though he was a member of the St Luke parish in Chelsea.⁵⁹

His wife Lucy lived out her later years (1841-1870) in a dyers' almshouse in St Luke parish in Chelsea. The Dyers' Guild sponsored homes for indigent family members of Guild dyers, and she died there in 1870.

Thomas Edward Rainbow was the youngest son of the family. He is the ancestor of Kenneth Rainbow. He went by the name Edward as an adult.

He married Sarah Lokier (1783-1853), in 1808 at St George Church, Bloomsbury. They had three children.

By 1813, Edward and his family were living in Chelsea, as their three children were baptised at St Luke, Chelsea. Oddly, all three children were baptised on the same day, on May 13, 1813, though they were born in 1804, 1805, and 1809. Edward is described as a dyer in their baptismal records, though it appears that he never was admitted to the Dyers Guild.⁶⁰

Edward probably died around 1838. There is a listing for an Edward Rainbow in the death index for 1838, in Richmond. Edward's son Elisha (also known as Ellis) lived in Richmond, so Edward may have been visiting or living with his son. His wife Sarah first appears a year later in directory listings as a grocer in 1839. She is listed by her own name, not her husband's, which suggests he had died. Edward is not listed in the 1841 census. Sarah died in 1853, and was buried at St. Luke, Chelsea.

Appendix A: Edward's Marriage

Mary was the name of Edward's wife, based on the baptismal records for their children.

There was a marriage between an Edward Rainbow and a Mary Park on August 18, 1765 in Southwark. Edward did not complete his apprenticeship until 1769, but under the terms of his apprenticeship he was not permitted to marry while an apprentice.

The evidence suggests that 1765 marriage was likely to be Edward's, though he was still an apprentice. I believe that Edward did marry Mary Park, but the evidence is not enough to be confident.

The details of the marriage are unusual. The banns (notices of the intention to marry) were posted in the parish of St Olave, Bermondsey. The marriage itself was performed in a different nearby parish, St Mary Magdalene.⁶¹ In both the banns and the marriage, Edward and Mary were described as "of this parish". It was odd that they were "of this parish" in two different parishes in a matter of weeks.

There were at least two other people named Edward Rainbow in London around 1765-1780, so Mary Park's marriage could be to a different person named Edward Rainbow. On the other hand, there are no additional marriage records in this period in London where an Edward Rainbow marries someone named Mary.

If we assume that Edward was allowed by his master to marry because of a pregnancy, then the banns being read in one church and the marriage performed in another makes some sense. There may have been an objection by the priest of the first church to performing a marriage for an unmarried pregnant woman, while the priest at the second parish either did not mind or did not know about the pregnancy. There are no records of the baptism of a child with the last name of Rainbow in 1765 to early 1766 in London. Mary might have miscarried, or the child died shortly after birth.

One other piece of evidence that supports the 1765 marriage of Edward and Mary Park is a birth record. Catherine Rainbow was born in April of 1769, in Wapping, four years after the marriage just described.⁶² Her parents are Edward and Mary Rainbow, and he is described as a *dyer*. The location is about a 20-minute walk away from where Edward was apprenticed. There were not many dyers, and the available records of the dyer's guild show only one Edward Rainbow.

There are no other records that can be clearly matched to Catherine Rainbow, such as marriage or burial records. But in a will probated in 1816, Edward's brother John leaves £25 to "my Niece Mary Catherine Rainbow the daughter of Edward and Mary Rainbow late of Queen Street Cheapside".⁶³ This may be the Catherine born to Edward and Mary Rainbow in 1769, who added Mary to her name later in her life.

If Edward did marry Mary Park, an additional complication arises. Which Mary Park? When Mary Rainbow died in 1807, her age was recorded as 57 years old, so she was born around 1750. She would have been about 15 when she married. Searching from 1748-1752 in the London area there are two candidates.

	Name	Baptism Date	Church	Parents	Parents' Address
1	Mary Park	Jan. 20, 1750	St Leonard's, Shoreditch	John and Edith	Hog's Lane Shoreditch
2	Mary Park	April 16, 1750	St Leonard's, Shoreditch	Richard and Mary	Daggets Court Shoreditch

At the marriage of Edward and Mary, one of the witnesses was John Park. Since that is the name of the father of the first Mary Park on the list above, she may be Edward's wife.

My assessment is that Edward Rainbow married Mary Park in 1765, while he was an apprentice. They had a child, Catherine, in 1769. Mary Park may have been the child of John and Edith Park, who lived in Hog's Lane Shoreditch. This is a case of circumstantial evidence, rather than a well-proved relationship.

Appendix B: 1782 Apprentice Trial

Court case of theft by Patrick Norris

22nd February 1781

Source: Old Bailey, see transcript and original

<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t17810222-51-victim573&div=t17810222-51#highlight>

182. PATRICK NORRIS otherwise NORTON was indicted for stealing two pounds and twelve ounces of sewing silk, value £3 the property of John Crocker and Edward Rainbow, January 20th

JOHN CROCKER sworn.

I am a silk-dyer, and am in partnership with Edward Rainbow. The prisoner has worked for me a year and half. On Saturday the 20th of January, at about a quarter after ten o'clock, my apprentice went down into the cellar to draw some beer; he returned very much frightened, and said there was a person in the house. I took a candle and went down and found the prisoner in the cellar. I brought him up; he appeared to be very much in liquor; he said he had got intoxicated, and fell asleep, and had never been out of the dye-house. I believed so at the time. There are utensils which are used in the dye-house in the cellar. I let him go, but one of my apprentices said he thought he had some silk about him, and they went after him and brought him back, and found some silk in the alley, and brought it in; then the prisoner owned the fact. He said it was the first time he had been guilty of such an offence, and begged I would let him go to sea. I told him if he would inform me who was the receiver I would do every thing I could to serve him.

(The silk was produced in court and deposed by the prosecutor.)

JAMES COLE sworn.

I am apprentice to Mr. Crocker. I went down into the cellar, about a quarter after ten o'clock, to draw some beer, and saw the prisoner run by the stair-foot into the cellar. I ran up and told my master. After he was gone out my fellow-apprentice said he thought he had some silk; and we went after him. I saw him secure the prisoner, and pick up the silk in the alley which the prisoner had gone through. He was brought in and I fetched a constable.

BENJAMIN WHITE sworn.

I am an apprentice to Mr. Crocker. I followed the prisoner and told him my master wanted him, and he came back with me into the dye-house, and stripped himself. My fellow-apprentice and I took a candle and went up the alley, and found the silk and brought it back.

PRISONER's DEFENCE.

I got in liquor; I went down to the necessary and fell asleep. My master came down and found me there. I did not take any silk; it is possible lying asleep some might stick to my clothes or buttons of my coat. Such a thing has happened. I never confessed taking it.

(The prisoner called two witnesses who gave him a good character.)

GUILTY. W. and Imp. 6 months.

Tried by the London Jury before Mr. RECORDE

Appendix C: Trial of Edward Rainbow, et al.

17th September 1800

Source: Old Bailey, see transcript and original

<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18000917-53-defend543&div=t18000917-53#highlight>

Two changes have been made.

- The transcript has been reformatted so that it is more readable. For example, space has been added between paragraphs, and extra spaces between words have been removed. No spelling changes were made.
- The notation for currency has been changed. In the original document a sum of 20 pounds is written as “20l.” These have changed to use the pound symbol, “£20”. Shillings and pence have not been changed.

Transcript

640. JOHN PRICE, JOHN ROBINSON, alias ROGERSON, alias ROBOTHAM, EDWARD RAINBOW, and WILLIAM THOMAS RAINBOW, were indicted, the two first for breaking and entering the dwelling-house of John Lambe, Edward Haycock, and Thomas Lambe, about the hour of twelve in the night of the 10th of July, and burglariously stealing thirty pounds five ounces of silk, value £27 8s. nineteen pounds two ounces of silk, value £24 4s. one hundred and twenty pounds ten ounces of other silk, value was taken into custody 208. 1s. one hundred and seventeen pounds three ounces of other silk, value was taken into custody 202. 3s. one hundred and eleven pounds three ounces of other silk, value £183 9s. forty-six pounds seven ounces of other silk, value £51. 2s. and five hempen bags, value 5s. the property of the said John Lambe, Edward Haycock, and Thomas Lambe.

Second Count. Laying it to be the dwelling-house of John Lambe and Thomas Lambe.

The other two prisoners were indicted for feloniously receiving, on the 11th of July, ninety-one pounds of silk, value £150 3s. fifty pounds of other silk, value £86 5s, twenty-six pounds of other silk, value £31. 8s. seven pounds eight ounces of other silk, value 121. 18s one pound of other silk, value 18s. eleven pounds of other silk, value £9 18 s. twenty-four pounds eight ounces of other silk, value £29 12s. eight pounds of other silk, value £10 2s. forty-three pounds of other silk, value £48 7s. and ten pounds of other silk, value £12 13s. being part of the before-mentioned goods, they knowing them to have been stolen. (The case was opened by Mr. Serjeant Best.)

THOMAS LAMBE sworn. Examined by Mr. Fielding.

Q. Be so good as tell as first the firm of your house?

A. John Lambe, Edward Haycock, and Thomas Lambe.

Q. Your house is in Foster-lane ?

A. Yes, the house door is in Bell-alley, and there is a door which opens into Foster-lane: On Friday morning, the 11th of July, about ten minutes after six o'clock, a young man who lives with us alarmed me; I came down stairs, and, on the first floor, there is a window was forced down; I saw that window fast the night before, and a screw in the shutter; I went to the ground floor, and found

the door that leads into Bell-alley open, the lock had been violently forced off, and the chain taken off; the cellar-door was also unbolted where we kept our silk; I went down into the cellar, and found we had been robbed of the property mentioned in the indictment, to the amount of £752 11s.

Q. In how many packages was that silk?

A. In five hempen bags, about a yard square, and a yard and a half deep; there were no marks upon it, except a ticket, when we buy a bale of silk, we mark it 142, 143, and so on; it is written with a pen upon a piece of parchment or cartidge paper; there were loose tickets, and also marks upon the bags, the East-India marks, but I cannot tell what the exact marks were.

Court. Q. Whereabouts did you sleep?

A. In the front, and these goods were backwards.

Cross-examined by Mr. Raine.

Q. Who are your partners?

A. John Lambe and Edward Haycock.

Q. Have you no others?

A. None whatever,

Q. It was past six when you first discovered this? A. Ten minutes or a quarter past six.

Q. Can you say what time the sun rose at that time?

A. No.

Q. Long before you rose?

A. Yes.

THOMAS SAWYER sworn. Examined by Mr. Knowlys.

I am shopman to Messers. Lambe and Haycock: On the 11th of July I was alarmed by the maid-servant; I went down stairs, and saw the window by the sky-light open.

Q. How was that window secured?

A. By a screw in the shutter; the window and the shutter were both down when I saw them in the morning.

Q. Did you observe any thing particular about the sky-light?

A. Nothing, till about eleven o'clock in the morning; when the officers came, I observed seventeen or eighteen drops of tallow, and the lead over the pannel of the door had been cut, which leads into the kitchen.

JANE SMITH sworn. Examined by Mr. Serjeant Best.

I fastened the door and the window on the night of the 10th; I put up the shutter, and put in a screw; I got up about ten minutes past six, and found the shutter gone; I did not take particular notice of the sky-light; upon the ledges of the window there was some dust, and apparently some marks of men's feet.

JOHN TAYLOR sworn. Examined by Mr. Fielding.

I am a green-grocer, in Noble-street, about 50 yards from the prosecutors.^a: On the morning of the 11th of July, between four and five o'clock, I saw a cart.

Q. Was it quite light at that time?

A. It was; I saw a green cart, a little country cart, exactly opposite to Bell-alley; I saw a man sitting in the cart; he sat there a minute or two, and another man came to him in a blue coat; he went away, and then the man in the cart, who had a light-coloured coat on, went away with the cart, and came back again in a few minutes.

Q. Was the cart then driven by the same man?

A. Yes.

Q. Had you an opportunity of seeing his person?

A. No, I had not, I only saw his back, I was going to market; I did not see any thing particular, except the cart standing there; I left it there.

Q. When you saw the prisoner before the Lord-Mayor, what was your opinion then?

A. I was not near enough to make any observation of them; Price had the same coloured coat on.

Q. Which was it that had a light-coloured coat on when you saw him before the Lord-Mayor?

A. Price; and the prisoner, Robinson, had a brown coat on before the Lord-Mayor.

FREDERICK WHEATLEY sworn.

I am a gold seal-marker and jeweller; I live at No. 27, Tash-street, Gray's-inn-lane; the prisoner, Price, lives in Little Tash-street.

Q. Does your house command a view of his?

A. Yes: On the 11th of July, Friday morning, I was up about five o'clock at business, with the window open, and I saw Price and another man come to the door; they stood at the door some time.

Q. Is the other man here?

A. No; he goes by the name of Bob, I do not know his surname; after they had stood at the door some little time, they went in again, and left the door ajar; then they came out again and I saw a tall man come in a chaise-cart, or a country-cart, like a higler's cart.

Q. Did you observe the colour of that cart?

A. It was green.

Q. Do you know the man?

A. Yes.

Q. Is he here?

A. Yes, that is him, next to Price, his name is Robinson, he had five bags in the body of cart; he tumbled them out as quick as he could, and they fell soft upon the ground; when Price, and the other man that came to the door before he came up, took them in as fast as ever they could; when

^a Those bringing the case, the silk merchants who had been robbed.

Robinson had chucked the last bag out, when there were about two to get into the house, he drove off; then Price and the other man took the remainder in.

Q. You say the bags fell soft, explain that?

A. As if they contained linen, or something soft in them; in the course of the day I saw Price very busy running backwards and forwards.

Q. Did you observe any thing particular towards the afternoon of that day?

A. Yes; about four o'clock I observed Price go out with a white apron on, like a porter, and Robinson, and this other man, Bob, in their shirt sleeves, each of them with one of those bags upon their shoulders; they went down Tash-street.

Q. Did you observe any body at Price's house in the course of the day?

A. I saw a genteel man in black, with his hair powdered, go backwards and forwards two or three times in the afternoon before the first bag went away; I did not know who that was.

Q. Do you know a girl of the name of Sarah King?

A. Yes; I know her about the neighbourhood.

Q. Do you know if she was at Price's house that day?

A. Yes, she was; she went out of Price's house either before or immediately after the bags went out, but I cannot exactly say which.

Cross-examined by Mr. Raine.

Q. You did not know the prisoner Robinson's name?

A. No.

Q. Where were you at this time?

A. Up two pair of stairs, the front room.

Q. Where you engaged at your business at the time?

A. Yes; but seeing this transaction, engaged my attention.

Q. For the whole day?

A. No, I did not see all that they did, but most of what they did that day.

(Sarah King, thirteen years of age, was called, but not knowing the nature of an oath, was not sworn.)

RICHARD TIPPER sworn. Examined by Mr. Serjeant Best.

I am an officer: On Saturday, the 12th of July, in the evening, I went to the house of the prisoner Price, in Little Tash-street, with Sapwell, Read, and a Mr. Osborne, clerk to Mr. Lambe; we found Mrs. Price, Mr. Price was not at home; we searched the house, and upon searching the house, below stairs in the kitchen, I found some pieces of wrappers, which were wet; I called Mr. Osborne to look at them, which he did; upon searching further, Sapwell found, in my presence, a centrebit, some knives and forks, and table-cloths; I went away, and left my brother officers there; when I returned, I brought Price in with me, I found him within nine or ten yards of his house, Mr. Sawyer was with me; I said, Johnny, I am glad to see you, you are the man I have been looking for; he

said, very well; and I immediately took him into his own house; I searched him, I observed his left-hand come quick from his pocket; I immediately seized his hand, and found it clenched very tight, I got his hand open; says I, Jack, what have you got in your hand, I must see; upon that I opened it by main strength; and in his hand I found a Banknote of fifty pounds.

Q. Did you observe any writing upon that Banknote?

A. Not then; I believe it was on Sunday, the next day; I then saw some writing, but I cannot say what it was; I have kept the note in my custody, (produces it); it has Walpole and Co. upon the front of it; on the Monday morning I went to Messrs. Walpole and Company's.

Q. Did you afterwards go to the house of the Rainbows?

A. Yes; in company with Sapwell and Mr. Osborne; we went first to the father's house, Edward Rainbow, in Queen-street, Cheapside.

Q. Before you went to Rainbow's, had you seen young Mr. Frith?

A. I had; Mr. Rainbow was not at home; I afterwards found young Mr. Rainbow at home; I asked him if he knew any thing of a fifty pound note having been in his possession within a few days; I did not shew him the note; he strictly denied knowing anything of it.

Q. Did you say any thing to him about any silk?

A. I cannot recollect that I did; at that time, he said, his father would be at home in a very little while, in the course of half an hour; I told him I must request of him to be so obliging as to stop with me till his father came home; I shut the door, and was in a little bit of a warehouse, with young Mr. Rainbow; during that time, somebody knocked at the door, which was Mr. Rainbow's porter; I thought it my duty to stop him, which I did, and desired him to go into the kitchen, his name was Wright; young Mr. Rainbow then went to the door, and said, here is my father coming; and he then came in; that might be in about half an hour; I asked Mr. Rainbow, sen. if he knew any thing of a £50 note having been in his possession within the course of a few days, or whether he had paid a £50 note away; he hesitated a great deal, and said he knew nothing of any such note; I told him a £50 note was a heavyish one, it was not like a one or a two-pound note; it was very odd he did not recollect it; I then asked him if he knew Mr. Frith; he said he did; I asked him if he had not received a £50 note of Mr. Frith, in part of £200; he then recollected something of it, and explained to me what he had received that £50 part of the £200 for; he told me that a person had been with him with a sample of silk.

Q. Had you then asked him whether he had purchased any silk?

A. Not till after this; he said a person had offered him a sample of silk, and he had purchased it, and given £200 for it; I then asked him if he knew the person; he said he did; I asked him his name; he said his name was Burdett; I asked him where the silk was; he said he had purchased it, but he had not received it yet; I told him I thought it a little mysterious that a man like Mr. Rainbow should pay £200 without seeing the quantity of silk or the quality; he said so it was, he had done it; I told him I could not be satisfied that he could give £200 without receiving the silk; he strictly denied, upon his honour, that he had received the silk; I asked him how he could put that confidence in Mr. Burdett; he said it was through a Mr. Sansum; that through his acquaintance with Mr. Sansum he became acquainted with Burdett.

Q. Did he say any thing about being recommended by Sansum?

A. No, I cannot recollect any thing about recommendation; I then heard a knock at the door, I went to the door and it was Sapwell; we had some conversation, and then I sent him away; I told both Mr. Rainbows that I expected Mr. Lambe; they then seemed to be agitated; Mr. Rainbow, the father, informed me that it was something singular that he had not received the silk, for he had been that morning up to Mr. Burdett's.

Q. Was that after you had mentioned the name of Mr. Lambe?

A. No, before; then Mr. Lambe came in with Mr. Osborne; they had not been in long, before Mr. Rainbow, sen.^b acknowledged his having the silk.

Q. What did he say?

A. He said that he had the silk; and added, my son shall go over with you, it is at his house; his son took down the key, and I went with him to No. 24, College-hill; when I came there the door was a little way upon the jar, with the chain upon it; it was an empty house; young Mr. Rainbow knocked at the door, and a kind of chair-woman came and opened it; upon that young Mr. Rainbow went up stairs, and Sapwell and I followed him into the one pair of stairs, and at the further end of the room young Mr. Rainbow opened a cupboard, and there we found five bags of silk; it has been locked up in the Marshal's office ever since.

Cross-examined by Mr. Raine.

Q. You are a City officer, and have been many years?

A. Yes.

Q. You are well known to be a City officer?

A. Yes.

Q. When you apprehend persons you always take what property they have upon them?

A. Yes.

Q. You sometimes find people very unwilling to part with property which afterwards turns out to be their own?

A. Sometimes we do.

Q. When you went to Price's house you found some pieces of wrapping in the kitchen?

A. Yes, wet.

Q. Was it canvas?

A. It was something of that sort.

Cross-examined by Mr. Garrow.

Q. Your conversation with young Rainbow was confined to his having had in his possession a £50 note?

A. Yes.

THOMAS SAPWELL sworn. Examined by Mr. Fielding.

^b Mr. Rainbow, sen. – Mr Rainbow, senior. That is, Edward Rainbow.

I went with Tipper on the Saturday night, to Price's house; he was not at home; I staid in the house while Tipper went out; he brought in Price with him, and I saw Tipper take something out of his hand, which I believe was a £50 note; I found a centre-bit, a saw, and a steel.

Q. Did you find any keys?

A. No, I did not; Tipper then secured him and took him to the Poultry Compter; he returned about half past twelve; I took Mrs. Price up stairs to search her, and while I was up stairs with her, I heard Tipper call, Tom, Tom, come down! I went down and there was Tipper and Read had got Robinson in custody; I searched him, and in his job I found £65 in notes; I asked him how he came by them; he told me he took them in trade; I asked him what trade he was, and he said, a private soap-maker; then he was taken to the Poultry Compter.

Q. What became of the notes?

A. They are in my possession; (produces them;) two of £20, two of £10l, and a £5. On the Monday morning, about nine o'clock, I went with Tipper and Mr. Osborne to Mr. Walpole's, a banker, in Lombard-street, to enquire about a £50 note; then we went to the house of Mr. Rainbow, the elder; Mr. Rainbow was out; I went to the Lord-Mayor to get a search-warrant; I then returned to Mr. Rainbow's; I knocked at the door, and Tipper opened it; I went in, and found Tipper and the two Mr. Rainbows; I did not hear any thing that passed, because I went into the kitchen to apprehend the porter; I then went with young Mr. Rainbow and Tipper and Mr. Osborne, to a house, No. 24, College-hill, where young Mr. Rainbow took out the key of a closet, and shewed us the five bags; I took them to the Mansion-house, and there they have remained, in the Marshal's office, under our seals ever since.

Cross-examined by Mr. Raine.

Q. Robinson told you he was a soap-maker?

A. Yes.

Q. Did not that turn out to be true?

A. I do not know; I have not heard.

Q. Have you enquired? A. Yes; but every body told me, no.

Cross examined by Mr. Knapp.

Q. When you went to the house on College-hill, with young Mr. Rainbow, you went by the direction of his father?

A. We did.

- OSBORNE sworn. Examined by Mr. Knowlys.

I am book-keeper to the prosecutors.^c

Q. Did you go, and when was it, to the house of the Rainbows?

A. It was on Monday morning the 14th of July, about ten o'clock; I found Tipper and both the Mr. Rainbows together; immediately that I entered, old Mr. Rainbow asked me how I did, and acknowledged he had bought the silk; I asked him who he had bought it of; he said he had bought

^c Those bringing the case, the silk merchants who had been robbed.

it of a man of the name of Burdett; but that he had not yet got the silk; he said that Burdett had asked him two hundred pounds for it; he said his reply was, that he had not the money by him, but he would procure it; and that he had borrowed two hundred pounds, by which he had paid for the silk; the officers interrogated him very much to let them know where the silk was; after much interrogation, he said it was at his son's house; his son was by at the time; and immediately that he had made that reply, the officers desired young Mr. Rainbow to walk out with them; while the officers were gone out with young Mr. Rainbow, I asked old Mr. Rainbow who this Burdett was; he told me he knew but little of him, that he had seen him two or three times before; I then asked him if there was any Book China, which was a particular article among the rest that we lost two bales of; he told me he could not tell, for he had not seen it; I then asked him what weight it was; he said he did not know, perhaps 200lb., perhaps 300lb. and perhaps more I told him it was very odd that he should trust a man with two hundred pounds, and buy such a quantity of silk, that he knew nothing about; he said it was so. and that he trusted this man through the recommendation of a person of the the name of Sansum; immediately after that almost, the officers returned.

Q. Did you accompany Tipper and Sapwell, or either of them, to trace these notes?

A. Yes; I went with them, to Walpole and Co.'s, in Lombard-street, whole name was written upon the £50 note, that was on the Monday morning about nine o'clock; we afterwards went to the Bank to trace the other notes.

Cross-examined by Mr. Gurney.

Q. The conversation which passed from the officers was with Mr. Rainbow, senior?

A. And junior, both.

Q. Young Mr. Rainbow was there; but the conversation was with Mr. Rainbow, senior?

A. Yes.

Q. The house at College-hill, which the officers went to, your understood had been taken by him for his son, who was just married?

A. Yes; he acknowledged that he had taken that house.

Q. And that he had not yet gone to reside? A. Yes.

THOMAS TAYLOR sworn. Examined by Mr. Serjeant Best.

I live at No. 31, Queen-street, Cheapside, next door to Mr. Rainbow.

Q. Do you know William- Thomas Rainbow?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you known him long? A. I have known him by sight these twelve months.

Q. Did you see him on the 11th of July?

A. Yes, I saw him in a hackney-coach pass my door; as he passed me he put the window half way up; the coach stopped at his door; I did not see any body in the coach but him; I saw him push a bale out before him; then I took no further notice.

Cross-examined by Mr. Garrow.

Q. I take it that whenever you have given an account of this business you have always given the same account?

A. Yes.

Q. If any body supposed you had said that you saw young Mr. Rainbow with three people in the coach, and the coach full of goods, they must have very wool-gatherings heads?

A. I think so.

Q. However, the occurrence that you saw, was putting up the window, stopping at his father's door, and putting out a bale of goods?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know that young Mr. Rainbow is a servant to his father?

A. I do not.

Q. You don't know much of the family, perhaps?

A. No.

GEORGE WRIGHT sworn. Examined by Mr. Fielding.

I am porter to Mr. Rainbow: On Monday the 12th July. I carried four bundles from Mr. Rainbow's, different sorts of bundles; some bigger and some less; I carried them to the corner of Cloak-lane, College-hill.

Q. What number?

A. I do not know; there are no inhabitants in the house.

Q. By whose direction did you take them there?

A. The Mr. Rainbows were both together.

Q. When, were they brought into the house?

A. I do not know.

Q. What part of the house did you take them from?

A. I took them from the door up one pair of stairs at the other house.

Q. Where did they come from before you took them from the door?

A. I saw them tumbled down stairs by young Mr. Rainbow.

Q. It was an empty house? A. Yes.

Q. Where is the warehouse in wich goods are generally put?

A. In the front of the house; the ground floor.

Cross-examined by Mr Knapp.

Q. Old Mr. Rainbow was your master?

A. Yes.

Q. Young Mr. Rainbow never did any thing but by the direction of his father?

A. I never saw any otherwise.

Q. If You had been desired to tumble them down stairs, you would have done it?

A. Yes.

JOSEPH FRITH sworn. Examined by Mr. Knowlys.

I am a school-master, and live in Thames-street.

Q. Do you know old Mr. Rainbow?

A. Yes. and the young one: On the 11th of July I lent Mr. Rainbow two hundred pounds; I paid it him in a £100 note, a £50, a £30 and the rest smaller notes.

Q. Where did you get those Bank-notes?

A. I received them at Walpole and Co.'s, bankers, in Lombard-street.

Q. Before you parted with them had you written any thing upon them? A. Yes, I wrote Walpole and Co. upon the front of the notes.

Q. Look at that £50?

A. That is my handwriting.

Q. That was one of the notes that you advanced to Mr. Rainbow? A. I presume it must be; I got them from Messrs. Walpole's in change for a draft or £180 of Bruckshaw and Co.'s stock-brokers, at the Royal Exchange.

Cross-examined by Mr. Garrow.

Q. If you had not the highest opinion of Mr. Rainbow's integrity you would not have lent him the money?

A. Certainly not; I have known him fourteen years; I should as soon suspect-you now to be guilty of the foul crime of murder, as Mr. Rainbow be guilty of any thing dishonourable.

Jury. Q. Had you received any other £50 Banknotes of Walpole and Co. recently before that?

A. No, I cannot say that I had.

Q. Was young Mr. Rainbow in partnership with his father?

A. I do not know any thing of their concerns in business.

Mr. Garrow. (To Wright.)

Q. You were asked about these things being up stars: the warehouse was rather small, was it not?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it not common for goods to be kept up stairs when the warehouse was full?

A. I never saw any thing of the kind.

Q. The prisoner desires me to ask of you this question, whether, while you were his porter, you do not know that he kept goods that came into his shop in the fair way of his trade, up stairs?

A. I never knew any thing of the kind.

DAVID PRICE sworn. Examined by Mr. Serjeant Best.

I am a clerk in the Bank. (Produces a one hundred pound note.)

Q. Do you know by whom that was brought to the Bank?

A. No; the person who brought it, wrote the name, John Rogers, No. 6, King-street, Holborn.

Q. Look round, and see if you can see the person?

A. No; I should not know the person if I was to see him. (The note read, with Walpole and Co. written upon the face of it.)

Frith. This my hand-writing, and I believe it to be the note that I sent to Mr. Rainbow.

Q. (To Price.) What change did you give for that £100 note?

A. Three twenties, two tens and four fives; I cannot tell the numbers without the book.

WILLIAM SEABROOK sworn. Examined by Mr. Serjeant Best.

I am a clerk in the Bank. (Produces the Bank-book).

Mr. Raine.

Q. Who made that entry?

A. I did.

Q. From what?

A. From the note.

Q. Who gave you the note?

A. I cannot say.

Q. You had not the note from Mr. Price then? A. No; I had it usually from the person who brings it.

Mr. Serjeant Best. Be so good as tell us the numbers and sum of the notes which you gave in exchange for the £100?

A. Three twenties, two tens, and four fives; the three twenties were No. 8729 to 8731, dated the 27th of June; the tens were No. 6588, 6589, dated the 28th of June; the four fives were No. 1156, 1157, 1158, 1159, dated the 30th of June, all of them of the present year. (Mr. Shelton read three of the notes taken from the prisoners, No. 8730, 8731, and 6589.)

Q. Look round, and see if you know either of the prisoners at the bar?

A. It is impossible to say that, so many persons as we see.

Mr. Serjeant Best. (To Tipper.)

Q. Did you go to No. 6, King-street, Halborn?

A. I Did; I enquired for person of the name of Rogerson, but no such person lived there; in the lower part of the house there were a few mattresses, and there were lodgers in the upper part.

JOHN TOM sworn. Examined by Mr. Knowlys.

I am clerk in the house of Walpole and company: On the 11th July, I paid a draft of one hundred and eighty pounds to Mr. Joseph Firth, (produces his book;) It was draft of Bruckshaw and

Company; I paid him a £100 note, No. 1215, dated the 9th of July, 1800; the £50 was No. 2625, dated the 10th of July 1800.

Mr. Shelton. They correspond.

- SANSUM sworn. Examined by Mr. Serjeant Best

Q. Do you know Mr. Rainbow the elder? A. Yes.

Q. Do you know Mr. Burdett?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever recommend him to Mr. Rainbow?

A. I never did.

Q. You are sure of that?

A. Yes.

Cross-examined by Mr. Garrow.

Q. You do know Burdett?

A. I dined with him once in company with Mr. Rainbow, in Thames-street.

Q. Then If he has said he became acquainted with Burdett in your comapny, it was strictly true?

A. Yes.

Mr. Serjeant Best

Q. What is Burdett do you know?

A. A Sheriff's-officer.

Mr. Garrow.

Q. And I belive you know that he has absconded?

A. I have heard so. (One bag of silk produced.)

Mr. Fielding. (To Lambe.)

Q. Be so good as look at that silk are you able to say that that is a parcel of the silk taken from your house? A. Yes, I am.

Q. From experiece in business, it is an easy matter upon the inspection of such an article as that, to be able to say?

A. I took very particular fabric, and if differed very materially from the fabric that I have had before, and I sent for our broker; I firmly believe it is the identical silk; I saw the other bags at the Mansion house, but I cannot speak to them so positively as I can to this.

Jury.

Q. Had this bag the tickets on them that you mentioned?

A. No; these are not our bags, they have been changed.

Mr. Fielding. Q. What was the value of the silk? A. Four hundred pounds.

Q. With the duty upon it? A. Yes.

Q. What is the value without the duty?

A. I do not exactly know what duty it pays.

Q. There were different denominations of silk lost from your house?

A. Yes, ninety-three pounds eight ounces of Friuli silk; the quantity of Friuli silk that we lost, and the quantity found, corresponded, as near as possible; and the China silk, I believe, will agree to an ounce.

- BANBURY sworn. Examined by Mr. Fielding.

I am a silk broker, and have been many years.

Q. Do you remember examining a quantity of silk with Mr. Lambe, that you had bought for him?

A. Yes; I recollect this silk perfectly, it is a very peculiar silk.

Q. But, in general, in the examination of an article, is it of a nature for you to say upon, being produced, whether that is the article or not?

A. In some kind of silks there is a difficulty, particularly in China; but I never-saw a bale like this in my life before, either in size, quality, or throw; I am almost positive it is the same.

Q. Whereabouts is the value of four hundred pounds worth of silk, without the duty?

A. About three hundred pounds.

EDWARD HAYCOCK sworn. Examined by Mr. Knowlys.

Q. You are one of the partners in this house?

A. Yes.

Q. You take the department of manufacturing the silk chiefly?

A. Yes; part of this bale was sent to me to Coventry, and I afterwards saw it at the Mansion-house; I am positive it is the same silk.

JOHN LAMBE sworn. Examined by Mr. Fielding.

Q. You are a partner in this house?

A. Yes.

Q. Look at that silk is there about that any mark by which you can say that that is a parcel lost from your house?

A. I believe it from the colour, and from the completion of the silk, it is out on condition, it is unlike most other silk that comes under our examination.

Cross-examined by Mr. Garrow.

Q. From what cause do you suppose it came out of condition; from the long voyage, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Any other silk being out of condition from the same cause, would have the same appearance?

A. Yes.

Edward Rainbow's defence.

My Lord, and Gentleman of the Jury, it has already been related to you with respect to Burdett coming to me and telling me that it was smuggled from on board a ship belonging to a person that he was intimately acquainted with; I told him I could not speak to him then, for my wife had been run over the day before, and the surgeon was then up stairs; he called again in about an hour and a half, and I bought the silk of him, for which I paid him £348. I borrowed £200 of it my friend, Mr. Frith; I never had the smallest suspicion of its having been stolen; I never had my name called in question before.

William-Thomas Rainbow's defence.

My Lord, and Gentleman of the Jury. My feelings this day you will better conceive than I can express: I served my time to my father, and have been servant to him ever since; I could not conceive, nor do I believe that my father was a person who could do that which was wrong, or which could implicate him, who must be the dearest to him, his son. My Lord and Gentleman, I have been married three months last Monday; my father took this house at College-Hill for me; I was only his servant, and acted under my father's direction; I believe solemnly, as I stand at this bar, and as I believe that I shall stand before the bar of the Almighty, that my father had no idea of this transaction being illegal.

For the Prisoner.

- TATLOCK sworn. Examined by Mr. Garrow.

I have been engaged in the silk trade twenty years, as a silk broker.

Q. It is your business, I take it, to attend to the quality and nature of different sorts of silk?

A. Yes.

Q. Look at that silk; from your judgement, and skill in the trade, I desire you to tell my Lord, and the Jury, whether that silk, having been in your possession yesterday, or the day before, without any ticket upon it, or any distinguishing mark, do you think you could, conscientiously, swear to its being the same silk, from its colour, from its texture, or any thing else intrinsic in the silk?

A. The fabricator of this silk sends a great quantity to market; we call these Burgams, but it being out of condition, I should think it impossible for any person to swear to it on that account.

Q. Suppose a large quantity manufactured by the same manufacturer, would not long package have the same effect?

A. No; frequently same parts will be out of condition, and other parts not; but this silk is finer than this fabricator generally sends to market.

Q. Supposing I was to take this silk, and lock it up for a week, could you, at the end of that time, be able to swear to it?

A. Certainly not.

Cross-examined by Mr. Serjeant Best.

Q. You say this silk is finer than the fabricator usually sends to market?

A. Yes; it is smarter in the throw, it has had more work in the mill.

Mr. Garrow.

Q. Do you know Mr. Rainbow?

A. Yes; I have known him some years; his transactions with me always marked the character of an honest man.

The prisoners, Rainbows, called twenty-four other witnesses, who gave them an excellent character.

Mr. Garrow. stated, that he had a list of one hundred and eighty witnesses, who were attending to speak to their character.

For the prisoner Robinson.

- LAMB sworn.

I am a tallow-chandler, at Dock-head: I have known Robinson three years; he always bore a good character.

Cross-examined by Mr. Serjeant Best.

Q. How long have you known him?

A. Three years.

Q. Has he been at home during all that time?

A. I never knew where he lived; being a private soap-boiler, I never wished to inquire; he used to come to my shop.

Did he come regularly, week by week?

A. Sometimes he would not come for a fortnight, when he was afraid of being found out.

Court.

Q. I wish to know what a private soapboiler is?

A. That is boiling the soap without paying the duty.

HENRY ORGER sworn. Examined by Mr. Raine.

I am a tallow-chandler, in the Borough: I have known Robinson two years, he was always very honest; I have sold him stuff, and he always paid me for what he had.

Q. Do you know where he lives?

A. No.

Court.

Q. Do you know that you come here, in the face of your country, to speak to the character of a man for honesty, whom you know to have been in the habit of defrauding the country, and the fair trader?

A. He always paid me very honestly.

Court. It is most abominably impudent.

The Jury having retired about half an hour, returned with the following verdict:

Price, GUILTY Death. (Aged 32.)

Robinson, GUILTY Death. (Aged 28.)

E. Rainbow, GUILTY. (Aged 55.)

Transported for fourteen years.

W. T. Rainbow, NOT GUILTY.

Tried by the London Jury, before Mr. Baron HOTHAM.

Figures

Cover

The Encyclopaedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Supplément à l'Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, vol. 10 (plates). Paris, 1765. Cropped

Figure 1 - Direct line from Edward Rainbow to current Rainbow family

Kate Stout

Figure 2 – Edward Rainbow's parents and siblings

Ibid.

Figure 3 - Silk woven in a red and gold pattern

<https://lifetakeslemons.wordpress.com/2011/05/04/18th-century-costume-archives-red-silk-1760s-robe-a-langlais/amp/>

Figure 4 - A Dyer's Workshop

The Encyclopaedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Supplément à l'Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, vol. 10 (plates). Paris, 1765.

<https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:gh93hm005>

Figure 5 - Locations in London near Edward Rainbow's home

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Figure 6 – St James Garlickhythe at the base of Garlick Hill

Website for St James Garlickhythe Church

<https://www.stjamesgarlickhythe.org/history>

Figure 7 – Buildings built after the Great Fire

Thomas Sandby, 'View of Beaufort Buildings looking towards the Strand' (c.1765).
British Museum, Crace XVII.65

Figure 8 - Front page of the London Gazette

The London Gazette, 21 May 1776, Issue: 11668, Page: 1

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/11668/data.pdf>

Figure 9 - Notice of Edward Rainbow's bankruptcy

Ibid. Page: 4

Figure 10 - Example of a banknote from Gloucester Old Bank

<https://twonerdyhistorygirls.blogspot.com/2016/10/forged-banknotes-in-regency-era.html>

Figure 11 – Money Flow to thieves

Kate Stout, Geoff Arnold

Figure 12 – Silk theft locations

Ibid.

Figure 13 - Muslin dress, made of cotton, not silk

<https://janeastensworld.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/sprigged-muslin-gown-c1800-kelly-taylor-auctions-trouvais1.jpg>

Figure 14 – Edward Rainbow's children

Kate Stout

End Notes

RESOURCES

This section provides key resources used in the endnotes. The bold title is how the resource is described in the endnotes, which are below. Please contact Kate Stout (kate@katestout.com) or Geoff Arnold (geoff@geoffarnold.com) if you want more detailed references. We can create reports that provide such information.

Apprenticeship Records

Database: *London, England, Freedom of the City Admission Papers, 1681-1930* on ancestry.com

Notes: includes apprenticeships and “Freedom of the City” documents. Known to be incomplete.

Church Records

Most dates for birth, baptism, marriage, and death in this document are found in compilations of parish church records. The endnote also provides a parish. There are many parish record compilations, the main ones are provided.

All of these are databases are available on ancestry.com:

- *England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975*
- *Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812*
- *London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1936*
- *London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1920*
- *England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-2003*

Dyer’s Company Thesis

Feldman, Roger A. (2005) *Recruitment, training and knowledge transfer in the London Dyers’ Company, 1649-1826*. PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science. <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/243/>

Notes: Provides detailed insight into the London Dyer’s guild, drawing on records of that company. Most of those records are not available online.

Land Tax Records

Database: London, England, Land Tax Records, 1692-1932 available at ancestry.com

Notes: These records provide land tax payment. In the 1750-1830 (time period for this story) they include the payment of renters as well as landowners.

London Gazette

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk>

Notes: Online images of the newspaper that prints many official notifications of political, financial, and legal events, from 1665 to present. Any quote from the documents have been transcribed by Kate Stout.

Old Bailey Trial Records

Transcripts from “Proceeds from the Old Bailey, London’s Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913” at <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/>

Notes: Contains trial records, both in transcript form and images of the original documents. There are powerful search tools, and information about [criminal trials](#) and the [background and history](#) of London life.

END NOTES

¹ **Church Records**, St Nicholas, Chiswick

² **Church Records**, St Nicholas, Chiswick. John was baptised on July 26, 1740, and Mary was baptised on May 27, 1744. Transcribed by a volunteer, given to Katie Thorpe (a descendent of Edward Rainbow through his son William Thomas), who gave them to Kate Stout. Edward is included in these records.

³ Edward's sister Elizabeth's existence is known because some of her children were bequeathed money in the will of John, her oldest brother. The will is at ancestry.com in the database [England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858](#).

⁴ **Apprenticeship Records** The apprenticeship record for Edward Rainbow in 1762 notes his father's name, profession, and location, and that he was dead. Edward's apprenticeship record can be seen at [the Lorna Arnold website](#), or in **Apprenticeship Records**.

⁵ **Land Tax Records** Land tax records show an Elizabeth Rainbow in in the 1780s in Turnham Green, and a burial record at St Nicholas Church.

⁶ **Dyer's Company Thesis** and **Apprenticeship Records**.

⁷ **Church Records**, St James Garlickhythe, City of London

⁸ **Church Records**, St Thomas the Apostle, City of London

⁹ Based on his age in apprenticeship records

¹⁰ **Church Records**, St Marylebone, London

¹¹ **Land Tax Records**, which included taxes for renters as well. Or contact Kate Stout for a spreadsheet of all locations for any Edward Rainbow in the great London area in the Land Tax Records.

¹² **Land Tax Records**

¹³ **Church Records**, St Giles in the Field, London

¹⁴ **Land Tax Records**

¹⁵ **Acts of Parliament** <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp603-612>.

¹⁶ **Old Bailey Trial Records** The workshop is mentioned in a trial record when one of Edward's apprentices stole from him. See Appendix B for the transcript of that trial.

¹⁷ Lowndes, T, *The London Directory*, 1786. United Kingdom:

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_London_Directory/NmDFqf3ZMdYC?hl=en&gbpv=0

¹⁸ *Journals of the House of Commons*. (1803). United Kingdom: H.M. Stationery Office.

[Journals of the House of Commons - Google Books](#)

¹⁹ Johnson, Ben, *Bartholomew Fair – A Comedy*, Act 1, p 183, 2015, Gutenberg.org,

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49461/49461-h/49461-h.htm> (

²⁰ Pepys, Samuel, *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Diary entry January 23, 1661, 2004, Gutenberg.org

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4200/pg4200-images.html>

²¹ **Dyer's Company Thesis**

²² **London Gazette**

²³ A doctor or lawyer, who only provided services, could not become bankrupt. Nor could the extravagant son of well-to-do family, despite that being a recurring motif in novels of the period. The overspending doctor and extravagant son were, in the eyes of the law, debtors, and their creditors had to follow a different process. The debtors might end up in debtor's prison. At the time, the term "bankrupt" was used loosely in conversation, referring to being greatly in debt, rather than a specific legal process.

²⁴ **London Gazette**

²⁵ The Rainbow Coffeehouse had no association with any Rainbow family. I did research the owners of the Rainbow coffee house for several generations.

²⁶ **London Gazette**, multiple notices

²⁷ **Church Records**, St Marylebone, London

²⁸ **Land Tax Records**

²⁹ **London Gazette**

³⁰ **London Gazette**

³¹ **Old Bailey Trial Records**

³² **Dyers Company Thesis**

³³ **Dyers' Company Thesis**

³⁴ **Apprenticeship records**

³⁵ **Apprenticeship Records**

³⁶ Brooks, C.W. **Apprenticeship, Social Mobility and the Middling Sort**, in J. Barry and C. W. Brooks, eds, *The Middling Sort of People* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 81.

³⁷ **Apprenticeship records**

³⁸ Will of John Rainbow is at ancestry.com in the database [England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858](#).

³⁹ **Apprenticeship Records**

⁴⁰ **Church Records**

⁴¹ I have done a lot of research into the family Robert Rainbow and have not (yet!) found any shared ancestors between Edward's family and Robert's. Because there is almost no information about Edward's parents, any connection is hard to prove.

⁴² **Old Bailey Trial Records**

⁴³ Edward and William Thomas Rainbow admitted to the theft on July 15, 1800 and were arraigned (committed to trial) for the crime. The exact date of when they were taken into custody is unknown.

Trial Transcript and Database: [London, England, Newgate Calendar of Prisons, 1785-1753](#). Access on ancestry.com

⁴⁴ **Land Tax Records**

⁴⁵ It is my assumption that the bank was the Bank of England. The clerk who gave testimony simply said he was a clerk from the Bank. That was a common way to refer to the Bank of England in this period. The customer who exchanged the £100 note from Walpole and Co. had given his name as "John Rodgers", and his address as No. 6, King-street, Holborn. Investigators found that there was no person by that name at that address.

⁴⁶ **London Gazette** Abraham and Abraham Favenc (sic), whose business was at No. 16 Sise-Lane, London, according to the *London Gazette*. In the *London Gazette*, they also appeared as holders of Deeds of Trust for other people.

⁴⁷ **UK, Prison Commission Records, 1770-1951**, at ancestry.com. Edward and William Thomas were both transferred.

⁴⁸ Old Bailey history <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Crime.jspx>

⁴⁹ The unit of measure "page" is arbitrary. I measured a page as one full screen on a specific computer, looking at the transcribed version from the Old Bailey, and measured all the transcripts in the same way. There were only six trials that were more than 10 pages long, about 4% of all trials.

⁵⁰ Database: **England & Wales Criminal Registers, 1791-1892**, available at ancestry.com

⁵¹ **Land Tax Records**

⁵² **London Gazette**

⁵³ **London Gazette**

⁵⁴ **Church Records**, St James Garlickhythe

⁵⁵ **Church Records**, St Luke Chelsea

⁵⁶ Based on Joseph's appearance in a trade directory.

⁵⁷ Database: **London, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-2003**, Norwood Cemetery, at ancestry.com.

⁵⁸ **Land Tax Records**

⁵⁹ **Church records**, St James Garlickhythe

⁶⁰ **Land Tax Records** for Edward's location in 1813. **Church Records** for baptism of children, St Luke, Chelsea
Note that the first two children may have been born before their parents married, which would provide a possible reason for a later baptism.

⁶¹ **Church Records** Banns in St Olave, Bermondsey, July 21, 1765, marriage in St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey, August 18, 1765.

⁶² **Church Records**, St John of Wapping

⁶³ Will of John Rainbow is at ancestry.com in the database [England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858](#)