



## Charged With Sheep Stealing

### Wilts Lent Assizes

Thomas North and Nehemiah Gray, were indicted for sheep stealing. It was one of those common cases which require little observation; but the counsel was three quarters of an hour in opening it; he examined 14 witnesses.

The facts can be stated in a few words. Robert Cross is a farmer at Mere; he had some sheep in a fold on the 20th of December; he found one stolen on the 21st. On the Wednesday he discovered that two of his neighbours had some mutton cooked for dinner on that day; this awoke suspicion; a search was made; mutton was found in a drest state; a skin and a sheep's head were found in an undrest state; North happened to drop out a word, by which Mr. Rogers, the work-house keeper, was enabled to discover a leg of mutton in a hay rick; it was tied up in a pocket handkerchief, which was proved to belong to Nehemiah Gray, as Nehemiah's wife had sent it by a boy to a lady of the name of Hunt, to be washed, "becays it had voll'n into a batter."

A gentleman of the name of Lawrence, a butcher at Mere, denied that North, the prisoner, ever purchased a bit of mutton from him ever since the month of October.

Nehemiah did prove that he had bought some neck of mutton of Mr. Lawrence, and also proved that though they might be brother poachers, they were not brother thieves.

The Judge descanted at large upon the everlasting testimony, and the Jury returned a verdict, North, Guilty; Gray, Not Guilty. The verdict gave general satisfaction.

**Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 12 March 1829**

#### **OPC Note:**

Thomas North was transported for life to New South Wales, on the convict ship "Katherine Stewart Forbes", arriving 18 February 1830.