

*Climb The Liberty Tree*

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE  
ULSTER-SCOTS' ROLE IN  
THE UNITED IRISHMEN'S  
REBELLION OF 1798**



**PUPIL WORKBOOK 5**



**Swing:**  
**Executions and Aftermath**

# How Much can You Remember?

The names below all belong to people you have already heard about while studying the Ulster-Scots during the '98 Rebellion. Can you remember what happened to each of them?



Henry Monro

Rev James Porter

William Orr

Rev Steel Dickson

Henry Joy McCracken

Jimmy Hope

Mary Ann McCracken

Archibald Warwick

Betsy Gray

David Baillie Warden

# The United Irishmen

Fill in the table below with the names overleaf in the correct columns.

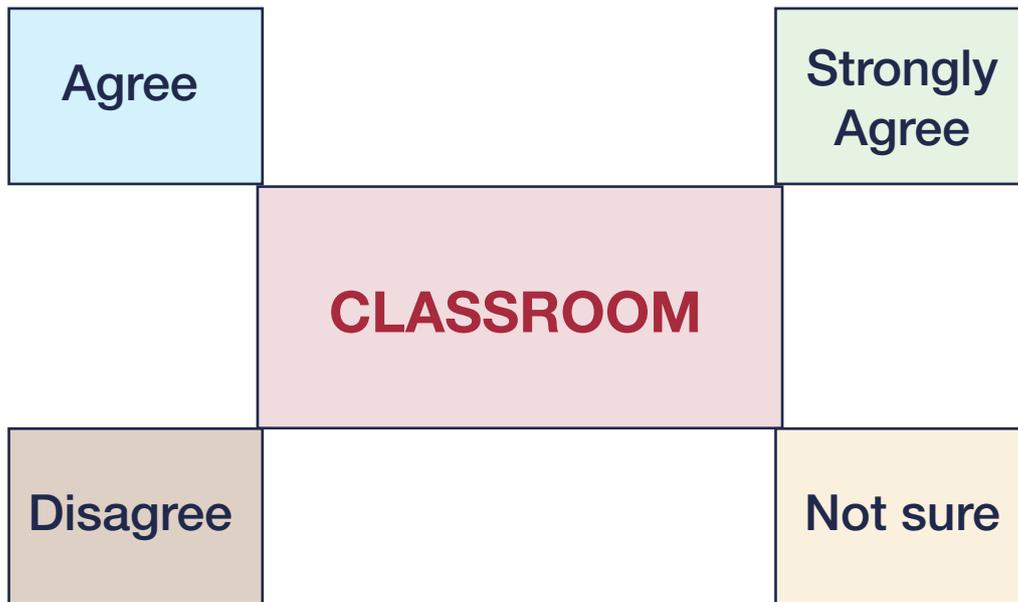
| Executed | Emigrated | Murdered | Survived |
|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
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## The story of William Nelson

Nelson was only sixteen when the rebellion broke out in Co. Antrim. He lived in Ballycarry and stole a horse from the local landlord, Richard Gervase Ker on which he rode about the country encouraging men to turn out in support of the rebels. He later took another horse and went to Donegore Hill where the rebels gathered before the Battle of Antrim.

After the Rebellion he was arrested and asked to give information about other rebels. His older brothers had turned out with the United Irishmen from Ballycarry. He refused to give any information and was sentenced to hang. His mother pleaded with James Ker to try to get him released, but Ker refused. He is said to have been hanged from a sycamore tree outside his mother's cottage. His grave is in Templecorran Cemetery, Ballycarry.

Carefully consider all the information about Nelson's execution and have a Four Corners debate on the subject of capital punishment. Mark the four corners of the room as follows:



Move to a different corner of the room according to your views on each of the following points. You must be prepared to give your reasons for choosing a particular corner.

1. William Nelson should not have been hanged.
2. Ker should have tried to save William.
3. Emigration or transportation was a fair way to punish the rebels.
4. The rebels were honestly trying to make things better and should not have been punished.
5. Capital punishment should never be used to punish wrong-doers.

# The Death of Henry Joy McCracken



Following a period in hiding in the mountains of south Antrim, McCracken attempted to escape to America, with the help of his sister Mary Ann. He was recognised at Greencastle on his way to a ship. ?

McCracken was tried and sentenced to hang on July 8, 1798. Mary Ann spent his last few hours of life with him and accompanied him as far as the gallows in Cornmarket, Belfast.

She wrote an account of the day which you will hear read aloud. Listen carefully. You will hear it twice. Then try to answer the questions on the following page.



# Mary Ann Remembers

**Answer the questions as fully as possible. You will have two opportunities to hear the passage.**

**Do not write anything until after the second reading.**

1. Why did Mary Ann ask for a pair of scissors?
2. What did Henry tell Mary Ann to do when the officer said she must give him the lock of hair?
3. Why did Henry wish he might have been allowed a few more days of life?
4. At what time did he have to go to his execution?
5. When did Mary Ann first begin to express her grief by weeping? What other details does she give which bring out the sadness of the parting?
6. What details of Henry's behaviour does Mary Ann give that suggest he acted unselfishly before his death?
7. Why did Mary Ann finally agree to leave the execution scene?
8. What comfort was Mr Boyd able to give Mary Ann?

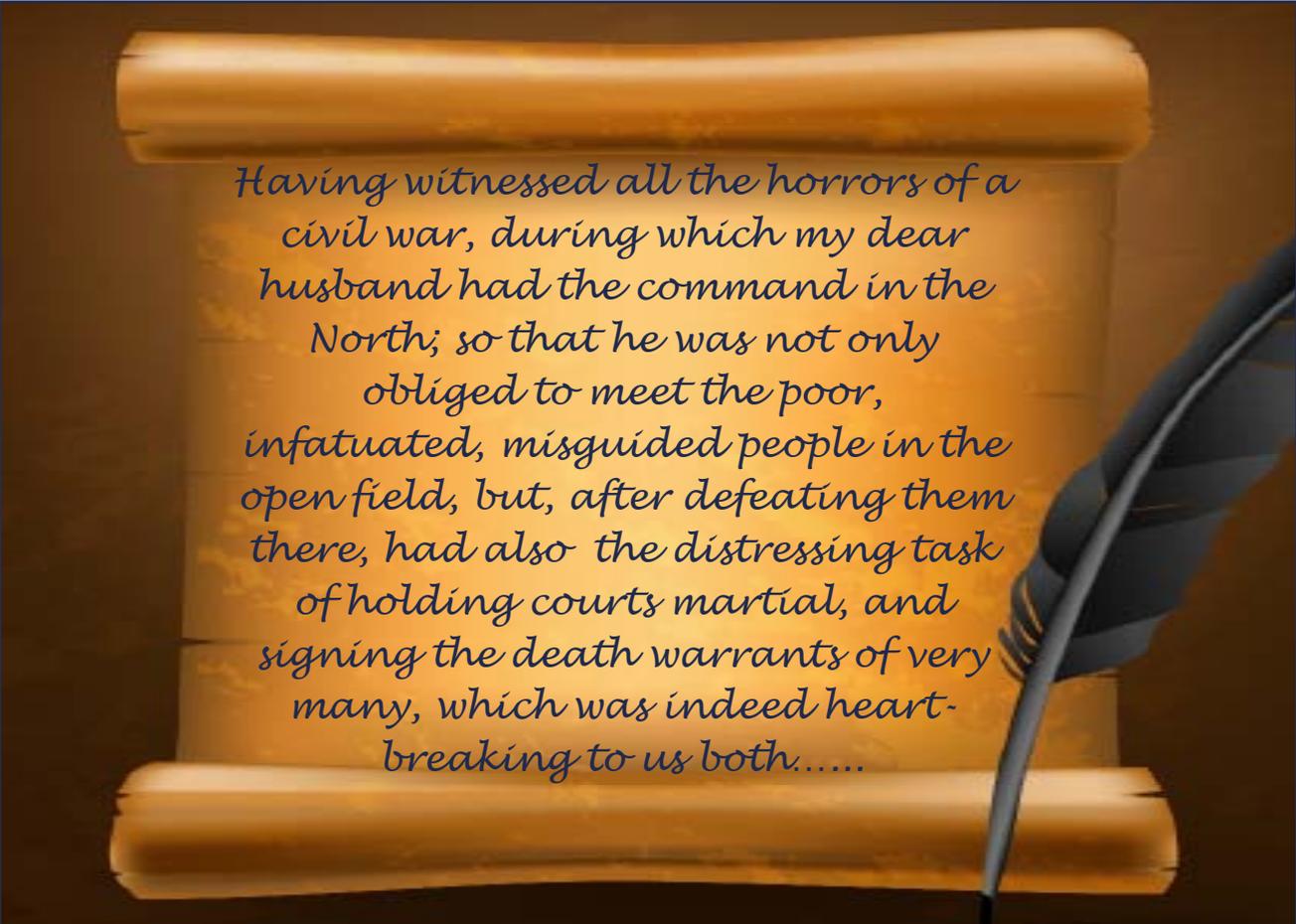


General Nugent released Henry's body into Mary Ann's care two hours after the execution. She had a doctor waiting who attempted to resuscitate him, but this was unsuccessful. His funeral took place shortly afterwards and Mary Ann with her brother John followed the coffin to the graveside at St George's Church in High Street.

Nugent seems to have acted sympathetically towards Mary Ann in allowing Henry a dignified funeral. At this time it was usual for the heads of rebels to be cut from their bodies and stuck on spikes around the city walls. This happened to Henry Monro, the leader of the Co. Down rebels.

Read the extract below from Lady Nugent's diary. What does it tell you about the experience and attitudes of the "winners" in '98?

## *Lady Nugent's Diary:*



*Having witnessed all the horrors of a civil war, during which my dear husband had the command in the North; so that he was not only obliged to meet the poor, infatuated, misguided people in the open field, but, after defeating them there, had also the distressing task of holding courts martial, and signing the death warrants of very many, which was indeed heart-breaking to us both.....*

## Choose one of the following activities:

1. Henry Joy McCracken attempted to address the crowd gathered in Cornmarket to watch his execution, however the horses made so much noise that he gave up as he could not be heard. With a partner, write the speech he might have made. Consider what he would have wanted to say about

- The Rebellion
- His own death
- His hopes for Ireland's future.

Begin: *"Citizens of Belfast...."*

2. Imagine you were present at the execution. With a partner, construct a role play in which you discuss it with a friend who was not present. You should also talk about what you see as the likely future of the United Irishmen and their aims.

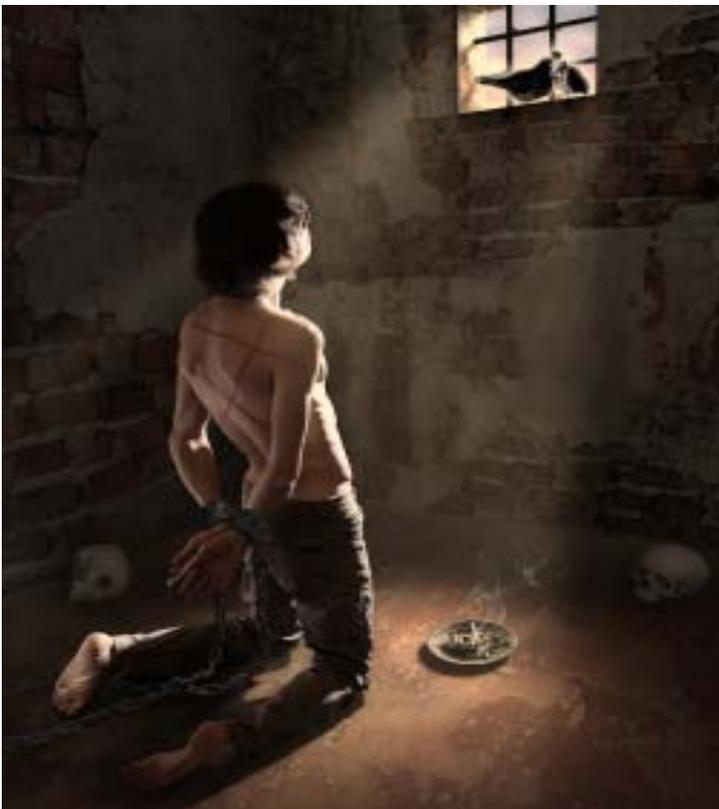
3. Use Publisher to create a Government Proclamation which announces the date and time of the execution of the rebel Henry Joy McCracken and warns against further armed rebellion.



# Research Time

Work with a partner and research punishment systems throughout the world.

- Name five to ten countries which allow capital punishment. For what sorts of offences?
- Which States in the United States of America have the death penalty. For what sorts of offences?
- Britain still has the death penalty for one particular offence. Find out what it is.



- Try to find out the reasons given by states and governments for retaining the death penalty
- What reasons can you find for its abolition?
- What are the opinions of your friends and family members on this issue?

Create a questionnaire and present your results in a bar graph.



Write a report which clearly sets out your findings on all the above.

You may conclude with your own opinion and the reasons for it, and whether or not you feel McCracken deserved his fate.

The websites below contain helpful information, but you should also search in libraries and newspapers.



<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/action/camp/dp/>

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/>