The Bristol Riots, October 1831: A Warehouse burning seen from Wapping Wharf

James Baker Pyne

Sold



REF: 2409

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Description

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James Baker Pyne (1800-1870)
The Bristol Riots, October 1831: A Warehouse burning seen from Wapping Wharf

Oil on canvas laid on card
12.7 by 9 cm., 5 by 3 ½ in.

The Bristol Riots of October 1831 were caused by the voting down of the second Reform Bill in the House of Lords. The bill was intended to lead to electoral reform. The arrival of the anti-reform judge Charles Wetherell in Bristol on 29th October led to three days of protests and riots. Much of the city centre was burnt down and up to 250 citizens were killed. The third Reform Bill was eventually passed in 1832.

Wapping Wharf was established in the early 18th Century when the shipyards were moved from Queen's Square. The shipyard became one of the most important in the city, from which Brunel's first steam ship, the SS Great Western, was built and launched in 1837.
The New Gaol was commissioned in 1816 and took its first inmates in 1820. During the riots of 1831, the doors of the gaol were smashed open, prisoners released and the prison was then torched. However, unlike Lawford's Gate (see no. 14), New Gaol, was rebuilt.

Derelict for years, Wapping Wharf has been undergoing extensive development and regeneration, including being the site of the M Shed, part of Bristol Museums and the repository for the city's history.

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