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| Dick Turpin | |
| Introduction | * Dick Turpin is a well-known criminal and probably the most famous highwayman of all. * Part of a criminal gang called the Essex Gang. * He is often described as dashing and daring. |
| Early life | * Dick Turpin was born in the early 18th century as Richard Turpin. (In 1706) * His father was John Turpin, a small scale farmer from Essex. * It is thought that Dick Turpin was an apprentice butcher. He opened his own butchers shop after completing his apprenticeship. * He began to steal livestock, but was caught trying to take two oxen and he was forced to flee. |
| Essex Gang | * Many people think of Dick Turpin as a lone highwayman, however for the majority of his criminal career he was a member of the Essex Gang (also known as the Gregory Gang). * Dick Turpin became a member of the Essex Gang, a group of criminals who specialised in robbing farmhouses. * Other members of the Essex Gang included: Thomas Barnfield, Ned Rust, John Wheeler and Herbert Haines. * There may have been other members who were either not identified or who were only occasional associates of the Gang. * The Gang often tortured the inhabitants of the houses they broke into in an attempt to get them to reveal where their valuables were hidden. * Robbing remote farmhouses was the Gang's speciality, and it was only towards the end of his criminal career that Turpin was actually involved in highway robbery. * By 1735 a reward of £50 was offered for the capture of the Essex Gang. Two members of the groups were caught, but Dick Turpin managed to escape out of a window. |
| A life of crime | * Turpin began to work with Tom King (often refered to as Captain). They used to watch the roads through Epping Forest in Essex from their cave hideout. Once they had identified a suitable target, they would rob them. * In 1737 a £100 reward was announced for the capture of Dick Turpin. * An Essex gamekeeper called Morris managed to locate Dick Turpin’s base in Epping Forest. Turpin shot Morris. * Dick Turpin killed Tom King by mistake. He was trying to stop King being arrested for collecting a horse that Turpin had himself stolen. * Turpin realised he had to leave Essex and he decided to head for Yorkshire. He took the name John Palmer and he started to rob farmhouses and steal horses. |
| Capture | * After an unsuccessful attempt to steal some cattle, Turpin returned to the inn he was staying at and, in frustration, shot the landlord’s rooster. * The landlord complained to Dick Turpin, and after Turpin threatened to kill the landlord, he was arrested. * Turpin (as John Palmer) was held in the dungeons of York Castle and other charges against John Palmer were investigated. * From prison, Dick Turpin wrote a letter to his brother. * Unfortunately, for Turpin, his brother wouldn’t pay the postage owed on the letter and it was returned to the Post Office. * One of Dick Turpin’s former teachers happened to see the letter at the Post Office and recognise the handwriting. * The teacher was sent to York to identify Dick Turpin - he was caught. |
| Convicted | * Turpin was given the death sentence and he was executed by hanging in York. * Apparently he was incredibly courageous and chatted to the executioner before throwing himself off the ladder to his death. |

