

PROTHERO, THOMAS (1780 - 1853), solicitor, colliery proprietor, and influential citizen of Newport, Monmouth

Name: Thomas Prothero
Date of birth: 1780
Date of death: 1853
Parent: Thomas Prothero
Gender: Male
Occupation: solicitor, colliery proprietor, and influential citizen
Area of activity: Business and Industry; Law; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: Watkin William Price

He was the son of Thomas Prothero of Usk, attorney, clerk of the peace for Monmouthshire, recorder of Usk, and steward of the duke of Beaufort. He is believed to have been illegitimate, and this seems to be confirmed, as he filled in his birthplace in the Census of 1851 as ' Monmouthshire,' without naming the parish as was usual. Early in life he became an attorney at Newport and was admitted a Burgess 9 October 1807; three days later he was appointed town clerk of the closed corporation of Newport. In addition he became agent to **Sir Charles Morgan** of Tredegar, the owner of most of the land on which the town of Newport was built, as well as of two other local landlords. This gave him considerable opportunities of adding to his private practice by conveyance of land and by inserting clauses to his private benefit at a time when the upland districts at the head of the Monmouthshire valleys were developing their coal and iron resources, whose natural outlet was Newport.

With his partner, **Sir Thomas Phillips**, who succeeded him as town clerk, Prothero was entrusted with the legal work that was entailed in the promotion of bills for the improvement of the town, its streets and highways, port and harbour. He thus became very wealthy, and was not over scrupulous in his methods of acquiring riches. ' A pugnacious and domineering man,' he was accused of sharp practice and of extortionate charges by his arch-enemy, **John Frost**, the chartist, once a town councillor, magistrate and mayor, in many published letters which delighted the victimized inhabitants of Newport. He set up as a banker, and was treasurer of the Caerleon Charity, which owned large property that was very rich in minerals, and as a slate and timber merchant he supplied the Charity with the necessary materials. He and **Thomas Powell** were the largest coal exporters in Newport, and were accused of forming a coal-selling monopoly. At one time he was under-sheriff, and packed the grand jury to secure a verdict against his antagonist, **John Frost**. His residence was, at first, ' The Friars ' and, later, ' Malpas Court,' which long remained in the possession of his family. He was high sheriff of the county in 1846. He died suddenly in London 24 April 1853, age 73. He had been twice married. Two of his grandsons, Sir **GEORGE WALTER PROTHERO** (1848 - 1922), historian, and **ROWLAND EDMUND PROTHERO**, baron Ernle (1851 - 1937), administrator and author, are commemorated in *D.N.B. Supplements*.

Author

Watkin William Price, (1873 - 1967)

Sources

Deeds of P. D. Steam Coal Co., quoted in 'The History of the P.D. Co.' by W. W. Price in the *P.D. and G.L.M. Review. A magazine of the coal trade activities of Powell Duffryn Associated Collieries, Ltd., GuÃ©ret, Llewellyn & Merrett, Ltd., and allied companies'*

Diary of Thomas Clarkson

The Cambrian, 6 June 1829

Census of 1851 (at P.R.O.)

Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire*

Burke's Landed Gentry

David Williams, *John Frost, A Study in Chartism* (1939)

personal researches

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Thomas Prothero](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q7793310](#)

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