

ROWE (or Roe), OWEN (born circa 1593, died 1661), Civil War officer and regicide, was son of John Rowe who in 1609 was of Bickley, Cheshire, but no relation to the Rowses of Macclesfield, Cheshire, as has been suggested (*Herald and Genealogist*, II, 61-3, 156-7), for Rowe's seal perfectly preserved on the Death Warrant of Hamilton, Goring, Capel, et. al. (6 March 1649, House of Lords Library), as well as his tricked arms (Rawl. MSS. B. 48., f. 29b) leave no doubt of his relation to the Rowses who were Lord Mayors of London in 1568, 1592, and 1607 (*Visitation of Cheshire, 1663*, pp. 95-6; *Visitation of Middlesex, 1663*, 30; *Middlesex Pedigrees*, ed. Armytage, 8, 46). Rowe's father was possibly the John Roe who 28 November 1637 petitioned the King against fraudulent practices in the wool trade (CSPD, 1637, 571). Rowe's father bound himself for £100 to Edward Pickering 11 August 1609 to put his son Owen to apprentice for the Haberdasher's Company (MS. 15,860/3, Guildhall Library), and Rowe eventually became a liveryman of the Haberdashers (Rev. T. C. C. Dale, *Members of the City Companies in 1641*, Typescript in the Institute of Historical Research, London), a silk merchant, and was on the Common Council of the City before 1638. He was a prominent resident of Coleman Street in the City, where, with Isaac Pennington, he was a leading parishioner of St. Stephen's and member of its committee to select communicants (*Archaeologia*, L, 23, 25). By the mid-1630s, Rowe had a share in the Massachusetts Bay Company, owned a house, town lot, and cattle in Boston, as well as property at New Haven and 200 acres of farmland in Massachusetts, and had the intention of settling there (John Winthrop, *Journal*, 1853 ed., I, 475). He even sent his eldest son Nathaniel to America in 1635 ahead of him. In 1630, acting as agent with John Alcock for the Bermudas Company, Rowe sold 700 lbs. of tobacco in London (J. H. Lefroy, *Memorial of the ... Bermudas*, I, 515), both of them becoming by October 13, 1644, members of the Company's governing board (*Ibid.*, 590), and then Rowe became Deputy Governor of the Company, an office he lost in 1647 (*Ibid.*, 623, 702) but regained again in 1655, and held until the Restoration (*Ibid.*, 675; II, 65, 87, 128, 285). Rowe's colleagues on the board included the Earl of Warwick and the radicals Cornelius Holland, Lord Say and Sele, Francis Allen, and Sir John Danvers the regicide (who was Governor in 1651; *Ibid.*, II, 20). Isaac Rowe, a 'kinsman' mentioned in Rowe's brother's will (PCC Wills, Prob-11-211, pp. 209-10), was on the board by 1653 (*Ibid.*, I, 675; II, 58, 61). Rowe was always dynamic and active in his concerns, and his Bermudas interests were no exception (CSPD, 1651, 454-5; Lefroy, *op. cit.*, II, 23-4, 42, 84-5), and he tried to restrain the royalists in those colonies (*Ibid.*, II, 87-8). His lands and property there were confiscated at the Restoration along with those of Holland and Danvers (*Ibid.*, II, 56-7, 164-5, 655-6, 679).

From the time he was a young man, Rowe was attracted to military affairs. He became a Lieutenant of the City's Honourable Artillery Company 26 October 1619 (G. A. Raikes, *Ancient Vellum Book*, p. 31). He later became Captain and then by 3 May 1642 (not 1643 as in DNB and Valerie Pearl, *London and the ... Puritan Revolution*, p. 324) was Serjeant-Major [this being a higher rank than captain, in other words equivalent to Major] of the City's 5th (Green) Regiment under Alderman Colonel John Warner, with his brother Francis Rowe as Second Captain under him (Rawl. MSS., *op. cit.*, f. 25a). By 31 December 1642, he was a Lieutenant-Colonel (CCAM, 7) in charge of the City's arms and ammunition magazine at the Tower. The Houses authorised Rowe to spend £5000 to buy arms for Parliament 6 September 1643 (CSPD, 1641-3, 484; LJ, VI, 207). He became the central arms administrator for

Parliament under the command of the Earl of Essex (CSPD, 1644, 25) and had under him the various officers of the ordnance (*Ibid.*, 92). Rowe continued in this role until at least July, 1645 (CCAM, 368, 1495-6; CSPD, 1625-49 Add. Vol., 661; 1644, 169-70, 302-3, 422, 425, 476, 508; 1644-5, 7, 28, 164, 230, 244, 259, 323, 348, 605), during which time he was the acknowledged expert in the entire country for judging the condition of arms (a crucial matter at a time when entire shipments of hundreds of muskets or firelocks were sometimes found to be worthless or faulty just prior to a battle, so that he was one of the earliest practitioners of what modern industry calls 'quality control'). He supplied thousands of arms of every variety, even dealing with arrowheads, to Parliamentary troops all over the country, inspected and loaded arms into the ships for Ireland, and was responsible for organizing his own shipments and deliveries inland. This shows an incredible degree of efficiency and reliability in Rowe, of whom no complaints ever seem to have been made in this most exacting job. He was thus one of those invisible functionaries upon whom the ultimate victory of Parliament depended, and he can claim a major share of the credit for winning the Civil War by making certain that the guns fired properly. The City then chose Rowe to go as a Commissioner to Ireland, which the House approved 18 August 1645 (CJ, IV, 245b). By 1646 he was back in England and was commissioned Colonel of the City's Green Regiment (Rawl. MS., *op. cit.*, f. 29b) and 7 August 1646 he was granted by Parliament £2000 'for his long and faithful service' (CCC, 43; CJ, IV, 607a), but only after he had petitioned for some payment. Parliament appointed Rowe 23 July 1647 one of the Committee for the Militia of London, with his old associates Pennington, Warner, and Allen, and with Titchborne the regicide and others (Rushworth, VI, 634). Rowe and his brother Francis were now in desperate financial straits due to their not receiving their wages for many years, and 4 March 1648 they petitioned the House for £6,457 owing to Owen from the state, to keep them both from debtors' prison for Francis's debts to which Owen had also stood surety (HMC 7th Report, Appendix, p. 13; LJ, X, 90), £200 of which was owing to their brother-in-law Thomas Salmon, who had been suing Francis for two years and 12 April 1648 petitioned the Lords about it (HMC Report, *op. cit.*, p. 19b; full document in the House of Lords Library). Francis was by now Scoutmaster-General of the New Model Army; but he died in December 1649 at Youghall in Ireland (HMC Report, *op. cit.*, 73-4) and in his will (*op. cit.*) named Owen as his executor, who proved the will in London 5 February 1650.

Rowe was named to the High Court of Justice to try the King, attended nearly all its meetings, and signed the Death Warrant. Rowe also signed the Death Warrant 6 March 1649 of Hamilton and others (*op. cit.* and HMC Report, *op. cit.*, 71). For the conflict with the Scots, the City raised a single regiment of horse as a militia force, and Rowe was its Colonel; it was finally ordered disbanded 17 September 1651 (CSPD, 1651, 436), presumably having seen service in the North under the general command of Harrison (Gardiner, HCP, I, 298, 407). Rowe was named 16 October 1651 to the commission for court martial of twenty English prisoners (CSPD, 1651, 479; Gardiner, *op. cit.*, I, 466-7). Rowe had been appointed to a committee to attend the Council of State regarding officers' pay (ironical, since he rarely if ever received his own), and was summoned in this duty again 30 December 1651 (CSPD, 1651-2, 84). In company with Major William Robinson 19 October 1652, Rowe made a remarkable bid to take over the inland and foreign letter offices, and offered £10,000 cash for control of all postal services, submitting a detailed proposal to the Council of State listing charges of all routes (Egerton MSS. 1048, ff. 158-9). A committee of the

Council of State which included Vane and Hazlerigg (Heselrige) favoured Rowe's proposal and submitted it to the full Council, but the House had other plans for the postal services, and after six months with no decision, Robinson withdrew the proposal (CSPD, 1652-3, 393, 478). As a commissioner of oyer and terminer he was summoned to the Old Bailey 17 August 1653 (CSPD, 1653-4, 92). He was a trustee for the sale of Deans' and Chapters' lands and on 2 March 1654, he, Titchborne, and others, as such made difficulties for Cromwell over the Protector's order for settling some lands (CSPD, 1654, 4). Charles Fleetwood and the regicides John Jones and Miles Corbet tried 8 July 1654 to persuade Cromwell to allow Parliament's grant of lands in Ireland to Rowe (CJ, VII, 317s) to go through in satisfaction of the long-standing public debt to him of £5065 (Rawl MSS. A. 16., ff. 115-6). Rowe was appointed 25 March 1656 a Commissioner for the Peace in London under the Mayor, Skippon, and the regicide John Barkstead (CSPD, 1655-6, 238). But Barkstead's true feelings about Rowe were well expressed in a letter to Thurloe 12 August 1656, where he names him, Titchborne, Bradshaw, and others as being, according to a spy of his, conspirators against the Protectorate, although he takes care to cover himself by saying that some of them may be being used unknowingly (Thurloe, SP, V, 304). In 1659, again commanding his Green Regiment, Rowe opposed Monck (Pearl, *op. cit.*, p. 3324). Rowe married three times, had many children (*Herald and Genealogist, op. cit.*) and his brother married the daughter of Thomas Scott the regicide. Sir Nicholas Crisp, Bart., the royalist, was Rowe's brother-in-law by his third wife. At the Restoration, Rowe was tried and imprisoned, died in the Tower 25 December 1661, and was buried on December 27 at St. John's Shacklewell, Hackney, the traditional burial place for the Rowes (see William Robinson, *History and Antiquities of ... Hackney*, II, 8-11, 17, 28, foldouts, etc.)