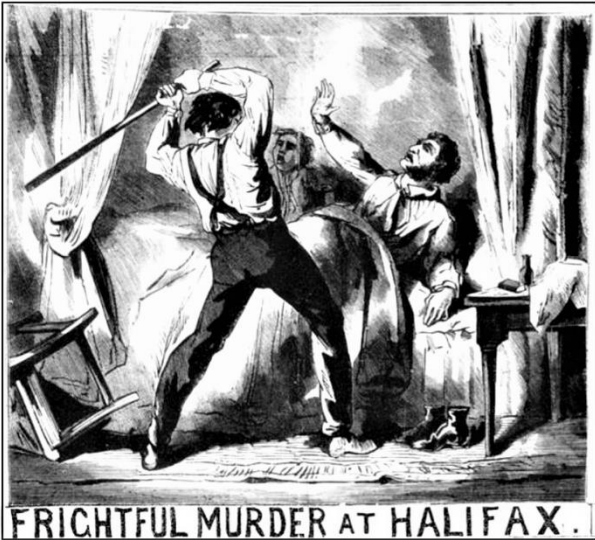


William Crabtree
1821 – 1870



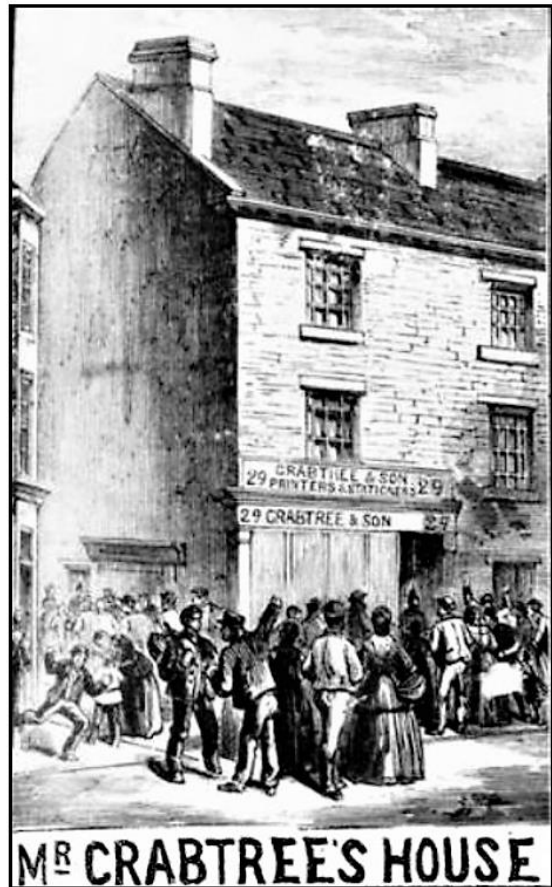
FRICHTFUL MURDER AT HALIFAX.

William Crabtree of Halifax was the founder of Crabtree & Son, newsagent, printer and bookseller, at 29 Waterhouse Street, where he and his family lived above their business premises. After his wife Ann's death in 1868, William remade his will, and this apparently caused a rift between him and his eldest son, Walter. Early on the morning of Sunday 18th December 1870, forty-nine-year-old William was found in bed with his throat cut. Nineteen-year-old Walter told police that his father had cut his own throat; but William had been hacked to death; his skull was fractured in three places. Walter was arrested on suspicion

of murder. William was buried in Lister Lane Cemetery; though his grave is unmarked.

The Coroner's Inquest took place in December, and Walter was committed to the Assizes at Leeds for trial on a charge of wilful murder. The trial took place in March 1871. Certain circumstances in the prisoner's conduct tended to implicate him, although no motive could be suggested for the murder. In Walter's defence, it was demonstrated that a stranger could have been the murderer, having concealed himself in the house, committed the killing, and escaped afterwards. Although William's youngest son, nine-year-old Samuel, had been sleeping in his father's room at the time of the murder, and saw the killer in dim light, he refused to identify his eldest brother as the murderer. After retiring for just a few minutes, the Jury returned and acquitted Walter of murder. The case was never solved.

Illustrations from The Illustrated Police News, Law Courts and Weekly Record - Saturday, December 31, 1870; Issue 359



MR CRABTREE'S HOUSE