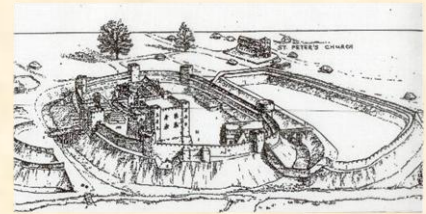


The Provisions

The official newsletter of
Simon de Montfort 2014

April 2014

As in any war, the victors get to determine the legality of everything that went on during it, and Henry later designated the fall of Northampton on 5 April 1264 as the official start of the civil war. He well knew that Simon and his men did not withdraw their fealty until he defied them in the exchange before Lewes, over a month later, but he needed to make rebels out of them in order to justify disinheriting them. There was also his honour to think of, and Northampton was his only real victory, when he bagged upwards of eighty Montfortian barons after storming the city (with some help from royalist monks undermining the walls from within). So swift did it happen that Simon had only got as far as St. Albans with a relief force before he turned back.



Northampton Castle
Henry's great, and only, victory

The question now becomes what did he do next, because somewhere around this time, a mob descended on the Jewish community in London and came close to wiping out every man, woman and child. The Dunstable annalist says he ordered it because the Jews were preparing to give the city away, and that failing, setting it on fire. It's difficult to believe a man of Simon's intelligence believing such nonsense. The London chronicler, moreover, credits his right-hand man Despenser with offering shelter to the survivors. Then there's the fullest account, from Wykes, who certainly would have blamed Montfort if he could, but the most he accuses him of is ordering the only indentified ringleader to hand over most of the blood money for their war chest. While none of this supports the charge that Simon encouraged his supporters to attack the Jews then or later, as is often bandied about today, this singular tragedy did mark the start of the 'season of atrocities' common to every civil war. Henry's forces were in fact already laying waste to the Midlands, pillaging and burning as they went, regardless of whose side anyone was on, and the Montfortians would soon do their part in Rochester, followed again by the royalists, by the time this most lamentable month of the conflict was over.



A fire has reportedly gutted the Phoenix Theatre in Lewes. The extent of the damage can be seen in this report and video available [online](#).

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