



Dr. Ward (Document A)

Michael Ward was a doctor in Manchester for 30 years. His practice treated several children who worked in Manchester factories. He was interviewed about the health of textile factory workers on March 25, 1819, by the House of Lords Committee, a government organization investigating safety in textile factories.

Question: Give the committee information on your knowledge of the health of workers in cotton (textile) factories.

Answer: Last summer I visited three cotton factories with Dr. Clough of Preston and Mr. Barker of Manchester. We could not remain ten minutes in the factory without gasping (coughing) for breath

Question: What was your opinion of the health of cotton factory children compared to children in other employments (jobs)?

Answer: The health of the cotton factory children is much worse than that of any other children.

Question: Have you any further information to give to the committee?

Answer: Cotton factories are very unfavorable (bad), both for the health and morals of those working in them. They are nurseries (birthplaces) of disease and vice (crime).

Question: Have you observed that children in the factories have accidents?

Answer: When I was a surgeon in the hospital, children injured in accidents were very often admitted to the hospitals. Many children's hands and arms had been caught in the machinery. In many instances the muscles and the skin is stripped down to the bone. In some cases a finger or two might be lost. Last summer I visited Lever Street School. The number of children at that time in the school who were employed (working) in factories was 106. The number of children who had received injuries from the machinery amounted to very nearly half. There were forty-seven injured in this way.

Dr. Holme (Document B)

Edward Holme was a doctor who lived in Manchester England during the early 1800s. He was an active member of a number of academic societies and associations and a well-regarded doctor. In 1818, he was interviewed by the House of Lords Committee about health conditions of factories. Here is an excerpt from the interview:

Question: How long have you worked as a doctor in Manchester?

Answer: Twenty-four years

Question: Has that given you opportunities to observe the health of the children who are ordinarily (normally) employed in the cotton factories?

Answer: It has.

Question: In what state of health did you find these children?

Answer: They were in good health generally. I can give you the specifics of Mr. Pooley's factory. He employs 401 persons. Of the persons examined in 1796, 363 were found in good health.

Question: Am I to understand you, from your investigations in 1796, you formed rather a favorable (positive) opinion of the health of persons working in cotton factories?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Have you had any reason to change that opinion since?

Answer: None whatsoever. They are as healthy as any other part of the working classes of the community

Question: Who requested (asked) that you examine these children in Mr. Pooley's factory?

Answer: Mr. Pooley.





John Birley (Document C)

John Birley was born in London in 1805. He lost both his parents at the age of 5. He began working at the Cresbrook textile factory in 1812 when he was 7 years old. John was interviewed about his experiences as a child worker at the Mill in 1849. An article on his life was published in the newspaper, the Ashton Chronicle in May 1849.

Our working time was from five in the morning until nine or ten at night. On Saturday we worked until eleven and often twelve o'clock at night, and then we were sent to clean the machinery on Sunday. No time was allowed for breakfast and we were not allowed to sit for dinner.

Mr. Needham, the master of the mill, had five sons. The sons used to go up and down the mill with long sticks. Frank (*a son*) once beat me until he frightened (*scared*) himself. He thought he had killed me. He had struck me on the side of the head and knocked me senseless. Another time he knocked me down and threatened me with a stick. To save my head I raised my arm, which he then hit with all his strength. My elbow was broken. I bear the marks and suffer pain from it to this day, and I always will as long as I live

I was determined to let Bethnal Green Church know the treatment we suffered. I thought they could help us. I wrote a letter and put it into the Post Office. Sometime after this three inspectors came down from Bethnal Green. But before we were interviewed we were washed (*cleaned up*) and ordered to tell the inspectors that we liked working at the mill and that we were treated well. Needham and his sons were in the room at the time. They asked us questions about our treatment, which we answered as we had been told to answer. We did not dare to say anything else because we knew what would happen if we told them (*the inspectors*) the truth.

Edward Baines (Document D)

Edward Baines was a newspaper journalist and editor for the Leeds Mercury Newspaper. In the 1830s, he was elected to Parliament, and served there as a political liberal. Although Baines supported the end of slavery and various political reforms, he opposed legislation regulating factories and extending voting rights to the English working class. This is an excerpt from his book History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain.

It is alleged (*claimed*) that the children who work in factories are often cruelly beaten by the masters of the factories, and that they grow up to be cripples (*people that have trouble walking*) because of the hard working conditions and the injuries they suffer. It is alleged that they are forced to work thirteen, fourteen or fifteen hours per day. This view of factory labor has been repeatedly given, which has convinced many to think these stories must be true. But the truth is that these stories are the exception and not the rule (*these things are not very common*).

The human body is weak and can easily catch diseases. Many of the children who are born into the world, and who live to be ten or twelve years old, are so weak that in most any situation they would likely die early.

None of the work that children and young people do in mills requires constant attention. It is barely possible for any employment (*job*) to be easier. The children walk around, and have the opportunity to sit frequently if they desire to.

If a spinner (*someone that makes clothes*) can now produce as much in a day as he could have produced in a year just a century ago, this is a reason to rejoice (*celebrate*) not to lament (*be sad*).

