

Working Conditions for Children

SOURCE A

In the evening I walked out to Cromford and saw the children coming from their work...I was glad to see them look in general very healthy and many with rosy fine complexions.

These children had been at work from six or seven o'clock this morning and it was near or about seven o'clock in the evening. One of them, a boy of ten or eleven years of age told me his wages were 3s and 6d a week, and a little girl said her wages were 2s and 6d a week.

Cromford's Working Children from the diary of Joseph Farington

SOURCE B

August 23rd.

We went to church at Cromford to a chapel built about 3 1/2 years ago [1797] by Mr. Arkwright.

These children are employed in Mr. Arkwright's mill, work in the weekdays, and on Sundays attend a school where they receive education. They came to chapel in regular order and looked healthy and well and were decently clothed and cleaned. They were attended by their schoolmaster. Girls go alternately with the boys to church, the boys on one Sunday, the girls on the next.

Whichever are not at chapel are at school. The whole plan appears to be such as to do Mr. Arkwright credit.

Cromford's Working Children from the diary of Joseph Farington

SOURCE C

*Derby Mercury Report
12 October 1786*

A man named George Hamilton, was convicted of cruelty to a child that worked at a Cotton Mill near Bakewell. He was ordered to be imprisoned for six months, and to pay a fine of Twenty Pounds. It appeared at the Trial, that as a punishment he [George Hamilton] kicked and otherwise abused the child in a very unmerciful manner; and afterwards drew it up by its neck. The child appeared a shocking spectacle. It is hoped the exemplary punishment of this man, will be a warning to all who abuse the trust placed in them by their masters, in cruelly treating poor children that are placed under their care. At the another court trial, Aaron Matley, of Ashover, was found guilty of stealing a large quantity of wool and ordered to be transported for the Term of 5 years.

Working Conditions at Cromford Mills

Richard Arkwright (Junior) State of Children Employed in Manufactories Sir Robert Peel in the Chair, 7 June 1816

At what age do you admit children into your mills? - *Not till they are ten years of age.*

What are the hours of work per day in your mills? - *Thirteen hours, including meal times*

That is from six-seven? - *From six to seven in the summer, and from seven to eight in the winter.*

Were not children from seven or eight to fifteen years of age, principally employed in cotton-mills some time after the invention of Sir Richard Arkwright? - *Yes.*

Was not the usual time of working twelve hours a day, inclusive of breakfast and afternoon's refreshment? - *Thirteen hours, inclusive of all their refreshments.*

Did you ever observe that their intellects were impaired? - *Certainly not.*

Did you ever observe that their growth was stunted, or that they became deformed in consequence of their employment? - *I have known of their becoming deformed; but I do not think that has been from the length of employment.*

Or from the nature of it? - *I have never known any that were employed in the day, who were deformed.*

You have mentioned, since the employment by night had been discontinued, you remarked that nothing of that sort had occurred? - *I think not. There are two boys at Cromford now who are deformed, and I have enquired the cause of it from medical men; no satisfactory account has been given. I cannot attribute it to arise from their employment. I think there are many instances from working in the night.*

But since night working has discontinued? - *Since that has been discontinued I do not think it has occurred.*

Do you think that it arose from their employment in the night? - *I think not - there were once at Cromford 164 boys employed in the night; they were so employed for about twenty two years; those boys got extravagant wages and were extremely dissipated, and many of them had few hours sleep.*

Then did that case arise more from the conduct of the boys during the day than from any employment during the night? - *I think it did; but the rooms were not so well ventilated as they are now and they might receive some injury from that.*

Working and Living Conditions at Other Mills

Damp and ill-ventilated cellars that consists of two rooms, the first of which is used as a kitchen, and though frequently damp, it is preferable to the backroom which has only one small window. In this room, the whole family, sometimes 7 or 8 are placed. The beds are fixed on the damp earth. A candle is required at midday. I have seen the sick lying in rags, they can seldom afford straw

Dr. J. Farriar

What are the forms of cruelty that you spoke of just now as being practised upon children in factories?

I have seen the time when a pound weight each, more or less, have been screwed to my ears, at Lytton Mill in Derbyshire. Here are the scars behind my ears. Then three or four of us have been hung at once on a cross beam above the machinery, hanging by our hands, without shirts or stockings.

Mind, we were apprentices, without father or mother to take care of us; I don't say that they often do that now.

Do you know that such things are now done in Manchester?

No, not just the same things; but I think the children are still beaten by overlookers; not so much, however, in Manchester, where justice is always at hand, as in country places.

Robert Blincoe, a small Manufacturer, once an Apprentice to a Cotton Mill, sworn and examined by Dr. Hawkins, 18th May 1833