

How useful are sources from Quarry Bank Mill for a historian studying the experiences of workers in the industrial revolution?

Story

Create a title for each paragraph.

The article below examines the experiences of apprentices and workers in Quarry Bank Mill. highlight any key features that can relate to the question

Summarise each paragraph in 1 or 2 bullet points.

The 17th and 18th centuries were a period of great change in the working lives of ordinary people. Many had to leave the land and seek work elsewhere, in towns and in the new textiles factories. The early workers at Quarry Bank Mill were a mixture of unskilled farm labourers and the spinners and weavers who previously worked at home before the textile industry was likewise mechanised. They were unused to the often quite appalling working conditions imposed upon them by the new factory owners but, faced with abject poverty or the workhouse, most were prepared to accept them in return for a regular wage.

Built in 1823, a decade before education for factory children was made compulsory, Styal school was also used to educate the 'half-timers', children whose working day was divided equally between school and work. Greg believed in making sure that his apprentices were educated, something that was not necessarily shared among other factory owners at the time.

By comparison with accommodation in the towns, the houses at Styal were quite comfortable. Many of them had a cellar, parlour, scullery and two upstairs bedrooms. Each one also had its own allotment garden to supplement the family's' basic diets. Rent for the cottages was deducted from their wages at source. The cellars were often rented out separately to couples or single workers. As Well as this, Greg also provided the people of Styal village with a local market shop, where quality groceries could be bought by the workers. This was paid for by Greg himself.

Samuel Greg was, for his time, a benevolent employer, who saw the virtues of having a healthy workforce. Ill health due to bad sanitation caused absence from work, resulting in lower profits. Each house in the factory community at Styal had its own private back yard and lavatory.

Source

A

Engraving from 'The life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy', By Frances Trollope, 1840

B

Robert Hyde Greg on 'The Factory question', 1833

"The law transfers to a master the privileges of a parent, amongst which is a command over the services of the child. It most probably imposes upon him also the duties of a parent: provide food, clothes and education"

C

The working day at Styal, c1830

5.30 am : Work day begins

8.30 am: Break of 10 minutes for Breakfast

1.00 pm: 30 minutes for dinner - hasten home to the village and back

5.30 pm: Tea at the machines

8.00 pm: End of the working day unless overtime is demanded



Scholarship

John Howard Hodson, The Story of Wilmslow, (J. Andrew & Co. Ltd, 1971)

Discipline was strict, and included corporal punishment. Fines were severe: for breaking a lamp glass, 4s.; breaking a window pane, 1s. 4d.; breaking a window pane at the Master's house, 8s.; stealing apples, 5s. 23 children absconded between 1815 and 1845; only four were not recaptured. Nevertheless, a Dr. Andrew Ure gave a glowing account of the factory in 1835, and recorded the Gregs' "belief that their children were superior in appearance, health, and education to the agricultural children. Mr W.R. Greg has observed that the children are a great deal more fatigued, and less will to go to school after a holiday, than after the business of an ordinary day. They all attend school with regularity."

Mary Rose, The Gregs of Quarry Bank Mill: The Rise and Decline of a Family Firm, 1993

The cottages at Styal were little different in size from any other factory housing. There were, however, no 'back-to-backs' and this, combined with the absence of overcrowding and the provision of a separate privy for each cottage, made them vastly superior to urban working-class dwellings. The best cottages in Styal had 'a parlour and a back kitchen and two bedrooms, a cistern and a yard'.

Task 1

Read through the **Story** of the lives of apprentices and workers at Quarry Bank Mill. For each paragraph, you need to create a 'title' on one side, and a short summary (two bullet points maximum) on the other.

Task 2

Look at **source** A, B, and C. In your book, write a short description of the message of each source. Then answer the question "What do these sources tell you about the experiences of workers in the industrial revolution?"

Task 3

Read through Hodson and Rose's interpretations on life at Quarry Bank Mill. Highlight what you think are the three most important sentences. In your book, answer the question "What do Historians think about the experiences of workers at Quarry Bank?"