

Name: William Morris

Occupation: Weaver

Home: Five miles from Manchester

Date: 17th March 1820

Source: Trial of Henry Hunt, 26-28

Summary: Saw men put into military formation on the morning of the 16th August 1819. Saw Bamford address crowd, urging non-violence. 'nor was I alarmed at [Hunt's] set.'

Done by: RH

William Morris, examined by *Sergeant Cross*. —I am a weaver, residing five miles from Manchester, near White Moss. In the course of August last, I saw many groups of people near Middleton; *Samuel Bamford* used to be among them. Early on the 16th of August, about nine or ten o'clock, I saw many hundreds of people put into regular form at Middleton, with two flags; 25 men were in each section. I know not who formed them into sections; there certainly was a large number collected, 2 or 300 at least. They marched off four abreast, after being first drawn into the form of a square, in the inside of which was placed a chair, in which *Samuel Bamford* stood, and said, "Friends and neighbours, I have a few words to relate: you will march off this place quietly, not to insult anyone, but rather take an insult. I do not think there will be any disturbance or anything to do; if there is, it will be after we come back; —there is no fear, for the day is our own." He got off the chair, and spread laurel among the men who were to command the sections: they put it some into their breasts, and others in their hats. Before they went away, a large number of people came also arranged in form, from Rochdale, with a band of music before them, and bearing two flags. Both bodies joined, and went off together, each with a cap of liberty. The men had nothing in their hands but bits of switches, or small sticks. Before that day I saw the Middleton people forming and arranging both in fields and high roads. *Bamford* was with them at different times. I know *John Whitworth*, who was a private in the 6th regiment of foot; he was drilling the men, but not on the 16th of August. *John Hay ward*, who was a private in the 6th Dragoons, was doing the same.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Bamford*. —I am swearing the whole truth. I did not see who put the men in form on the morning of the 16th; but I saw you address them from the chair, and heard you recommend them to be peaceable, and understood you wished them to continue so the whole of the day. I was only a dozen yards from you, and I think I could very well hear what you said. I do not recollect your saying, that when they got to Manchester, every man was to remain around his own banner; nor that they were to return home quietly and orderly after the business of the day, and that if any stragglers were on the ground, they were not to form with them, but to look out for their own banner. Many thousand went before and followed the Middleton and Rochdale people, who were not formed with them, as well as a good deal of women and children. I did not observe your wife or your child in the crowd that day. I have seen many processions with music at Middleton, of the Orangemen and Odd fellows; they had flags and inscriptions. I was at Middleton on the Proclamation of his Majesty, and I saw then a procession of the Odd Fellows bearing a flag.

Justice Bayley —I am unwilling to interrupt you; how does this bear upon the point?

Mr. Bamford. — I mean to show, that it is a common practice in this part of the country to have these sort of processions.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Hunt*—It is 25 years since I was a non-commissioned officer in the 14th regiment; I remained so as long as I stayed in the 'service? I was in the habit of a soldier for three years, but I never took an oath, and was therefore not sworn in the oath of allegiance. When I seen as much of the service as I liked, I wished them good morning a laugh). When I thought I had been there long enough, I made the best of my way home. I was never toy that being a deserter, and having violated my path, I could not be a good witness in a Court of *Justice*. I entered the regiment as what was called a mushroom *Sergeant* (loud laughter). I had so much a man for enlisting on the recruiting service. I have been in Ireland, but never happened to see Orange clubs marching there as at Middleton. I never saw the Orangemen with shillelagh to defend themselves, but I have seen them with common sticks. *Mr. Hunt*— You were not alarmed then?

Witness—No, "I was not, nor was I alarmed at your set—(laughter). I saw no depredations committed on their march. I saw them insult nobody. I will not swear that they did

not play "God save the King" he added with warmth, on *Mr. Hunt's* pressing the question). I did not expect those loyal tunes would be played by them; I did not hear them play disloyal tunes, nor "The Rogue's March", which, perhaps I think if yours; nor "The Deserter's", which may be I'd have taken to myself laughter). I saw none of them drunk on their way to Manchester. Some of the people had small sticks.

Mr. Hunt—Were any of them large enough to whip an infamous case out of Court
The *Judge* said, this was not the time to make an observation.