

Name: John Ratcliffe

Occupation: Cotton Spinner

Home: Nether Lees

Date: 23nd March 1820

Source: *Trial of Henry Hunt* 132-133

Summary: Saw the Rochdale procession. Perceived no alarm from the inhabitants of Manchester. Saw many women and children in the procession. 'The ladies showed no fear; indeed I was astonished at the indifference of the towns-people to the meeting.'

Done by: RH

John Ratcliffe. —I live in Nether Lees, near Lees. I am a cotton-spinner by trade. I was at Manchester on the 16th of August. I was not upon business, but out of curiosity. I know Manchester well. Business seemed to be going on there as usual. There was no appearance of general alarm. I saw no shops shut up. The factories and foundries were all at work. I saw Peel and Williams's. That was also at work. I saw Mr. Peel come from his factory, to wait, as I understood, to see the procession. They showed no symptom of alarm at its approach. I saw the Rochdale procession come in, they had no offensive weapons. I was at the field. There were numbers of women and children in the processions; the women did not appear to be frightened. They were abroad in great numbers, many of them well dressed. No one offered to insult them. The ladies showed no fear; indeed I was astonished at the indifference of the towns-people to the meeting. I was standing on the north side of the hustings, between them and *Mr. Buxton's* house, when you arrived. I did not then see the line of constables, it was not until the cavalry came that I saw them. Your arrival was cheered. I saw the Yeomanry come, I first saw their swords drawn in a line in front of *Mr. Buxton's* house.

By the Court. —It might be from a dozen to twenty yards that I stood from the hustings. if resistance was made to them, I should have seen it, for they went directly between me and my friend. The crowd, as far as I saw made no opposition whatever. If there had, I should have seen it, from the place where I stood. I saw neither brickbats nor stones thrown at them. There were no sticks held up. I could see the whole show they made to the hustings. My eye was fixed upon them.

By *Mr. Hunt*—When I understood the cavalry were coming, Looked, but saw neither brickbats nor stones. They passed quite close to me. The people, so far from closing them in ran away.