

Name: Sidney Walker

Occupation: Lieutenant in the Bengal Native Infantry

Home: Manchester

Date: 24th March 1820

Source: *Trial of Henry Hunt* 139-140

Summary: Saw the meeting at SPF. Saw no resistance made by the crowd. Never saw *Hunt* in company of other reformers (particularly *Carlile*). 'Mr. *Carlile's* trial had not then come on, and I must presume a man to be innocent until he is found guilty.'

Done by: RH

Sidney Walker, by Mr. Hunt—I am a Lieutenant in the Bengal Native Infantry. I have been from India one or two years. I was at Manchester on the 16th of August last. My family reside there. It consists of my mother, a sister, and her family. I observed the processions coming in; they were perfectly peaceable. I went afterwards to the meeting; some of the processions I saw pass through Deansgate. I saw nothing in the course of the morning calculated to excite fears in the respectable people of the town. Neither my mother nor sister expressed alarm. I did not hear any express fears for the safety of the town. I saw the military on the field. I stood about 40 yards from *Mr. Buxton's* house, on the Deansgate side. *Mr. Buxton's* is at the side of St. Peter's Church. I did not see any violence committed either in the field or in the streets, in the course of the day, by the people. There were, however, two or three inclined to fight amongst themselves, but they were prevented by those about them. They said they would not have a riot created. Up to the arrival of the cavalry, I did not see anything like intimidation on the part of the people.

Cross-examined by *Sergeant Hullock*. —I am still in the service of the Company, but my leave is out, and I do not receive pay. I have a mind to retire, and am now a student of the Inner Temple. I was called to the meeting by notices on the walls. I did not see the *Observer*. I had come in from the country. I lived about two miles from town. My mother lives in town, about four or five hundred yards from St. Peter's Field. I am not a member of the Union, or any political society. I was told who the speakers would be. I knew that *Mr. Hunt* was to preside there. I did not know that *Dr. Crompton*, *Mr. Carlile*, or *Mr. Pearson* were to be there. I knew *Mr. Carlile's* shop. I knew at the time that he was under prosecution for blasphemous libels.

Mr. Hunt again objected to any inquiry being made about *Mr. Carlile*, who was not a defendant here.

Justice Bayley said, as he was one of those who were called to the meeting, the prosecutors were at liberty to show that he was under prosecution for blasphemy at the time.

Mr. Hunt thought it very hard to be made accountable for every act of *Mr. Carlile's* life.

The witness went on—I know *Mr. Wooler*, his shop is in Fleet-street; I have been in *Mr. Carlile's* shop; that is also in Fleet-street. I believe it is called "*The Temple of Reason*;" Office of "*The Republican and Deist*" is over the door. Never knew *Mr. Hunt* before the 16th, but I saw him at a meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern; it was upon occasion of the death of *Sir Samuel Romilly*; *Sir Francis Burdett* was in the chair; *Mr. Hunt* was there; many other public characters were there. (Here there was another objection raised, but after some conversation, the witness went on) I don't know that *Wooler* or *Carlile* were there; I have not been much in the habit of attending the trials at Guildhall; I was not at *Carlile's* trial; *Wooler* is a publisher, I believe; I never saw *Mr. Hunt* at any other place than the Crown and Anchor; I never was at a public meeting before that of the 16th of August. The divisions marched in order, keeping a step, seven a breast. They did not march so regular as a regiment of sepoy. I can't say what number of persons were assembled; they were calculated at 100,000. The place was quite full. I heard *Mr. Hunt's* address. I did not see the carriage in which *Mr. Hunt* was.

Re-examined. —I saw the persons assembled, but I can't say in what numbers. They were not in military order. If they had been, I might have guessed their numbers. In August last I had not heard that *Mr. Carlile* was convicted of any crime. *Mr. Carlile's* trial had not then come on, and I must presume a man to be innocent until he is found guilty. I had heard in August that *Wooler* was tried, but I don't know that he was convicted. I never saw you in company with either of them, *Mr. Carlile* I never saw in my life. I slept one night before the meeting at my mother's, the other at my sister's; two miles out of town. The people in the field

had not the appearance of regular troops. I saw no large staves. The people did not appear to me ready to fight for *Hunt* if there should be occasion, for they had no arms.

By the Court. From seeing the divisions you could judge whether they had been drilled? I thought they might walk as well if they had not been drilled. I should not think, from their appearance, that they had been drilled. I saw some of them in the streets. I could tell, by hearing the approach of a body of men, whether they were regular troops or not. There was nothing of uniformity in their step. I did not observe that they were locked in walking. In the field the people pressed very close to the hustings. I think they were too close for offensive operations.