**Name**: Abraham Wrigley

**Occupation**: Cotton spinner

**Home**: Oldham

**Date**: April 4th, 1822

**Source**: Redford v Birley p38-47

**Summary**: Testifies to peacefulness of crowd and seeing cavalry cutting people and chasing them as they dispersed. Hat knocked off by a cavalry sword.

**Done by**: RM

*Abraham Wrigley sworn: examined by Mr. Blackburne.*

Q. You are a cotton-spinner, and live at Oldham?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you do so in 1819?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you go with the Oldham people to Manchester on the 16th. August?

A. Yes.

Q. In the course of your progress from Oldham to Manchester, was any thing done to excite a disturbance?

A. Not at all.

Q. What part of the field did you go on to?

A. About five yards or six from the hustings, between the hustings and Mr. Buxton's house.

Q. Was you near the constables?

A. With my back to the constables; the line of constables leading from Mr. Buxton's house to the hustings.

Q. Did you see the yeomanry cavalry advance towards the hustings?

A. Yes.

Q. Before that time, how had the people attending the meeting, conducted themselves?

A. In a very decent manner; all appeared to be harmony and conviviality.

Q. Did you see the yeomanry when they first advanced?

A. When they met, I did not.

Q. How near had they got to you before you did observe them?

A. They had got close up to me before I could possibly see them.

Q. Was there a great crowd of people round you?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. When you did see them, what were they doing?

A. When they first came up to the place where I stood, they were cutting away with their swords at the people.

Q. When they came up to you what happened?

A. When they come up to me, I stood, as I observed before, with my back to the constables: the constables that stood next to me began to strike the people with their truncheons; and one of the constables standing nearest to me, pushed me forward close to the cavalry-men's horses; and I received a blow on the hat, which I conceived to be by one of the cavalry-men's swords; it knocked it

off.

Q. Did you observe any body else?

A. Yes; I saw many that were struck by the cavalry-men in that situation.

Q. Did you see the effect the blows had on them?

A. I saw blood flowing very copiously from the heads of some of them, after their hats were struck off; they struck them over the head.

Q. Which way did you get away?

A. I was forced back by the pressure of the crowd, in the way where the constables stood; that is, to my back; I was forced against the higher part of the houses that formed Windmill-street.

Q. Well?

A. In that situation, the houses in Windmill-street have cellars.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—You are now speaking about other people in the cellars.

A. Yes; there were some cellars: the houses have mostly cellars in that street; there was an iron railing to prevent accident, which was broken down by the pressure.

Q. Iron railings opposite the cellaring?

A. Yes.

Q. Well?

A. I was then forced into a back yard of Windmill-street.

*Mr Justice Holroyd*.—I do not know whether this is material.

Q. Did you observe any thing more of what happened?

A. After we were driven through the yard, followed by the constables, a great many constables followed and struck several of the people; we were then compelled to make our escape over a fence, not being safe, a very high fence for boards; from there I got down to a brick yard.

Q. Did you get away? Did you see any thing more?

A. When I got over the fence, the cavalry were after the people, who made their escape that way.

Q. Do you know into what street you had gone, when you got over the fence?

A. I got into a brick-yard.

Q. What street had you got into?

A. The higher end of Windmill-street.

Q. Do you mean the end towards Watson-street?

A. No; the other end.

Q. Towards Lower Mosley-street?

A. Yes.

Q. You got away?

A. I got away that way, but returned again.

Q. What did you then see?

A. I came on the field again in ten minutes after I was forced away.

Q. What did you then see?

A. I was coming on the top of Windmill-street; I met an old man, whom I knew, bleeding profusely, from, apparently, a sabre wound received on his forehead.

Q. Was the blood from his forehead?

A. Yes.

Q. Did the blood come from a wound in his forehead?

A. Yes.

Q. What more?

A. I observed to him.

Q. What did you see?

A. After I had seen him, I came down to that part of the ground where I had been, in order to obtain my hat or get another.

Q. You came back to get another hat?—had you seen any body else that had lost their hats?

A. Many.

Q. What did you see?

A. When I came back, I observed that most of the people had fled, and that the cavalry were riding about and forming in a sort of column, and the constables near them.

Q. Did you see any thing more?

A. I saw the constables striking the people who had got away, infirm people.

Q. At the time you returned?

A. At the time I returned.

Q. Do you usually walk with a stick?

A. Yes; I do.

Q. Had you brought your stick with you on this day?

A. I had not; I had at that time walked with a stick for three quarters of a year, for a complaint.

Q. What complaint?

A. The rheumatism.

Q. Did you bring it with you to Manchester on that day?

A. I did not.

Q. How came you not?

A. From something I had heard, that the people were to go without any sort of instruments whatever.

Q. That made you leave your stick behind?

A. That made me leave my stick behind me.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Starkie.*

Q. Did you get your hat again, Abraham j you went back for your hat?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you get it?

A. I did not.

Q. Perhaps you got a hat of somebody's else?

A. I saw a man waving his hand, and he saw I was without a hat, and he gave me one.

Q. Well, exchange is no robbery, you got one belonging to somebody else?

A. Yes.

Q. You say you are a cotton-spinner?

A. Yes.

Q. At that time?

A. Yes.

Q. At Oldham?

A. Yes.

Q. Who did you work for?

A. James Chadwick.

Q. What wages were you receiving?

A. I did not work by the week, what I earned.

Q. What was that?

A. I earned, at that time, about seventeen or eighteen shillings a week.

Q. Did you work all the week, except Monday?

A. All the week.

Q. How long before this had you been at drill?

A. I never was.

Q. Never at drills?

A. I had never no connection with them; I disapproved of them; I persuaded others to keep from them.

Q. You disapproved of them yourself, and endeavoured to dissuade others from going?

A. Yes.

Q. Because you thought mischief might take place?

A. I did not conceive any thing of that sort; I thought it was the work of some incendiary.

Q. Were the persons women and children, you gave this advice to?

A. Young men, just coming into men; perhaps some of them up to eighteen.

Q. These were young men you advised?

A. Yes.

Q. Most of the young men at Oldham?

A. Those who I had conversation with; I advised.

Q. Was it at some club?

A. No.

Q, Was it at the market-place?

A. No.

Q. I should like to know where it was?

A. In our own neighbourhood; some go to each others' houses; it often came into conversation, I advised them to the contrary.

Q. When they were talking politics?

A. Not particularly; no.

Q. Had you never the curiosity to go and see what these people were doing?

A. No.

Q. You never went near them?

A. No.

Q. You was never at White Moss?

A. No.

Q. Nor Tandle Hill?

A. No; I am sure of it.

Q. At what time did you meet when you was going to Manchester?

A. Somewhere near eight o'clock.

Q. They came in different parties; we hear, from Lees and Moseley?

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—These are different towns?

A. Small villages or towns.

Q. Within two or three miles of each other?

A. Yes; the whole does not exceed three miles,

Q. What number might there be from these townships you describe as being within three miles ?

A. I cannot speak to the number.

Q. Were there five or six thousand?

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.-You have got that.

Q. Had they bugles?

A. I believe one, or an instrument of that description.

Q. You were used to the sound of the bugle, you have often heard it at night?

A. No, I had not.

Q. Will you swear you had not?

A. I will swear.

Q. Will you swear that on a Saturday night, or a Sunday morning, you had not constantly heard the sound of a bugle?

A. Yes, I will.

Q. Who commanded your division?

A. We had no commander.

Q. Who gave the word to march?

A. When the parties met at Oldham, it was arranged they should proceed by the sound of the bugle.

Q. All the four parties were to be governed by the sound of the bugle?

A. Yes.

Q. Of course they knew the sounds of the bugle, the sounds for marching?

A. I do not know that they did.

Q. Did the bugle sound from time to time?

A. On the road.

Q. To march and stop?

A. It did.

Q. Had you a drum and fife?

A. I believe a fife or two.

Q. And a drum or two?

A. I believe there was one, I do not know whether there was more or not.

Q. Were the fifes playing and drums beating when you passed on to Manchester?

A. Yes.

Q. In that array you went on to Manchester?

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you first halt?

A. At Failsworth.

Q. There you was joined by another considerable division?

A. Yes.

Q. They had colours drums and fifes also?

A. They had colours.

Q. Then the bugle sounded again, and you proceeded on your course?

A. Yes.

Q. Keeping up your divisions?

A. They were distinguished by their colours.

Q. Did you march in columns or single files?

A. About five or six a breast.

Q. With nothing but slight sticks or switches?

A. Nothing but the ordinary sized walking-sticks.

Q. In that way you marched into Manchester?

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you first halt?

A. In the neighbourhood of New Cross.

Q. And the bugle sounded?

A. Yes.

Q. In order to be quite sure, when you got to the New Cross, all the little switches were thrown away?

A. Not all; some were thrown away.

Q. What course did you take from the New Cross to get to Peter's Field?

A. Along Swan-street, down Shade-hill, by the Exchange, up Dean-street.

Q. That was not the direct way?

A- I did not at that time know.

Q. You know now?

A. Not the nearest way; I believe it was through ignorance of the nearest road to the place, not knowing the nearest road to the field.

Q. So that out of the five or six thousand men with you, no one knew the nearest way?

A. I cannot say.

Q. Was not the way you went, through the most crowded part of Manchester?

A. I cannot say.

Q. Have you been there?

A. I have been there.

Q. The part you went through, was it not the most crowded?

A. I cannot say; it is a very populous place; a populous neighbourhood.

Q. You went by Shude-hill, through Hanging Ditch, by the Market-place, and into Dean-street?

A. Yes.

Q. I believe that goes by the house of a person of the name of Murray?

A. I do not know where he resides.

Q. You know where they stopped?

A. Stopped where?

Q. At Murray's house.

A. They never stopped at any place but the Cross, to the best of my recollection.

Q. Then you marched on to St. Peter's Field?

A. Yes.

Q. What time did you get to the field?

A. Sometime about twelve o'clock.

Q. Had the divisions of Stockport, Middleton, and Ashton arrived?

A. I cannot say any thing of the divisions; but I saw a great number of people.

Q. Were there not many there at the time you got there?

A. There were.

Q. Flags?

A. There might be three or four flags when I arrived.

Q. And some afterwards?

A. Yes.

Q. You say at the time the cavalry came up, you had your back

to them, you knew nothing of their coming?

A I heard they were coming.

Q. You was then looking towards the hustings?

A. Yes.

Q. The flags were then ranged all round the hustings?

A. Some were in the crowd; I cannot be positive as to that.

*Re-examined by Mr. Blackburne*.

Q. At the sound of the bugle, when the bugle sounded what did you do?

A. Stopped.

Q. And when you was stopping, and the bugle, sounded again, what did you then do?

A. Marched.

Q. It was not by the different tones?

A. No.

Q. Only by the sound?

A. Only by the sound.