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Alliance University

Week 6

First, we have Joshua Drake, who testified and expressed his work conditions and what his master expected from them. In this factory, children were mistreated and overworked. He was asked why parents would allow their children to work in these circumstances, to which he replied, "Necessity compels a man that has children to let them work." Meaning it wasn't an option for them. Joshua's final remark was that he wished they would work fewer hours and employ more people.

Second, we have Mr. Matthew Crabtree. He was eight years old when he began working in a factory. At the time of the call, he was a blanket manufacturer. In this location, there were also long hours. For Matthew, it was a bit different; if he were late to his assigned work, he would be beaten very severely, he stated. The master expected them to keep up with this machine which "turns off a regular quantity of cardings." You will be beaten when you do not keep up with this machine. With children, he will strap them when they become weak and not useable in the work field.

Then we have Mr. John Hall, regarding one of the mills. He stated, "At the top to the spindle there is a fly goes across, and the child takes hold of the fly by the ball of his left hand, and he throws the left shoulder up and the right knee inward; he has the thread to get with the right hand, and he has to stoop his head down to see what he is doing; they throw the right knee inward in that way, and all the children I have seen, that bend in the right knee. I knew a family, the whole of whom were bent outwards as a family complaint, and one of those boys was sent to a worsted-mill, and first he became straight in his right knee, and then he became crooked in it the other way."

Elizabeth Bentley, 23, began working at a factory at six. Like Mr. Crabtree, she had very long hours ahead of her. With no time to eat most days, the "supervisor" would take the food and feed it to his pigs, according to Elizabeth. Her job was to empty the frames, take the flyers and bobbins off, carry them to the roller, and then replace them. She expressed that she had to do these many times a day because there were so many frames. If the job weren't done correctly, her master would then strap them. If they are late to work, they will lose their hourly wages, and the difference will be significant.

Finally, we have Peter Smart, who has a different story. He tried to run away twice but was brought back and faced some consequences. In this case, the master “thrashed him with a whip for running away.” At 17, he moved to other mills to Mr. Webster’s. He became an overseer but a slave driver. He will commonly do about fourteen hours, but most time, he will need to produce a specific amount that the master requires and will go about nineteen hours to do what is needed. They were also required to work on the Sabbath, and all had stated wages. With Peter, he was beaten when the work wasn’t done correctly. In Mr. Webster’s mill, children weren’t bound like adults were kids were bound for twelve months.