

Working conditions in bradford 19th century

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Worksheet: Living and working conditions in 19th century Bradford. This short piece of writing will be describing and explaining why and how the living and working conditions were so appalling in 19th century Bradford. A quote from the poet George Weerth in 1842 gives a graphic idea of what life was like in Bradford 19th century. He gives quite a detailed verse saying in one part that ' you think you have been lodged with the devil incarnate' (Bradfordhealth-General, no date) this gives the impression that he would rather be residing or is the same as hell because of the immense disease and vile stench.

He compares Bradford to Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester. The reason for these horrendous conditions was the adaptation of industrialisation and urbanisation. Industrialisation was when people moved to the cities, and machines produced things instead of by hand. When industry started to adapt, Bradford started to become worse, in 1800 Bradford had 1 spinning mill 50 years later it had 129 mills. This huge growth in industry and population had some catastrophic effects on Bradford.

In 1769 the waterframe was invented, it was powered by water but, it was not a very good machine as with water there are floods, droughts, and foul smells from rivers. One of the main problems came when the use of steam came into force, as coal mills sprang up extremely fast, this transformed human relationships (capitalism). Many of the factories were dominated by women and children, as women were easily controlled and received less than a quarter of the wages that males received. In 1830 in John Woods spinning mill (which was the biggest spinning mill in Bradford) had 528 workers, 489 were women and 38 men.

As the industry expanded, even more the openings of wool houses and dye houses came, later then came more shops and houses, they were built anywhere and everywhere. These houses were one up and one down, had no kitchen, no water and no toilet. People bought water privately in barrels; little did they know that this water could have come from anywhere. At this point there was no sewerage and the dye from the dye houses flooded the town and rivers. It is said that people could set fire to Bradford canal and the water from Bradford could turn silver watch cases black.

While the women and children dominated the industry, illness and sickness rates shot through the roof, while there was no sewerage and the population was uncontrollable the average age of death was 18 years old, over fifty percent of children never reached the age of five, and the majority never reached the age of one. In one district alone over five hundred people shared one toilet. In 1850 Bradford won prizes for being the biggest area for textiles, taking over places such as, Manchester and Leeds.

At this point in time Bradford was at its worst , in 1850 the graveyard was full of bodies, houses were too crowded and people kept pigs, chickens and human excrement outside their doors until farmers came and took it away (at the right cost). In the 1841-1851 census it was recorded that up to 20 people were living in one house. Unaware of the dangers of no sewerage, people thought there was no harm in this way of living, as everyone believed these diseases were miasmatic diseases and the diseases were caught by overcrowded areas.

They believed that decomposing animal and vegetable substances (Thompson, 1982, pp137-138) caused diseases such as smallpox, typhus, <https://assignbuster.com/working-conditions-in-bradford-19th-century/>

cholera and other horrific, frightful diseases. The Bradford Registration District said about twenty percent of all mortality was attributable to 'Miasmatic Diseases' (Thompson, 1982, pp137-138) so a cleanup of the environment was needed to improve life expectancy. As a conclusion to this piece of writing, it is proven that although the mass growth in industry made Bradford into the biggest textile production area, it also caused colossal social tragedy in Bradford.

The main reason for the adaptation in Bradford was for immediate profit but unfortunately it caused disastrous effects on society.

Bibliography Thompson, B (1982) "Public Provision and Private Neglect: Public Health" in "Wright, DG Jowitt, JA (eds.) Victorian Bradford. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan Council, pp 137-138. Bradford Health- general (no date). Available at: <http://www.schoolhistory.org.uk/gcse/medicine/publichealth/bradford> (Accessed: 24 September 2009)