

From Textiles to Tailors

Today, if we need a new shirt, frock or trousers, we think nothing of popping to the shops and buying what we need. However, back in our ancestor's day, life was somewhat different. How did they dye the wool that they had spun? There were no synthetic dyes back then! The bolts of material might have been delivered to the village shop for the women to choose from, those same women would have then turned the material into garments, teaching their daughters so that they would be able to develop those skills.

In the mills, children were employed to scuttle underneath the warp threads of the power looms, whilst they were still in operation, tying the ends of broken threads. Injury and mortality was high.

What did they do?

They might have been involved in the creation of the material, working in the mills, operating the looms or checking the warp threads for breakages. Then again, they might have been spinning wool at home or trying to sew garments by candlelight. Here is a miscellany of some of the occupations that you might come across:

Archil Maker – A person who made violet-coloured dye from lichens

Beamer – A person who wound the warp onto the roller before it was fitted to the weaving loom.

Beetler – A Beetle was another name for a machine that embossed material. The beetle operated this piece of machinery.

Bushelman/woman – A tailor's assistant who repaired or altered clothes

Cutter – Cutter of cloth for the Tailor

Deviller – Operated the devilling machine, which tore material into rags to be made into rugs.

Scavenger – A child employed to collect loose cotton lying about the floor under the power looms.

Slop Maker – Women who made cheap garments at home from ready-cut pieces of material.

Please be aware that this is just a small list of occupations that your ancestors who were involved in the textile industry might have done. You will probably find a lot more!

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If you have a question about your ancestors from the Textile Industry, we have a forum where you can post those queries. Register for FREE at <http://www.genealogy-specialists.com/> and tell us about the ancestor that you are researching. The members will do their best to help you.

If you would like to discover more about the Textile Industry, whether your ancestor was involved in making the material or cutting the cloth, the types of work that they did or want to know more about their lives, listed below are some products that will certainly help you - and all of them are available from [www.parishchest.com](http://www.parishchest.com). Just pop the reference number in the website search box to see the details:

- Discover Dorset - Dress and Textiles Ref: DOR-Bk38
- Impact of the Domestic Linen Industry in Ulster Ref: UHF-44
- Memories of the Lancashire Cotton Mills Ref: CSB-1471
- The Skilled Labourer 1760-1832 Ref: ARB-0582
- The Web of an Old Weaver Ref: YKS-gw185
- 1927-8 The Yorkshire Textile Directory Ref: ANG-ARA 6

Many more products are also available from Parish Chest that would be specific to the area that you are researching. Use the website search box to pop in key words such as **Textiles**. You never know what you might find!