

KidCitizen Teacher's Guide

Snap a Photo: Agent of Change

How did photographers help convince Congress to pass child labor laws? We will explore some of Lewis Hine's photographs that exposed child working conditions and advocated for child labor laws to protect children. We will investigate who the photographer was who captured the photos to understand sourcing of information as part of historical inquiry.



Toni Frissell, sitting, holding camera on her lap
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008680192/>

Essential Question

How did Lewis Hine expose child labor through his photographs and advocate for change?

TPS Connections

In this episode, students will engage in careful observation to identify objects and note details (See), generate and test hypotheses based on evidence they have collected (Think), and reflect on their learning by applying it to related questions (Wonder). A key focus is to consider source information and identify aspects of a primary source that reveal a photographer's point of view or purpose.

Curricular Connections

NCSS Standards

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- VIII. Science, Technology, and Society

C3 Framework

D2.Civ.2.3-5. Explain how a democracy relies on people's responsible participation, and draw implications for how individuals should participate.

D2.Civ.3.3-5. Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key U.S. constitutional provisions.

D2.Civ.4.3-5. Explain how groups of people make rules to create responsibilities and protect freedoms.

D2.Civ.12.3-5. Explain how rules and laws change society and how people change rules and laws.

D2.Civ.13.3-5. Explain how policies are developed to address public problems.

D2.Civ.14.3-5. Illustrate historical and contemporary means of changing society.

D2.His.2.3-5. Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.

D2.His.3.3-5. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities.

D2.His.11.3-5. Infer the intended audience and purpose of a historical source from information within the source itself.

D2.His.13.3-5. Use information about a historical source, including the maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose to judge the extent to which the source is useful for studying a particular topic.

Historical Background

The United States changed dramatically after 1875. Before then the majority of Americans worked agriculture associated jobs as farmers or farm laborers. This changed by 1900, as the United States became the largest industrial nation in the world. The development of innovative forms of corporate organization, new scientific inventions, and the rapid growth of cities aided this swift rise as the nation eventually produced one-half of the world's manufactured goods. At the same time agricultural workers declined from one half to one third of the national workforce while the percentage of industrial workers increased. The demand for additional industrial workers spurred a move to cities by rural residents and increased immigration. It is estimated that more than eight million immigrants relocated to the US between 1877 and 1900 (White, n.d.).

Unfortunately, working conditions did not keep pace with the speed of industrial growth. For most workers the work environment was monotonous and dangerous as factory owners stressed efficiency and profits ahead of safety measures. A ten-hour day six days a week described the routine of most laborers. Unsafe conditions, boredom and fatigue fueled a high injury rate, which gave the U.S. the

worst injury rate in the world. On average about 35,000 workers died in factory and mine accidents, and about 500,000 individuals suffered injuries each year ("Working Conditions in Factories," 2000). Children were a significant proportion of the individuals seeking work and suffering under these conditions. By 1900, it is estimated that 1.7 million children under the age of 16 worked (Rosenberg, 2013). Child workers provided important sources of income for families who struggled to earn enough money to provide for the basic necessities. But the work took its toll on them. Children lost fingers, legs, arms and their lives while tending to machines or other tasks.

Progressives, who were social reformers of the period, sought to find ways to protect children from these dangers. Several organizations working at the state level joined together to create the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) in 1904 with the mission "to investigate and report the facts about child labor" and "to assist in protecting children by suitable legislation against premature or otherwise injurious employment" (Braeman, 1964, p. 11). One of the tools employed in their investigations into the conditions under which children worked was the creation of images and essays to illustrate for the public the challenge confronted by child workers. Louis Hine, who previously photographed immigrants on Ellis Island and children in New York, played an important role in this effort. The NCLC hired him to take pictures of child workers throughout the nation. He spent several years traveling around the country, photographing children working in mines, cotton mills, canneries and factories. To gain access to the companies he often disguised himself as a salesman or industrial machinery photographer since owners did not want the working conditions in their establishments exposed to the public. He also systematically recorded the name and age of the children for the captions of his photograph to insure the authenticity of his images when he shared them with public officials. When he could not gain access, Hine took pictures of the children as they entered and then departed after a long workday. His pictures vividly illustrated the physical and mental toll the work had on the children (Lewis Hine, n.d.). His image of a ten-year-old girl inside a mill in New England became emblematic of the injustice and exploitation of child labor.¹ In total Hine shot more than 5000 images, which he displayed in exhibitions, magazine articles, lectures and pamphlets. He believed "if people could see for themselves the abuses and

¹ Hine photographed the young girl, Addie Card, who worked in Bennington, Vermont during the summer of 1910. See <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004001719/PP/>

injustices of child labor, surely they would demand laws to end those evils” (Freedman, 1998, p. 5).

The NCLC used his images to great effect to touch the conscious of the public in support of their legislative efforts. They first lobbied at the state level for stronger child labor regulations and then turned to Congress, hoping to convince them to pass national legislation. One of their earliest successes was the creation of the Children’s Bureau signed into law by President Taft with the task of investigating the welfare of children, including their employment conditions. They later followed this legislation with the passage of the Keating-Owen Act, which made the interstate shipment of goods manufactured by child labor illegal. President Woodrow Wilson signed it into law, but eventually the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional (*Hammer v. Dagenhart*; Social Welfare History Project, 2011). As a consequence the NCLC threw its efforts behind the passage of a national child labor constitutional amendment that congress passed but was not ratified by the states. The Children’s Bureau and the NCLC continued to collaborate in their efforts on behalf of children and influenced the passage of child labor regulations as the part of New Deal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which the Supreme Court later supported.

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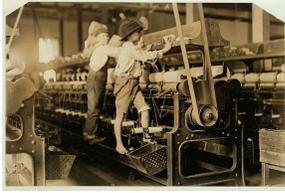
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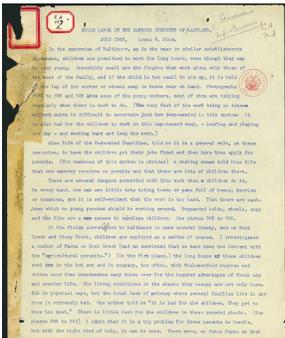
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Suggestions for Teachers

Lesson Plans

About Life: The Photographs of Dorothea Lange Curriculum

http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/dorothea_lange/lange_lesson_plan_index_01.html

Child Labor in America from the Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/child-labor/procedure.html>

Childhood Lost: Child Labor During the Industrial Revolution Resource Booklet

<http://www.eiu.edu/eiutps/Childhood%20Lost%20Resource%20Booklet.pdf>

Childhood Lost: Child Labor in the United States, 1830-1930 from Teaching with Primary Sources –MTSU

http://library.mtsu.edu/tps/lessonplans&ideas/Lesson_Plan--Child_Labor_in_the_United_States.pdf

Giving Voice to Child Laborers Through Monologues from NCTE readwritethink

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/giving-voice-child-laborers-289.html?tab=4#tabs>

Take a Picture of Me, James VanDerZee Teacher's Guide

https://www.leeandlow.com/uploads/loaded_document/437/JamesVanDerZee_Teachers_Guide.pdf

Work, Lyddie! Work! <http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/lyddie/>

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Additional Resources

Trade Books

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Child Labor and Lewis Hine flickr Album

https://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/albums/72157631320489950

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