

ART TO ZOO

News for Schools from the Smithsonian Institution, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Washington, D.C. 20560

December 1988

In the Playtime of Others: Child Labor in the Early 20th Century

When you look at the pictures in this issue you are seeing what Lewis Hine saw through the eyepiece of his camera eighty years ago. Your students' great-grandparents were probably children around then. They could have been among these working youngsters who posed for Hine at their jobs in factories, on city streets, and in tenement homes.

This issue of ART TO ZOO uses historical photographs to teach about the work and working conditions of child laborers in the early 20th century. In American history, you can use these materials to introduce your students to working conditions at the turn of the century and to illustrate one of the many reform movements that flourished around that time.

The writing assignment, "A Child Worker Speaks Out," may be used in English, and the Pull-Out Page stamp-designing activity in Art. Step 3 of the Lesson Plan gives your students practice in observation. And both Step 3 and "Answer It!" (on the Pull-Out Page) focus on analytical skills.

It was 1906 when Hine began making photographs for the National Child Labor Committee, an organization dedicated to bringing about reforms in child labor laws. To document the conditions that children were working under, Hine spent over ten years traveling around the country for the NCLC. He made thousands of photographs and wrote reports on what he saw as he visited cotton mills in New England and the South; glass factories in West Virginia and New Jersey; Pennsylvania coal mines; Massachusetts cranberry bogs; sugar beet fields in Wisconsin and Colorado; canneries in Maine, Mississippi, and Maryland; and city streets in many parts of the country.

Over and over, Hine saw children working sixty- and seventy-hour weeks, by day and by night, often under hazardous conditions. He saw children caught in a cycle of poverty, with parents often so ill-paid that they could not support a family on their earnings alone, and had to rely on their children's earnings as a supplement for the family's survival. He saw children growing up stunted mentally (illiterate or barely able to read because their jobs kept them out of school) and physically (from lack of fresh air, exercise, and time to relax and play). He saw countless children who had been injured and permanently disabled on the job; he knew that, in the cotton mills for example, children had accident rates three times those of adults.

For children to work was nothing new—even very small children had been expected to labor alongside their parents in colonial times—but public attitudes toward child labor had shifted radically from what they had been before the Civil War. Then, most people had taken it for granted that poor children should work. Child labor was even desirable: it was a way for poverty-stricken youngsters to support themselves (and their widowed mothers, injured fathers, and younger brothers and sisters), instead of becoming a burden to the community. People argued that working had moral benefits too. It kept these youngsters out of harm's way: a poor boy with a job was less likely to become a delinquent, a poor girl less likely to become promiscuous. And people claimed that working from an early age bred habits of industriousness and gave children a headstart toward success in adult life.

This last point had been truer earlier in the century, when the apprenticeship system was still flourishing. Apprentices had to undergo years of restricted freedom and hard work, but in exchange their master was required by law to provide training in his craft or trade; instruction in reading, writing, and (for boys at least) simple arithmetic; and room and board. But by the Civil War, the apprenticeship system had pretty well broken down. The country was becoming industrial-



Boys working in a glass factory.

ized. After the Civil War, this process sped up dramatically, turning the country into the world's foremost industrial power in just a few decades.

Being a factory worker was a completely different story from being an apprentice. As industrial laborers, children received only money in exchange for their work—and very little money at that. Now they worked in crowded, noisy, impersonal, and often polluted surroundings, often subject to the authority of someone who hardly knew them. Long hours kept them out of school. Even in the rare cases where evening or Sunday instruction was available, children tended to be too exhausted to benefit from it.

And most factory jobs were so limited in scope that they didn't teach young workers skills that would prepare them for better jobs in the future. A cobbler's apprentice in the old days eventually learned every step from piece of leather to completed boots. But a young worker in a shoe factory might spend her childhood doing nothing but positioning a heel to be nailed on by machine, over and over and over. When she grew up, she would be prepared for nothing but unskilled labor.

In the latter decades of the 19th century, many states enacted laws to regulate child labor in many industries. These laws raised the age limits at which children were allowed to work; restricted the number of work hours permissible and eliminated night work; and prohibited the employment of children in many hazardous jobs.

Very often, however, these state laws were not

enforced. Many had huge loopholes. It was common, for example, for a notarized parent's affidavit to be sufficient proof of age. Many parents—out of necessity or venality—lied so their children could work. And if regulation was successful in one state, then industries would simply move to a neighboring state where they could operate more freely.

By the time the National Child Labor Committee was founded in 1904, it had become evident that federal regulation was necessary. But employers of child labor—and often the children themselves and their parents, who wanted the money or could see no way to survive without it—resisted. Little by little, however, public support for child labor legislation became more widespread. Federal legislation was passed in 1916 and again in 1919, but both laws were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Although the number of child workers declined dramatically during the 1920s and 1930s, it was not until the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 that federal regulation of child labor finally became a reality.

Many American children today never work before they graduate from high school or college, or work only sporadically as babysitters, leaf rakers, and dog walkers in their neighborhoods. Children still hawk newspapers on city streets. Others deliver to their regular paper routes. Many kids earn spending money this way, and they enjoy their jobs and feeling they are part of the working world. But some children still work long hours in agriculture and in home industries, helping to supplement the family income.

Background to Photographs

Cotton Mills (Photograph 1)

At the time that Lewis Hine made this photograph, more children were working in the textile industry than in any other branch of manufacturing.

Employers often justified employing children in cotton mills by emphasizing that their jobs did not require great strength. This was true. Most of these children worked in the mill spinning rooms as sweepers, spinners, and doffers. The girls who worked as spinners spent their time moving among the machines, wiping lint off them and watching for breaks in the cotton. When a girl saw a break, she had to fix it as fast as possible by tying the thread ends together.

Boys who worked as doffers had the task of changing the bobbins as soon as they were filled.

The children working at these jobs were often so young that they had to stand on boxes to reach the bobbins. It was easy for them (especially when they

were exhausted after long hours of work) to catch their clothes in the moving machinery, or to fall into it themselves.

Children in the mills usually worked eleven- or twelve-hour days, five-and-a-half days a week, often at night, amid a deafening racket of machinery. Since moisture and heat helped keep the cotton from breaking, the windows in mills were kept closed. Lint from the cotton accumulated in the air. It covered the children's clothing and filled their lungs.

A boy mill worker was only half as likely as a boy on the outside to live to the age of twenty. For girls, the ratio was even worse.

Whole families often worked in the mills, especially in the South. They lived in mill villages, in houses owned by the mills. If they went to school at all, it was in a mill school, but according to one turn-of-the-century study, about half of these children under fourteen years of age were unable to read or write.

Agriculture (Photograph 2)

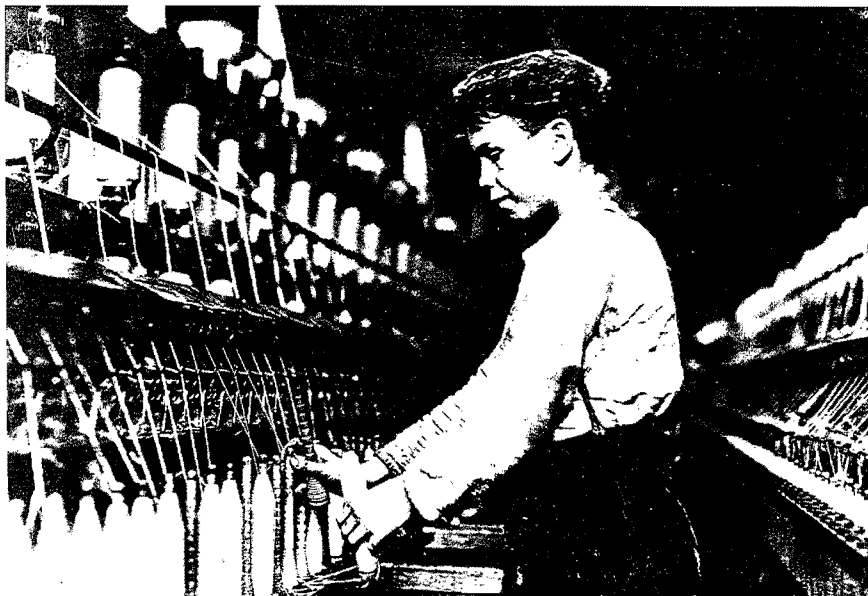
In the early decades of the 20th century almost three-quarters of all child laborers worked in agriculture.

Yet reforms tended to focus on industrial child workers. This was in part because most people thought of work in the fields as less harmful to children than work in factories. When they imagined children doing agricultural labor, they thought of youngsters helping their parents on the family farm, getting healthy exercise in the open air, and learning the skills they would need in the future.

But even the children who worked in family-owned fields often spent grueling weeks at heavy labor, often in bitter weather, and at times when school was in session. Many farm children fell years behind their age group in school.

Moreover, many children in agriculture were working land that didn't belong to their families. Some were the children of sharecroppers. Many were seasonal workers whose families lived in the city during the winter, but hired themselves out for agricultural work from early spring until well into the fall.

Arrangements for this kind of work were often made through a middleman. The workers were paid by how much they picked. The only way this kind of work could pay off was if several family members worked—including as many children as possible.



1. Doffer changing a bobbin in a cotton mill.



4. Louisiana cannery, March 1911. Mary, the girl on the right, is eight years old. She shucks oysters from 3 a.m. until around 5 p.m.



2. Fanny Breto, nine years old, picking with her father in a Massachusetts cranberry bog in the early years of this century.



5. New York City family shelling nuts for commercial use in 1911. The girl on the right is not eating, but using her teeth to crack open a nut. Reformers often pointed out that the products of industrial homework could be dangerous to consumers because of high disease rates in city slums.



3. Breaker boys at work in a Pennsylvania coal mine, January 1911. Hine described the dust in this room as so thick that at times you could not see what was in front of you.



6. Two newsgirls make a sale in Wilmington, Delaware, May 1910.

Living conditions were usually terrible. Often several families would be crammed together in one decrepit shack. There was seldom running water—at best, usually one filthy outdoor toilet that all the families shared, and perhaps a single kerosene campstove set up outside for cooking.

The family would stumble out of bed while it was still dark, and pile into trucks to be driven to the fields. There they would work until late in the evening, often without even a break for lunch.

Children worked alongside their parents, struggling to wake up in the morning, fighting sleep as it grew dark, picking until their hands bled, stooping and twisting and pulling in scorching sun and pounding rain, cutting themselves on the knives used to cut the tops off sugarbeets, hauling heavy bags of cotton and baskets of produce to be weighed.

And when the season was finally over and these families returned home, school had been in session for weeks. Frequently it was too late for these children to catch up. Many fell further and further behind, year after year.

Coal Mines (*Photograph 3*)

Most of the children working in coal mining were boys. Very often, they started as “breaker boys.” The breakers were buildings outside the coal mine itself. There, rows of boys sat on wooden boards placed over chutes that carried broken-up pieces of coal past them. The boys’ job was to pick out waste like slate and stone that was mixed in with the coal. To be able to see which pieces were waste and which were coal, as tons of coal sped past them, the boys had to crouch low over the chutes. Over time, their chests grew narrow and their shoulders rounded. The moving coal bruised and tore their hands. Crushed and broken fingers were common. Sometimes a boy reached too far and toppled over into the moving coal.

The breakers were filled with the roar of machinery, and the air there was filled with coal dust that coated the boys’ clothing and filled their lungs. For this a boy might earn 50 cents a day.

From the breakers, a boy would usually move on to the mines themselves. Underground, he might work as a mule-driver or a door tender. A door tender spent fourteen hours a day underground in the darkness, often standing ankle deep in water, waiting to open the trap door for the mules hauling their loads of coal to pass through. His reward for his fourteen hours in the dark might be 60 cents.

Some of the boys who worked in the coal mines never set foot in school. Only a few could read a child’s book. And accidents in mining were three times as common for boys as for adults.

Canneries (*Photograph 4*)

There were a number of similarities between hiring out for cannery work and hiring out for agricultural work. Both were seasonal jobs, usually set up through a labor agent. Both tended to involve whole families who moved on site for the season, living in temporary quarters provided by their employers, almost always under abysmal conditions.

The employers themselves argued that, since they dealt with perishable foods, cannery jobs were agricultural—and hence not subject to the laws regulating the employment of children in industry.

A cannery day began early, usually around 3 a.m. It was common for six- and seven-year-old boys and girls to work all day alongside their parents. Payment was on a piecework basis. Children were paid at the same rate as their parents, but usually earned considerably less because they couldn’t do as much work.

In a seafood cannery, a child might be able to shell one or two four-pound pots of oysters a day while his parents could fill eight or nine. As the children worked, oyster shells piled up on the ground around their feet, making it exhausting just to keep a footing. The jagged shells cut into their fingers. Shrimp were even worse, because they exuded a substance so corrosive that it ate into the leather of the workers’ shoes and even right into the cans in which the shrimp were packed. Workers would soak their hands in alum at the end of the day to try to toughen up their skin as a protection. Besides, the shrimp were packed in ice, making it even more painful to handle them for long periods.

Even babies would sometimes be brought along to the work site. Three- and four-year-olds often worked as “helpers”—not officially on the payroll, but doing their part to increase their parents’ earnings.

In vegetable and fruit canneries, hours were often even longer. The produce had to be canned quickly, before it wilted. Eighteen-hour working days were not uncommon at the height of the season. Children hauled boxes of produce, like corn crates weighing between 30 and 60 pounds, to weighing stations. They shucked corn, and used sharp knives to snip off the heads and tails of beans. They were especially likely to hurt themselves toward the end of the day, when they were exhausted.

Industrial Homework (*Photograph 5*)

In U.S. city tenements, whole families—often recent immigrants—often did piecework at home. For ex-

ample, they made hair brushes, powder puffs, cigarettes, artificial flowers, and other small objects. They embroidered and beaded. They pulled out bastings and put in coat linings.

Even preschool children could help with some of these jobs. For example, a child too young to sew on beads could help her mother by sorting the beads out by color. Or a toddler could wrap green paper around wires to help make the stem of an artificial flower.

The dyes that colored the paper and cloth were often toxic. The tenement homes where the children worked were usually crowded, dark, and very poorly ventilated. Contagious diseases were common.

The main problem with this kind of work, however, was not so much what it was but rather how much of it there was. Many of these children attended school, but every moment before class and every moment from the time they came home until late at night was given over to this work. They had no time to study, to be outdoors, to run around or to play. And of course some stayed out of school to work.

One mother in 1919 said that she was paid 15 cents a bunch for artificial flowers. This meant that by working all day, she and her seven children together could make 75 cents—while their rent alone was 11 dollars a month.

Industrial homework was particularly hard to regulate. Many people believed that the law had no business telling people what they should be doing in their homes. Also, in this kind of work set-up the parents were not the legal employer. The legal employer was the owner of the goods—and he could always claim that he didn’t know that there were children working illegally on his materials.

Newsies (*Photograph 6*)

Many city kids earned spending money selling small items—gum, candy, flowers, pencils, and so on—on the streets.

Selling newspapers was especially common. In the late 1880s, more and more papers had come out with afternoon editions, and they depended on children to distribute them on the streets.

The kids would gather outside the printer’s after school and play while they waited for the afternoon

Lesson Plan

Step 1: A Taste of Life on the Job

Introduce your students to child labor by having them role-play child factory workers of the early 20th century. They will do this by repeating a precise but repetitious task over and over again.

It is essential that this step be carried out long enough to become excruciatingly dull. The first five or ten minutes will probably be fun. But little by little the repetitions will become uninteresting, and eventually maddeningly boring. Your students have to continue into this last stage, or the point of the activity will be lost.

This may seem at first like wasted class time, but it most emphatically is not: it will set up your students to empathize with child workers of their great-grandparents’ generation, to think of them as real people, and to become curious to know more about their lives.

Begin by setting the scene. Tell the class: *You are children in a large American city in the early years of this century. Your parents immigrated to the United States four years ago. Your father works as a laborer, and your mother takes in laundry. But still they cannot make enough money to support the whole family. So all of you children who are school age have to help out by working too. You are old enough to do your part to support your family. You have gotten a job in a factory, and will be giving what you earn to your parents. Today is your first day on the job.*

I am the supervisor in the factory. The rules are very strict here: you may not talk, sing, whistle, or move around during work hours. You may not leave the room.

Here is what your job consists of. . . .

Then explain the task to the children. You need to provide each child with five nickels and five pennies (the children can bring their own, or you can get rolls of coins from the bank). Each child’s job consists of putting his nickels and pennies in a certain order, and then passing them to the next child, who will put them in a different order.

Every other child makes a pile that alternates coins: penny, nickel, penny, nickel . . . for all ten coins. Meanwhile, the children on either side of him are making piles with all the nickels on the bottom, and all the pennies on the top. Each child has a pile, so all the children are working at the same time, reorganizing their coins and passing them on to their neighbor. This might go more smoothly if you clap once each time there should be an exchange of coins.

(Of course this is just one of any number of monotonous activities that all the children can be doing at once. You may substitute any other one that you prefer.)

When you have explained what their job consists

of, tell your students that, as their boss, you will be supervising them very closely. The factory will lose money if the parts (coin piles) are not put together right. If they make mistakes or drop coins, their pay will be cut. Then have the children begin. Be a stern supervisor for the duration of the role-play.

Selling newspapers was different from the jobs in the other photographs on these pages. When you sold papers, you were your own boss. You invested in your papers. You decided for yourself how and where to sell them, and you set your own hours.

In the early 20th century, being a newsie was a part-time job. Some children worked every day after school, others just on Saturday night, and still others only did this job when there was a banner headline. Most newsies were in school all day, and had decent homes to go to at night. They were not poverty-stricken. Most were just working-class city kids earning spending money.

If the child workers in the other photographs seem powerless, the newsies were generally thought of as streetwise, entrepreneurial, and independent. This was indeed much of the appeal of the job for the newsies themselves: in school they had to mind their teachers, at home they had to mind their parents, but on the streets they were their own bosses in an active grown-up world.

This was precisely what the reformers most objected to. They were concerned about the dangers these children ran as they moved around the streets unsupervised. Not only were there physical dangers as they dodged in and out of traffic hawking their papers. But they often stayed out late at night—since the after-theater crowd and people coming out of restaurants and bars were freer with their money than were people hurrying home from work.

Most adults were particularly concerned about girls coming to harm on the streets. Many cities passed laws forbidding girls to sell papers. But in some places—as you can see from this picture—they too were allowed to earn money this way.

Aside from this, these street trades remained virtually unregulated long after many other kinds of child labor were restricted by law.

When you think the simulation has gone on long enough, tell the children to stop and to think for a moment of how doing this made them feel. Ask each of the children to write down two adjectives describing their reactions. Finally, have them compare and discuss their adjectives.

Now tell your students more about what their work life would have been like if this had been a real job around 1910. Of course, working conditions varied, but it would not have been unusual for their working day to last twelve hours, with perhaps a half-hour off for lunch. What time would that mean they would be leaving today?

They could expect to work six days a week, year after year. Would they have time to play? Would they have time to go to school? Would they be trained to get better jobs when they grew up?

Then describe what their surroundings in the factory were likely to have been: the room might well be hot and airless, and filled with dust or fumes. Very likely there would have been loud machinery operating. . . .

But of course this is all general. Each workplace has its own characteristics, and of course not all working children had jobs in factories.

Tell your class that they are now going to look at some photographs of real children working back then at real jobs, and find out more about what their lives were like.

Step 2: Children at Work

Give the class a chance to examine the photographs on pages 2 and 3. All show real children at their place of work in the early years of this century.

First, ask your students to figure out as much as they can just by looking at the photographs. Suggest some of the kinds of questions they should be asking themselves as they examine the pictures: How old do these children appear to be? What kind of work do they seem to be doing? Where are they working—in a factory? a shed? a street? a store? a yard? Are they indoors or outdoors? Is it daytime or nighttime? Do working conditions look comfortable? Do you see anything that indicates that this work could be harmful to the children?

Have your students write down two guesses (that is, right-seeming answers to the kinds of questions just enumerated) for each photograph. In parentheses after each guess, state on what evidence in the photograph their guess is based.

Finally, have class members compare and discuss their answers, picture by picture. In the course of the discussion, give them more information about each picture: tell what the child laborers in each picture are doing and what working conditions were like for this kind of job. The Background to Photographs on pages 2 and 3 provides this information.

Step 3: What Did They Gain? What Did They Lose?

Now your students are ready to think what effects working under these conditions probably had on the lives of these child workers. Naturally there were big differences between kinds of work: 72 hours a week in a factory is very different from a few hours hawking newspapers on the street after school. You will want to point this out in your instructions.

Now ask the class to discuss what advantages and disadvantages working at the jobs in the photographs were likely to have for the children. On the chalkboard, write your students' answers in two columns—*Advantages* and *Disadvantages*. Don't worry if the answers overlap, or if some apply only to certain jobs.

The **Advantages** list might point out that, by working, the children:

- made money
- helped their families survive
- learned whatever skills their jobs involved
- met new people
- became more independent

The **Disadvantages** list might point out that, on these jobs, the children:

- often had to work harmfully long hours that left time for little else but sleep
- couldn't attend school, or could attend only part of the time
- usually had unskilled, badly paid jobs that did not train them in the skills they would need to get better work as adults
- spent long hours at work that was boring
- had little time for play and for physical exercise
- were usually badly paid. This not only meant that the children themselves earned less money, but because children would work for low pay, the adult wage scale too was lowered.
- had higher accident rates than adults. Many child workers were injured, disabled, or even killed on the job.
- labored in workplaces that were often very polluted, and sometimes had to handle toxic substances (like dyes).

When your students have compiled and discussed these two lists, have them write "A Child Worker Speaks Out." (These instructions are phrased for a girl but are similar, of course—except for the pronouns—if you choose a boy.) Choose one of the children in the photographs you have been discussing. Imagine that this child can travel through time and talk to you face-to-face for ten minutes. In this short time, this child worker is eager to give you as vivid as possible a sense of what her life is like, how she feels about it, and what she expects from her future. Write what she says, in her own words. Be sure to include a number of specific details about working conditions on the job: exactly what she does, what hours she works, what her surroundings look like, what discomforts and dangers the job involves, as well as whatever satisfactions it may give her.

Follow-up Activities

Here are a few additional activities that your students can do to follow up what they have been learning in the Lesson Plan.

• Right Here, Eighty Years Ago

Back at the time when the Hine photographs were made, there were probably children working in your own community. It may be possible for your students to find out what kinds of jobs would have been available to them there. The local history section of your public library is a good starting point for finding this information.

• Time-Frame

—To help your students develop a sense of historical time and to place the period they have been learning about within it, have each student make a time-line extending from 1900 to the present, with each decade (1900, 1910, etc.) indicated.

Then ask each student to mark the date when the child labor photograph he wrote about was made.

How long ago was this—in familiar terms? To begin developing a sense of this, each student should mark his own date of birth on the time-line, and then add that of a parent, grandparent, and great-grandparent on one side of his family. Were any of them alive when the photograph was made? If not, how long after the photo was made was the great-grandparent born?

Changes in fashion make good time-markers. Have your students find, and cut out or draw, pictures of a woman or couple dressed in the style of 1910, 1930, 1950, 1970, and the present, and add them to the time-line.

—Another way for your students to develop their

Smithsonian National Seminar for Teachers

You don't have to live in Washington to study at the Smithsonian!

"Teaching Writing Using Museums and Other Community Resources," a special ten-day course, will be offered by the Smithsonian Institution this summer for elementary and secondary teachers living more than 75 miles outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

The course carries graduate credit from the University of Virginia. Tuition and materials fees will total approximately \$325. No scholarships are available.

"Teaching Writing Using Museums" will survey ways in which teachers can use local museum exhibits and such diverse resources as cemeteries and houses as tools for teaching and writing. In addition to working on formal and informal exercises, participants will interview several Smithsonian staff writers to learn about various approaches to writing.

The course, worth three graduate credits, is open

to full-time classroom teachers (grades 5 through 12), school librarians (media specialists), and curriculum specialists. Interpreters for hearing-impaired individuals can be provided for all class work.

Classes will meet from July 5 through 14 in Washington, D.C. Specially priced housing may be available in a conveniently located college dormitory. Participants will arrange their own meals.

Enrollment is limited. Applications must be postmarked no later than April 3. Notices of acceptance will be mailed by May 4.

For an application form, including complete information, write:

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Or, telephone (voice) 202/357-3049 or (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) 202/357-1696.



Lewis Hine/Library of Congress

Joseph Severio, 11 years old, selling snacks on a Wilmington, Delaware, street in May 1910. He has been pushing a cart for two years and works six hours a day. He gives everything he earns to his father.

sense of historical time is to focus on the period itself, and expand their knowledge of what life was like then. Have them find pictures of people, vehicles, houses, advertisements, machinery, etc., from around that time and paste them up to make a display, "U.S. Life around 1910."

• Child Labor Now

Have interested children do research on whether there are still child workers in the United States now. Are they legally employed? What kinds of work are they doing?

• When Can I Work?

Find out what the child labor laws are now in your

own community. Tell your students about them, and then ask the children to figure out at what age they could legally work in the following ways:

- part-time in a fast food restaurant during the day
- part-time in a fast food restaurant at night
- part-time in a sawmill
- part-time as an actor in a professional play
- part-time as a house painter's assistant
- full-time as a sales clerk
- part-time delivering newspapers
- part-time selling newspapers on the street

Have the class as a whole discuss the answers, and explain why these work categories are treated differently from each other.

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Our reason for producing a publication dedicated to *promoting the use of community resources among students and teachers nationally* stems from a fundamental belief, shared by all of us here at the Smithsonian, in the *power of objects*. Working as we do with a vast collection of national treasures that literally contain the spectrum from "art" to "zoo," we believe that objects (be they works of art, natural history specimens, historical artifacts, or live animals) have a tremendous power to educate. We maintain that it is equally important for students to learn to use objects as research tools as it is for them to learn to use words and numbers—and you can find objects close at hand, by drawing on the resources of your own community.

Our idea, then, in producing ART TO ZOO is to share with you—and you with us—methods of working with students and objects that Smithsonian staff members have found successful.

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THE NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK

Designer: Joan Wolbier

ART TO ZOO brings news from the Smithsonian Institution to teachers of grades three through eight. The purpose is to help you use museums, parks, libraries, zoos, and many other resources within your community to open up learning opportunities for your students.

The Child Labor Commemoratives

From America's earliest days, countless children contributed their work to building this country. Imagine that the United States Postal Service has decided to issue a series of four stamps honoring the contributions of these child workers of the past.

There will be four 25-cent stamps in the series. Each stamp will show a child worker carrying out a different job. The stamps will be in full color.

You are the artist who is going to design and

draw these stamps. Draw on loose sheets of paper so you can experiment with different designs. When you are happy with four of your pictures, make them look like stamps by putting in the holes around the edges. The drawing on this page will give you some ideas.

Your teacher can show you some actual stamps that come in series of four or you can go to the post office and ask to see commemorative stamps. Be sure to put the words 25 USA (or USA 25) on each stamp you design. You may also want

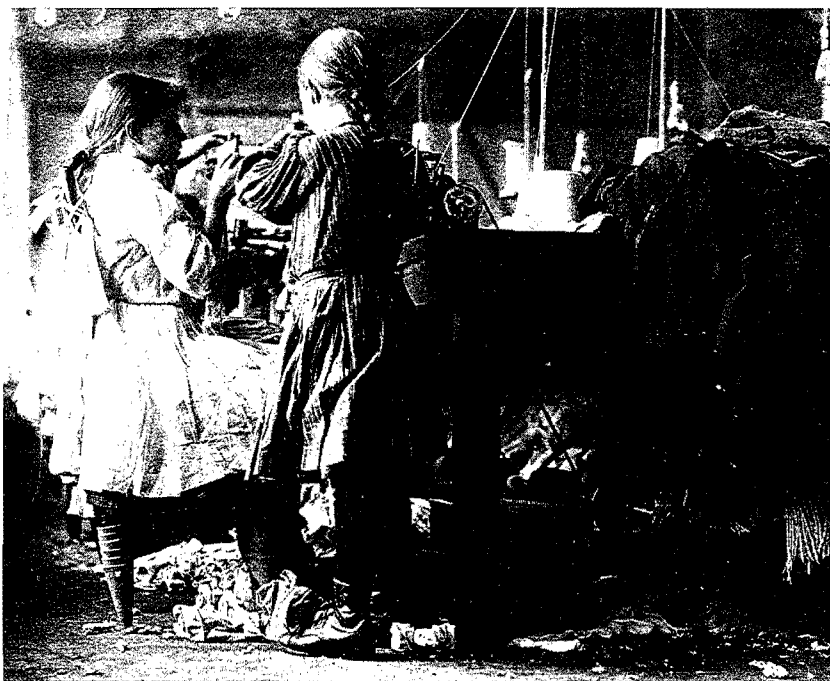
to include a short phrase about child workers.

If there is a photocopying machine you use that will make copies that are smaller than the original, you can see what your finished signs would look like at normal stamp size.

Remember one thing though: no matter how good your stamps look, don't put them on an envelope you are actually sending—it won't go through the mail!



Children ranging in age from 5 to 11 picking cotton on a Texas farm, September 1913.

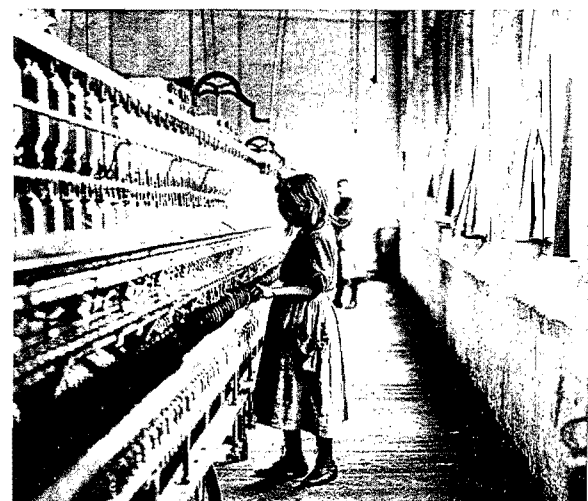


Two girls at work in a cotton mill. It is likely that only the older one is officially on the company payroll, while the younger is simply called a "helper." This means that she works unofficially; her earnings are probably recorded as part of her sister's pay. This was a common way for companies to avoid obeying child labor laws.



Vance, a 15-year-old trapper in a West Virginia coal mine, in September 1908. Vance spends about 12 hours a day here in the darkness of the mine. His job is to open this door when necessary.

Use these pictures or the others in ART TO ZOO to get ideas for your stamp designs. Above we have taken one part of the photograph, called a "detail," for our stamp.



Photos by Lewis Hine, Library of Congress

PULL-OUT PAGE

A girl at work in a cotton mill early in this century.

about Child Labor

Answer Back!

It is 1912 and you are a grown-up. You come across the following letter to the editor in the *Vanguard Magazine*.

You disagree strongly with the picture Mr. Bumbershoot has painted in his letter. You work for an organization that is trying to reform the child labor situation. Because of your job, you know a lot about the lives of child cotton mill workers. You have visited many mills in person

and seen first-hand what working conditions there are like. In fact, you have visited the Bumbershoot Mill, and you know that it is typical.

You decide to write a reply and send it to the editor of the *Vanguard Magazine*. In your reply, explain why Mr. Bumbershoot's description is, in your opinion, inaccurate. Discuss at least four aspects of these young mill workers' lives that you consider harmful to them.

Bumbershoot Mill

January 17, 1912

Editor
The Vanguard Magazine
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

I feel I must respond to your recent article on child workers, "The Sufferings of the Babes."

I am the owner of a large cotton mill. Among the workers in my mill are many children. I do not apologize for employing them. I do not think it wrong to employ them. In fact, I am proud that I hire children to work in my mill.

Because of their mill jobs, these youngsters have a far better start in life than they would otherwise have had.

The Bumbershoot Mill is located in a poor rural area. Almost all our workers come from isolated farms. Before they came to work and live at the mill, these children spent their days toiling in the fields. They almost never went to school. They almost never learned to read. They grew up poor and ignorant.

Then they came to work at the mill, and their lives changed. For the first time, they lived in clean new houses. They had money in their pockets. They had a store and a church nearby. They met people from different places. Their lives opened up.

And they did not have to leave their families to get these rewards. They came with their families. Older brothers and sisters here work alongside their fathers and mothers; younger children tag along to help the older ones. We let them do this because we at Bumbershoot believe in the family. We even provide jobs to unfortunate youngsters who have lost their fathers, so they can support their widowed mothers.

The work that the children do in the mill is not hard. They sweep floors. They change the bobbins. They keep the machines clean and repair breaks in the threads. They get healthy exercise as they walk around the mill performing these tasks.

And as they perform these tasks, these little ones are learning important lessons in hard work and responsibility.

How much more promise the future holds for these youngsters at the mill than for those on isolated farms, or for those whose families had to go to the city to find work. What bad habits are those children picking up on city streets?

Yes, when I walk through my mill and hear these youngsters humming merrily as they go about their work, I am proud of what I am offering them: a better start in life.

Respectfully yours,

J. Zachariah Bumbershoot

J. Zachariah Bumbershoot
Proprietor, Bumbershoot Mill

Traducido por Ricardo Inestroza, Ed. D.

Las Estampillas de Niños que Trabajan

Desde los primeros días de existencia de Los Estados Unidos, muchísimos niños trabajadores han contribuido al desarrollo de este país. Imagina que el Servicio Postal de Los Estados Unidos ha decidido imprimir una serie de cuatro estampillas para honrar las contribuciones de estos niños trabajadores del pasado.

Habrán cuatro estampillas de 25 centavos en la serie. Cada sello postal mostrará a un niño haciendo un trabajo diferente. Las estampillas serán en colores.

Tu eres el artista que va a diseñar y dibujar

estas estampillas. Haz dibujos en hojas de papel para que puedas experimentar con diferentes diseños. Cuando hayas terminado, escoge cuatro de los dibujos que te gusten mas y conviértelos en estampillas haciendoles huecos en los contornos. Los dibujos de esta página te darán algunas ideas.

Tu maestro/a te mostrará algunos sellos postales que se imprimen en series de cuatro o puedes ir a la oficina de correos y pedir estampillas conmemorativas.

Asegurate de poner 25 centavos USA (o USA

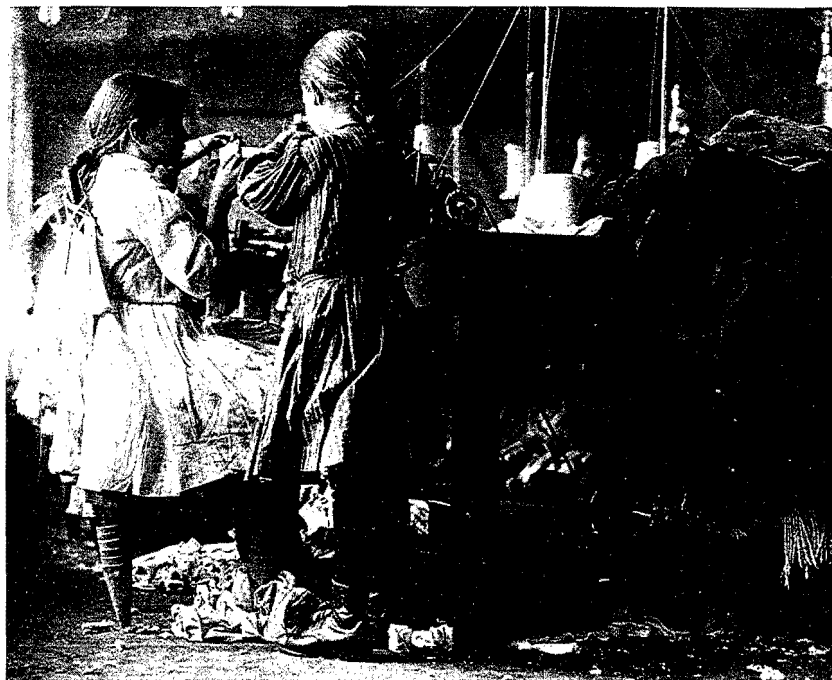
25 centavos) en cada estampilla que hayas diseñado. También puedes incluir una frase con el dibujo sobre los niños que trabajan.

Si tienes acceso a una máquina fotocopiadora, haz copias mas pequeñas que tus dibujos originales para que puedas ver tus diseños del tamaño de una estampilla normal.

Recuerda que, no importa lo bien que se ven tus estampillas, no debes pegarlas en el sobre que vas a enviar—¡porque el correo no las va a aceptar!

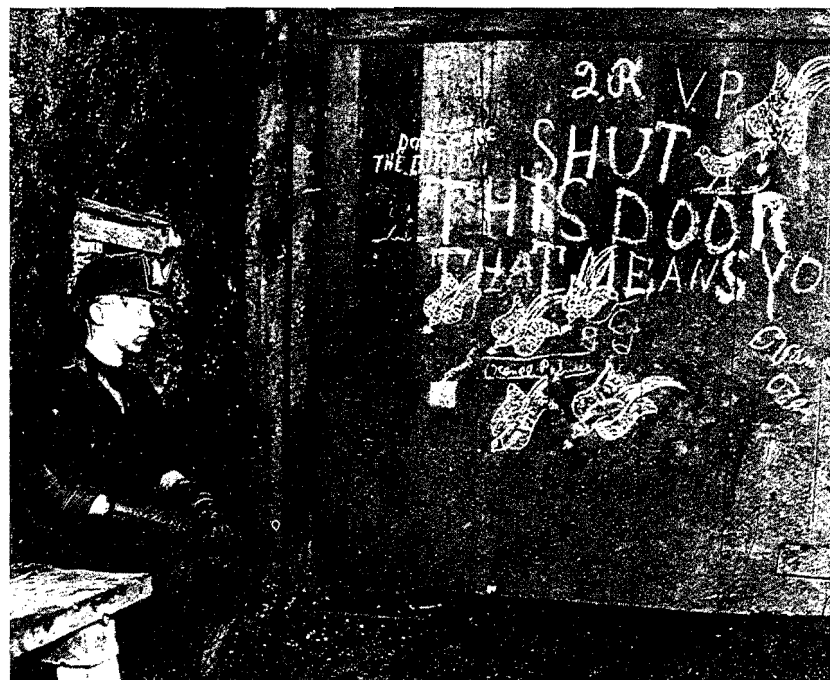


Niños de cinco a once años recogiendo algodón en una hacienda en Texas, Septiembre 1913.



Dos niñas trabajando en una fábrica de algodón. Es bastante probable que solo la mayor de ellas esté incluida oficialmente en planillas, mientras que la mas pequeña sea simplemente una "ayudante." Esto significa que ella trabaja extraoficialmente; sus ganancias son probablemente registradas como parte del salario de la hermana. Esta era una forma muy usada por las compañías para evitar cumplir con las leyes de trabajo para niños.

Utiliza estas fotografías y otras en este ejemplar de Arte a Zoológico para inspirarte en tus diseños de estampillas. Como puedes ver nosotros hemos escogido parte de la foto de arriba, "un detalle," como tema para nuestra estampilla.



Vance, un muchacho de quince años en Virginia del Oeste, trabajando en una mina de carbón, en Septiembre 1908. Vance pasa aproximadamente doce horas al día en la oscuridad de la mina. Su trabajo consiste en abrir esta puerta cuando es necesario para facilitar la ventilación de la mina.



Photos by Lewis Hine/Library of Congress

PULL-OUT PAGE

Una niña trabajando en una fábrica de algodón a principios de siglo.

re Niños que Trabajan

¡Contesta!

Imagina que estás en 1912 y que tu eres un adulto. Tu lees la siguiente carta escrita al editor de la Revista Vanguardia:

Tu estás en completo desacuerdo con lo que el señor Bumbershoot describe en su carta. Tu trabajas para una organización que está tratando de cambiar la situación de los niños que trabajan. Debido a tu empleo, tu sabes mucho acerca de la vida de los niños que trabajan en las plantas algodoneras. Tu has visitado muchas plantas al-

godoneras personalmente y has visto como son las condiciones de trabajo de estos niños. Has inclusive visitado la Planta Bumbershoot y sabes que es una planta típica donde trabajan niños.

Tu has decidido contestar esta carta y enviar tu carta a la Revista Vanguardia. En tu carta explica porqué, en tu opinión, la descripción del señor Bumbershoot no es correcta. Discute al menos cuatro aspectos de las vidas de estos niños trabajadores; aspectos que tu consideras dañinos para ellos.

Planta Algodonera Bumbershoot

17 de enero de 1912

Editor
Revista Vanguardia
Nueva York, Nueva York

Estimado Señor Editor:

Creo que debo responder a su reciente artículo sobre los niños trabajadores, "El Sufrimiento de los Niños."

Yo soy dueño de una planta algodonera. Entre los trabajadores de mi planta hay muchos niños. Yo no me excuso por emplearlos porque no pienso que es incorrecto darles trabajo. Francamente estoy orgulloso de emplear niños para que trabajen en mi planta.

Debido a sus trabajos en la planta, estos jóvenes tienen una mejor oportunidad en la vida de la que tendrían si no trabajaran allí.

La Planta Algodonera Bumbershoot está situada en un área rural pobre. Casi todos nuestros empleados provienen de granjas aisladas. Antes de venir a trabajar y vivir en la planta algodonera, estos niños pasaban sus días trabajando en los campos. Ellos casi nunca iban a la escuela. Ellos casi nunca aprendían a leer. Los niños crecían pobres e ignorantes.

Entonces estos niños vinieron a trabajar en la planta y sus vidas cambiaron. Por primera vez vivieron en casa nuevas y limpias. Ellos tenían dinero en sus bolsillos. Ellos tenían una tienda y una iglesia cerca. Ellos conocieron gente de diferentes lugares. Sus horizontes se expandieron.

Y estos niños no tuvieron que dejar a sus familias para obtener estos beneficios. Ellos vinieron con sus familias. Los hermanos y hermanas mayores trabajan aquí al lado de sus padres y madres, y los niños menores les ayudan a los niños mayores. Nosotros les permitimos esto porque la Planta Algodonera Bumbershoot cree en la familia. Nosotros inclusive ofrecemos trabajo a los desafortunados jóvenes cuyos padres han muerto, para que ellos puedan mantener a sus madres viudas.

El trabajo que estos niños hacen en la planta no es un trabajo pesado. Ellos barren el piso. Ellos cambian las bobinas. Ellos mantienen limpias las máquinas y reparan los hilos cuando éstos se revientan. Ellos se ejercitan cuando caminan por la planta haciendo sus quehaceres.

Y mientras hacen estas faenas, estos niños aprenden importantes lecciones sobre el trabajo con dedicación y sobre responsabilidad.

El futuro ofrece muchas mas promesas a estos niños en la planta algodonera que a los niños que están en granjas aisladas y también a esos cuyas familias tienen que ir a la ciudad para encontrar trabajo. ¿Qué malos hábitos aprenden esos niños que andan por las calles de la ciudad?

Sí, cuando yo camino por mi planta algodonera y oigo a estos niños canturriando alegremente mientras hacen su trabajo, me siento orgulloso de poder ofrecerles esto: un mejor comienzo en sus vidas.

Respetuosamente,

J. Zachariah Bumbershoot

J. Zachariah Bumbershoot
Propietario de la Planta Bumbershoot