

**CHILD LABOR EXPOSED:
THE LEGACY OF PHOTOGRAPHER
LEWIS HINE**



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- A camera made an improbable weapon against the growing evil of child labor in the early 20th century. Then, children as young as five years old worked long hours in dirty, dangerous canneries and mills New England.
- Lewis Wickes Hine, a former schoolteacher, cleverly faked his way into places where he wasn't welcome and took photos of scenes that weren't meant to be seen. He traveled hundreds of thousands of miles, exposing himself to great danger. His exertions ultimately received their reward with a law banning child labor in 1938.
- He was a 30-year-old prep school teacher in New York City when he got a bright idea: He would bring his students to Ellis Island to photograph the thousands of immigrants who arrived every day. Over five years he took more than 200 plates; but more importantly, he realized he could use photography to try to end child labor.
- “There are two things I wanted to do. I wanted to show the things that had to be corrected. I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated,” he said.

CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE

- In 1908, Hine got a job for the National Child Labor Committee, reformers who fought the growing practice of child labor.
- Between 1880 and 1900, the number of children between 5 and 10 working for wages had increased by 50 percent. One in six small children were then mining coal, running spinning machines, selling newspapers on the street or otherwise gainfully employed. They were robbed of an education and a childhood, trapped in a downward spiral of poverty.
- Newsies, telegraph messengers and young mill workers were exposed to vice and abused by their employers, their customers and even their parents.
- He went to the canneries in Eastport, Maine, where he saw children as young as seven cutting fish with butcher knives. Accidents happened -- a lot. "The salt water gits into the cuts and they ache," said one boy.

CHILD LABOR LAWS!

- By 1912, the NCLC persuaded Congress to create a United States Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor and Department of Commerce. The Children's Bureau worked closely with the NCLC to investigate abuses of child labor.
- The NCLC also worked to pass the Keating-Owen Bill in 1916. The resulting law established child labor standards: a minimum age of 14 for workers in manufacturing and 16 for workers in mining, a maximum workday of 8 hours, prohibition of night work for workers less than 16, and documentary proof of age.
- Years of political battles followed, until finally in 1938 Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act. The law prohibits any interstate commerce of goods produced by children under the age of 16. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed it into law on June 25, 1938.
- By then, the public had lost interest in Lewis Hine's work. He died two years later, broke, in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. His son offered to donate his photographs to the Museum of Modern Art, but MOMA rebuffed him. Today, Hine's photographs of child labor belong to collections at the Library of Congress and the George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y.

FIVE SENSES ACTIVITY

For the following pictures, pretend you are the child in the photo and write down:

- What do you see?
- What do you hear?
- What do you smell?
- What do you feel with your hands?
- What do you feel with your heart?

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

WHAT DO YOU SMELL?

WHAT DO YOU FEEL WITH
YOUR HANDS?

WHAT DO YOU FEEL WITH
YOUR HEART?



“Boy Selling Newspapers” –Tony Casale, age 11, been selling four years. Sells sometimes until 10pm. His paper told [Hine} the boy had shown him marks on his arm where his father had bitten him for not selling more papers. The boy said, “drunken men, hurt us.” Hartford, Connecticut

WHAT DO YOU SEE?
WHAT DO YOU HEAR?
WHAT DO YOU SMELL?
WHAT DO YOU FEEL WITH
YOUR HANDS?
WHAT DO YOU FEEL WITH
YOUR HEART?



“Boy with hands on hips” - Furman Owens, 12 years old. Can't read. Doesn't know his A,B,C's. Said, "Yes I want to learn but can't when I work all the time." Been in the mills 4 years, 3 years in the Olympia Mill. Columbia, S.C.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?
WHAT DO YOU HEAR?
WHAT DO YOU SMELL?
WHAT DO YOU FEEL WITH
YOUR HANDS?
WHAT DO YOU FEEL WITH
YOUR HEART?



“Girl Looking out of the window” -
A moments glimpse of the outer
world. Said she was 11 years old.
Been working over a year. Rhodes
Mfg. Co. Lincolnton, N.C.

PHOTOS OF CHILD LABOR



HOMework ASSIGNMENT:

Pretending to be one of the children from the three photos you analyzed, write a letter to a friend describing your day, from sun up to sun down.

Needs to be at least a page long -
handwritten.