

Analyzing a Photograph or Illustration Student Worksheet

PART 1 – OBSERVE THE FACTS

SUBJECT

(people, objects, gender, age, clothing, facial expressions, posture)

SETTING

(indoor, outdoor, urban/rural, time of day, time of year, background-objects)

ACTION

(What activity/event is shown? What are people doing? Are they working in groups or alone?) Relationship to each other?

OTHER CLUES

(What other details do you see in the photo? Examples: tools, vehicles, animals, buildings, signs. Is it a candid or posed photo?)

Is there a title? What information does it give you?

Is there a title? What information does it give you?



Analyzing a Photograph or Illustration – Student Worksheet

continued



Young Boys Working in a Cigar Factory

Use the observation worksheets to examine the photo. When you have completed your worksheet, discuss your observations. Do you agree with other students about what you see in the photo?

Analyzing a Photograph or Illustration – Student Worksheet

continued



Young Girls Working in a Cigar Factory

Use the observation worksheets to examine the photo. When you have completed your worksheet, discuss your observations. Do you agree with other students about what you see in the photo?

Background Material -Teachers Reference

The Exposure of Ignorance: Child Labor in America

Posted in History on Friday, February 04, 2011. Written by Marilyn Esperante Figueredo

Sadly, during the 19th and 20th centuries child labor was prevalent in our country. Our children were working in mills, mines and factories 12 or more hours a day, six days a week. Americans knew the practice existed, but whether they knew the scope or the depth of the issue is still a debatable topic. But it happened and no one seemed to care.

In order to understand this issue, one must go back to a time just after the Civil War. During this period, huge industrial growth occurred and the demand for labor increased. Wages were low and families needed everyone in the household to work. Mothers and fathers struggled with the decision to take their sons and daughters out of school, but some had no choice. Children became part of the American work force.

The U.S. government recognized the need to stop this form of child abuse and, in the late 1800s, laws were passed to regulate working conditions and outlaw child labor. Many states were weak in enforcing the laws, loopholes existed, and many of the laws did not apply to immigrants. Frequently exploited, these families ended up living in slums and working long hours for little pay.

One of the most devastating aspects of child labor was the health problems experienced by the children. They worked long hours, did not get enough exercise, and fatigue was common. As a result, their small bodies did not develop properly and their growth was stunted. It was even worse for those who worked in mills and mines—exposure to toxic materials caused lung disease. Then there were the children operating

machinery that became victims of an accident and were maimed for life.

Newspapers like the Cleveland Journal published many stories on child labor. They ran an article on April 22, 1905, titled “The Evil of Child Labor” which said:

Children waste materials, waste time, and, if careful calculations were made, it would be found that their labor is not economical. Of all expensive luxuries the most expensive and most cruel is child labor.



A photography can light-up darkness and expose ignorance.
- Lewis W. Hine



No time for play—young boys working in Ewen Breaker of Pennsylvania Coal Co. would spend ten to twelve hours a day working in the coal mines of South Pittston, Pennsylvania, and never see the light of day, 1911.

Reporters trying to draw attention to this issue wrote many articles, but child labor continued. There seemed little hope for the children until a photographer named Lewis W. Hine became their champion.

Lewis W. Hine was born on the 26th of September 1874, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. His father and mother ran a popular coffee shop and restaurant on Main Street and the family lived upstairs in a small apartment. A veteran of the Civil War, Hine's father had survived many battles, but was unfortunately killed in an accident in 1892. In order to help support his mother and sister, Hine had to go to work. He was first employed at a furniture store where he worked 13 hours a day and earned four dollars a week. He also split firewood, delivered packages for a clothing store, sold water filters door to door and worked as a janitor in a bank. At age 25, Hine began taking classes at the Normal School and, a year later, enrolled at the University of Chicago, studied sociology, and became a teacher. He later moved to New York where he earned his masters degree.

In 1903, Hine took up the hobby of photography after buying his first camera. As a teacher, taking pictures opened up a new area of education for him. He found

photographs could educate without a single word being written or spoken—and that he liked!

In 1904, he took a short trip back home to Oshkosh and reunited with a school friend by the name of Sara Ann Rich. They soon fell in love and eventually married. This same year, Hine began photographing immigrant families when they arrived at Ellis Island. As families rushed through immigration processing, Hine would stop them and ask to take their picture—most of the time relying on hand signals to communicate since the majority could not speak English.

Hine continued using his dependable 5 x 7 inch box camera with an old-fashioned bulb shutter, glass-plate negatives, and magnesium flash powder. When he took a picture, a loud “bang” would be heard as the powder ignited and sparks flew! Although his camera equipment was old, his photographic skills produced excellent results. He continued to take pictures at Ellis Island for the next few years, producing approximately 200 photographs.

In 1906, Hine was doing freelance work for the National Child Labor Committee. The NCLC had been investigating child labor, and the information collected indicated the number of children working in factories, mills and mines was staggering. Approximately 1.5 million children under the age of 15 worked in industrial jobs in 1890 and their research showed the numbers were increasing with each passing year. The Committee felt that images of child labor captured on film would put them in a better position to fight against these illegal activities. Lewis Hine's photographic skills were well known and, in 1908, they hired him as their full time investigative reporter.

Hine was the perfect person to become involved in this cause. As a teacher, he loved children and he wanted to do whatever he could to support the efforts of the

NCLC. Experience had taught him pictures could tell a compelling story and he accepted the assignment with great vigor. He later would say, "I felt that I was merely changing my educational efforts from the classroom to the world."

As Hine began his assignment, he knew he had to draw a distinction between children working part-time jobs after school, or as apprentices or trainees, and those who were employed as cheap labor. His target would be mines, mills and factories that were exploiting young boys and girls. With his small box camera at his side, Hine set off on what became a four-year journey across America. He visited states where he heard child labor existed and took as many pictures as he could of working children. It turned into a demanding assignment as he traveled as many as 50,000 miles a year by automobile and train. His wife Sara accompanied him on many of his trips, but most of the time Hine traveled alone.

Getting into factories, mines and mills was not easy, especially as owners began to hear about a photographer gaining access to businesses. They warned their staff to be on the look out for anyone trying to take pictures. If someone did visit unexpectedly, children would be rushed out of sight and the visitor would be told that they were there to see relatives. Owners, managers, and the children themselves would often lie about their ages.

Hine had to be deceptive and figure out ways to access businesses without management finding out. One of his tricks was to pose as a fire marshal or

insurance salesman needing to perform an inspection of the facility. He would then hide his camera under his jacket and take pictures when he could. He also carried small bits of paper in his pocket and took notes. In order to gauge the height of children, he would secretly measure them by using the buttons of his coat or would take a picture of them standing next to a large piece of equipment.

Although Hine was careful to avoid being discovered, he frequently was caught and faced threats of physical harm or injury by an angry manager or guard. Being thrown out of a facility did not deter him. He would simply wait outside and take photographs as the children arrived and departed. He would also follow them home and try to persuade their parents to talk to him. If successful, he would then ask to see the family Bible, a passport or other documents to verify ages.



Two boys working on a machine in a Georgia factory, 1909. Children would have to climb the large machines to reach the controls. Their small hands and feet would frequently get caught in the machinery and they would be maimed for life.

Hine Visits Tampa

Tampa and its factories did not escape the eye of Hine's camera and, in January 1909, he arrived in "The Cigar Capital of the World". His research revealed that children under the age of 14 were working in certain cigar factories and he set out to find which factories employed them. He was able to talk his way into the A. Ramirez Cigar Co. Here he snapped a picture of two young girls using wood barrels covered with a tarp as tables while they worked with tobacco. At the De Pedro Casellas Cigar Factory he was able to sneak a picture of a young boy, with his stocking supporter's visible, sitting among other children and adults all busily at work. At the Salvador Rodriguez Factory he found another young boy busy making cigars. He then gained access to the Engelhardt & Company Cigar Factory. While there, Hine took a picture that later became widely used to illustrate child labor in cigar factories. The photograph was of three young boys sitting side by side busy at work. The boy in the middle is smoking a cigar. You immediately are drawn to their glassy eyes staring off in the distance, with expressions frozen in time. Hine wrote of this visit:

Work was slack and youngsters were not being employed much. Labor told me in busy times many small boys and girls are employed. Youngsters all smoke.

The next day Hine visited a Tampa cigar box factory and took pictures of children sitting at wooden tables as they placed labels on the new boxes. His written note from that day said:

I saw 10 small boys and girls—has had reputation for employment of youngsters but work is slack now.



One of Hine's most captivating photos was taken at the Engelhardt Bros. Cigar Co. in Tampa, Florida. It was commonplace to see young boys smoking both inside and outside of the cigar factories. Some were as young as five or six years old.

It must be noted that although there were factories in Tampa employing children under the age of 14, there were a number of factories that did not. These factories refused to hire children and were against any type of child labor practices.

By 1912, Hine had taken over 500 photographs and had visited a total of 24 states and the District of Columbia. The National Child Labor Committee was impressed with his work and felt they were now well armed to go forth and fight for America's children.

The Committee began by publishing Hine's photographs with detailed reports in magazines and books. Hine then traveled around the U.S. giving lectures, displaying his photographs, and presenting slide shows.

Some critics said his photographs were not "shocking enough". But, Hine felt the pictures were truthful, real, and the American public would understand the

magnitude of child labor that existed. When asked what he hoped to accomplish with his photographs he said:

Photography can light-up darkness and expose ignorance.

Another time during one of his photograph displays, Hine told the audience, “Perhaps you are weary of child labor pictures. Well, so are the rest of us, but we propose to make you and the whole country so sick and tired of the whole business that when the time for action comes, child labor pictures will be records of the past.”

Hine’s photographs all had one thing in common—he captured the sadness and the silent plea for help visible in the children’s eyes. This photographic effect, shown on a large screen during Hine’s slide shows in dark auditoriums, had a spellbinding affect on his audiences. Gasps of disbelief were heard and at other times total silence. Each picture was captioned with the meticulous notes Hine had made which added even greater impact:

She said she was 11 years old. Been working over a year ... some boys and girls were so small they had to climb up on to the spinning frame to mend broken threads and to put back the empty bobbins.

He is age 14, works from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. - smokes and visits houses of prostitution.

She was 51 inches high ... has been in the factory one year. Sometimes works at night. When asked how old she was she hesitated, then said, “I don’t remember”, then added confidentially, “I’m not old enough to work, but do just the same.”

In time, more and more Americans saw Hine’s photographs and heard about his efforts. Public opinion became stronger and pressure was placed on state lawmakers to begin passing legislation banning child labor. Stiffer laws were imposed and authorities began enforcement. Eventually, child labor began to come to an end.

After years of dedication, Hine’s mission was now complete and so his assignment came to an end. America finally woke up and Hine’s wishes came true—“child labor pictures became records of the past.”

Hine’s next job was with the American Red Cross. World War I was in progress and Hine was hired to travel to Europe and photograph their accomplishments during the war. He traveled for a number of months photographing refugees and relief efforts in the aftermath of the war. When the war was over, Hine returned home and wanted to change direction with regards to his photography. He said, “I thought I had done my share of negative documentation, now I want to do something positive.”

In the 1920s he began taking pictures of working people and craftsmen with a goal to profile the importance of human labor in the new age of machinery. He called this particular series, “Work Portraits.”

In 1930, Hine’s next undertaking was to photograph the building of the Empire State Building. His son Corydon became his assistant. It was not uncommon to see Hine climbing with construction workers and setting up his camera. He would balance his camera on girders high above New York City. Perhaps Hine felt if he survived the rage of factory owners during his child labor days, he could definitely defy dizzying heights!



These three young girls—Mary 6, Lucy 8, Ethel 10—worked long hours in the dirt fields planting beet crops in the hot Colorado sun, 1915.

During this decade times were hard for Hine as he tried to survive the Great Depression. He was a well-known, respected photographer but he could not find steady work and by 1938 he was penniless and discouraged. He tried to secure a foundation grant for a new project—a photographic study of foreign-born Americans. He was turned down and had to apply for public assistance. By January of 1940 he could not pay his mortgage and lost the home he had owned since 1918. Eleven months later, on November 3, 1940, Lewis Wickes Hine died in New York in extreme poverty. He was just 64 years old.

Many years have passed since Lewis Hine became one of the first documentary photographers. His name and his story have become part of history for all generations to read and to wonder how we ever allowed child labor to exist.

Today Hine is acknowledged as one of America's great photographers, but there are many who do not recognize his name. His photographic images of working children touched the hearts of Americans and helped change the laws of our nation. Because of this, it is incumbent upon all of us not to forget Lewis Hine the teacher, the photographer, the crusader who made a difference—one man with one box camera who took on a social cause that was in need of a voice.

Note: In 1985, The National Child Labor Committee began awarding "The Lewis Hine Award" to recognize dedicated men and women who have made a difference in the lives of young people across America.

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