

Ending Child Labor in early 20th Century

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I.

Summary

Child labor occurred in England as well as in the United States. In the early 20th century businesses hurried to serve the needs of a growing population. Children were often exploited to meet those needs. This was especially the evident in the south during the Industrialization Age in the United States.

Objectives

Students will:

- 1.) Study facts and photographs, make inferences, and generate questions about Child labor in America.
- 2.) Compare child labor conditions during the early 20th century with those that might exist today.
- 3.) Write editorials to the observed injustices of child labor in early 20th century.

US History Event

This lesson could be used with any unit that shows injustices in the growth of the United States of America.

Grade Level

This lesson can be implemented into the middle school Social Studies class.

Materials

Transparency of Child labor Photographs in different areas and documents to end child labor: Mills, newspapers, seafood camps.

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/index.html>

<http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/hine.htm>

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=59&page=transcript>

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=59>

Copies of Reading assignments for each student: "What Is Child Labor?"

And "What are the ways countries have tried to get rid of Child labor?"

<http://www.earlham.edu/%7epols/globalprobs/children/Janet.html>

Copies of Newspaper editorials as samples.

<http://shopping.msn.com/Reviews/shp/?itemId=2289526>

Lesson Time

This lesson could be implemented and discussed in two 45 minute class.

II.

Procedures

- 1.) Use a KWL chart to find out how much students already know about Child labor.
- 2.) Preview students examine the Photos on projector or transparency. Students will write two hazards that could occur while the children are working in these areas.

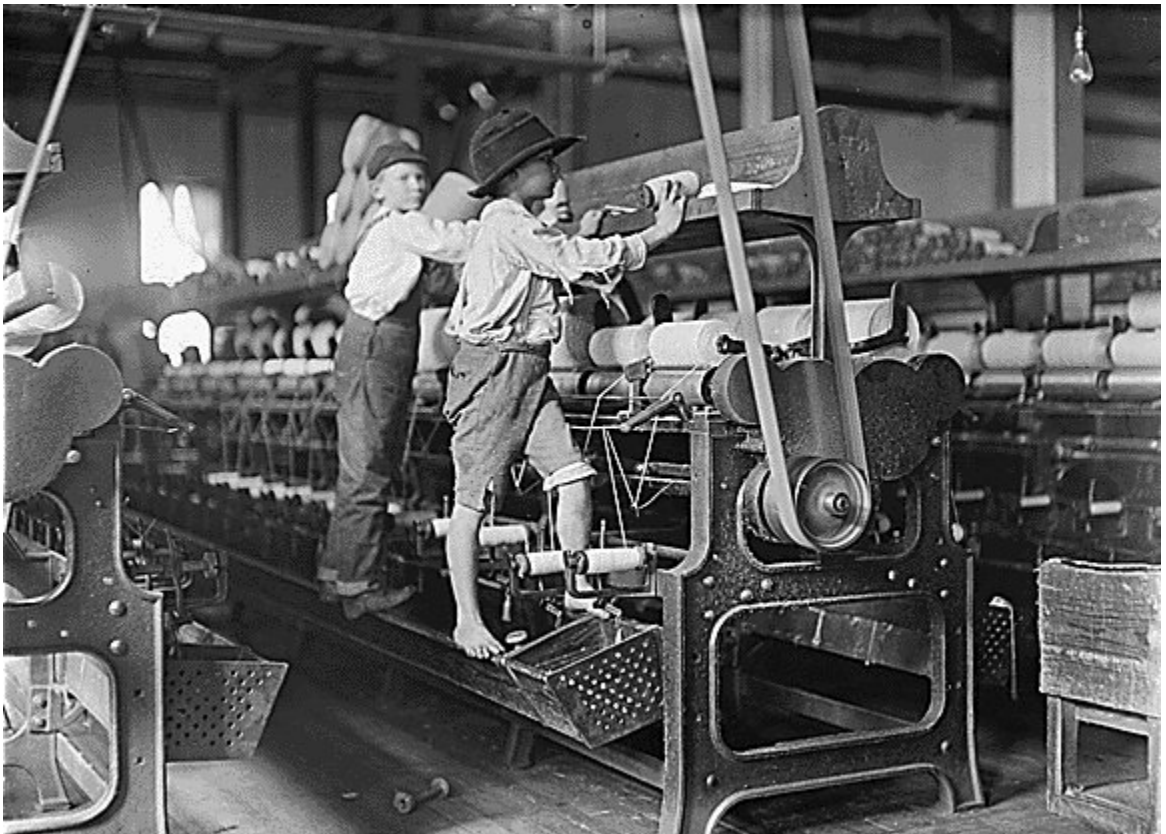


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<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/glimpse.jpg>



<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/empty.jpg>



<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/capitol.jpg>



<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/dust.jpg>



<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/slippery.jpg>

3.) Students read the article with partners on what is Child Labor. Students will write three questions about child labor in America.

What is Child Labor?

"Police recently raided a Bangkok sweatshop that produced paper cups and rescued 31 children who had been locked in a small room. Not one was older than 13....They were emaciated and suffering from malnutrition. They had been beaten so badly that they needed to be carried to freedom....They told of being thrashed if they failed to make 700 cups a day, by hand....the owner....gave them amphetamine tablets [to keep them awake and working longer hours]....One 13 year old told police he had been beaten unconscious twice when he tried to escape."

--Chicago Tribune, 10/12/1991

Child labor is a problem that has been occurring throughout the world for a long time-since even before written history, in fact. Child labor is not necessarily a bad thing if it allows the child to spend adequate time in educating him/herself and when the conditions that the child works under are not detrimental to his/her health. However, this is not usually the case. In fact, very rarely do you find children working under safe conditions nor do they usually have adequate educational time. This is when child labor gets to be a problem.

Day 2

- 1.) Use examples of editorial from newspaper to help students understand how to write their opinions. Students then read the article: **“What are some of the ways in which countries have tried to get rid of child labor?”** Have the students write editorials explaining why they think these ways were effective or not. Make sure they give examples from the text.

Despite popular belief, the problem of illegal child labor has not been remedied. The practice persists in the United States and even appears to be increasing. Levine, an acknowledged expert in the field, reveals the nature and magnitude of this "old" problem in today's economy. Levine explains that since 1981, there has been a relaxation in enforcement of federal child labor law provisions. He presents the complicated elements and troubling implications of a problem that has come to be ignored or overlooked in American society, focusing especially on matters of occupational health and safety. This book is important reading for the general public, as well as for scholars and policymakers involved with children's and labor issues in the United States. The United States has more of its children in the workforce than any other developed country. They are found in textile, jewelry, and machine shops in New York and New Jersey, in Southeast supermarkets operating meat-cutting machines and paper-box bailers, in Washington state selling candy door-to-door, and in farming operations throughout the country.
<http://shopping.msn.com/Reviews/shp/?itemId=2289526>

What can be done to stop Child Labor?

The problem of child labor is indeed a pressing one. The most relevant question to bring up when discussing child labor is simple. How do we stop it? Unfortunately, the answer isn't quite as easy to come up with as the question is. Child labor is a multifaceted global issue, and there is no one foolproof panacea for it. There are several very worthwhile methods that have been proposed to combat child labor, and the most effective solution to the problem is probably a combination of several different techniques. The global marketplace will be affected by these techniques; there is no way around that, nor should there be. Even the U.S. is likely to feel the impact of strong measures against child labor. First of all, the U.S. (albeit illegally) does contain sweatshops, particularly of the garment industry, where immigrant children are the chief source of labor. Secondly, the U.S. is the largest importer of child-produced goods in the world (MC Carthy 12).

At the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources Subcommittee on Labor hearing entitled "Child labor and the new global marketplace: reaping profits at the expense of children?" several experts on labor issues proposed solutions to the problem of child labor. The most-emphasized idea is that of consumer voice. Boycotts of child-produced products are an excellent way for consumers to make their opinions known to large corporations. The Rugmark campaign in India is a good example of customer awareness: the Rugmark seal on a carpet means that it is certified to have been produced without the use of child labor. The support of campaigns such as Rugmark is a clear message to those companies which do rely on child labor: it indicates that not only are

customers informed, but that they refuse to knowingly purchase goods made by children.

In the battle against child labor, there are degrees through which we must progress. One example of a creative solution to child labor being practiced in South America is a program called Tierra del Vido. A branch of the Swiss charity Sentinelles, it is a program which offers children alternative employment to the usual work in coal mines. The children still work, but they work outdoors, cultivating fruits and vegetables that will go to feed hungry children, and they have enough time to (and are actively encouraged to) attend school in the evenings. Although this program pays less than the coal mines do, it has been enormously successful, and there are many more applicants to the program than there are spaces available (McCarthy 13).

A third component in the fight against child labor is education. A basic education is what will enable children to obtain jobs other than those in coal mines or textile sweatshops. Educated children grow up to be educated adults, more able to provide for their families and therefore less likely to subject their children to the torture of child labor. Education is the key to breaking the cycle of child labor. "When basic education becomes accessible, relevant, and free, parents will understand that the education of their children is the best investment in their future, and children themselves will also be motivated to get an education."- Guido Bertolaso, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF).

Fourth, trade laws which employ strict measures against child labor are needed. Forbidding companies which use child labor to participate in free-trade agreements is one economic strategy which could be used to combat child labor. "...if the U.S. is to continue the press for open markets around the world, we must--I repeat, we must--link free trade agreements and child labor protections."-Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa. Senator Harkin is the sponsor of the Harkin Bill, which has failed several times to pass through Congress. The Bill makes stringent provisions against child labor.

What are some of the ways in which countries and the U.N. have tried to get rid of child labor?

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has declared that the child shall have the right to be protected from work that threatens his/her health, education, and development. Each state shall set minimum working ages along with regulating the conditions that children must work under.

The problem with UNICEF's declaration is that often times the governments of countries who have problems with child labor exploitation are not able to give adequate funding for watching over the places where children work. Even if they do, the main exploiters of child labor are often large companies that not only give a lot of money to the country's economy, but they are also foreign owned. No lesser developed country wants to scare off any further industrialization, no

matter how negative of effects it may have on its citizens, just because of a problem with foreign companies exploiting their children.

The International Labor Organizations Convention 138 on Minimum age for Employment (1973) said that the minimum age for work "...shall not be less than the age for compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years. Convention 138 allows countries whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed to initially specify a minimum age of 14 years and12 years for light work...."

The ILO forgot to mention at its convention what exactly constitutes as light labor. Not only did they forget to create an international definition of light labor, they did not specify which countries had insufficiently developed economic and educational facilities. This would not be such a problem if it were not for the companies that come into countries specifically to exploit the cheap labor markets. Nor would it be such a problem if the governments of these countries (and of the companies that exploited child labor) would take a stand and demand that the rights of people, and especially children, not be exploited.

<http://www.earlham.edu/%7epols/globalprobs/children/Janet.html>

2.) Students scan the Congressional document to see what the law is against Child labor. The students can write their own law prohibiting Child labor and give 4 examples why Child labor should not be tolerated.

Sixty-fourth Congress of the United States of America; At the First Session,

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the sixth day of December, one thousand nine hundred and fifteen.

AN ACT To prevent interstate commerce in the products of child labor, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That no producer, manufacturer, or dealer shall ship or deliver for shipment in interstate or foreign commerce, any article or commodity the product of any mine or quarry situated in the United States, in which within thirty days prior to the time of the removal of such product therefrom children under the age of sixteen years have been employed or permitted to work, or any article or commodity the product of any mill, cannery, workshop, factory, or manufacturing establishment, situated in the United States, in which within thirty days prior to the removal of such product therefrom children under the age of fourteen years have been employed or permitted to work, or children between the ages of fourteen years and sixteen years have been employed or permitted to work more than eight hours in any day, or more than six days in any week, or after the hour of seven o'clock postmeridian, or before the hour of six o'clock antemeridian: *Provided,* That a prosecution and conviction of a defendant for the shipment or delivery for shipment of any article or commodity under the conditions herein prohibited shall be a bar to any further prosecution against the same defendant for shipments or

deliveries for shipment of any such article or commodity before the beginning of said prosecution.

SEC. 2. That the Attorney General, the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of Labor shall constitute a board to make and publish from time to time uniform rules and regulations for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 3. That for the purpose of securing proper enforcement of this Act the Secretary of Labor, or any person duly authorized by him, shall have authority to enter and inspect at any time mines quarries, mills, canneries, workshops, factories, manufacturing establishments, and other places in which goods are produced or held for interstate commerce; and the Secretary of Labor shall have authority to employ such assistance for the purposes of this Act as may from time to time be authorized by appropriation or other law.

SEC. 4. That it shall be the duty of each district attorney to whom the Secretary of Labor shall report any violation of this Act, or to whom any State factory or mining or quarry inspector, commissioner of labor, State medical inspector or school-attendance officer, or any other person shall present satisfactory evidence of any such violation to cause appropriate proceedings to be commenced and prosecuted in the proper courts of the United States without delay for the enforcement of the penalties in such cases herein provided: *Provided*, That nothing in this Act shall be construed to apply to bona fide boys' and girls' canning clubs recognized by the Agricultural Department of the several States and of the United States.

SEC. 5. That any person who violates any of the provisions of section one of this Act, or who refuses or obstructs entry or inspection authorized by section three of this Act, shall for each offense prior to the first conviction of such person under the provisions of this Act, be punished by a fine of not more than \$200, and shall for each offense subsequent to such conviction be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000, nor less than \$100, or by imprisonment for not more than three months, or by both such fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court: *Provided*, That no dealer shall be prosecuted under the provisions of this Act for a shipment, delivery for shipment, or transportation who establishes a guaranty issued by the person by whom the goods shipped or delivered for shipment or transportation were manufactured or produced, resident in the United States, to the effect that such goods were produced or manufactured in a mine or quarry in which within thirty days prior to their removal therefrom no children under the age of sixteen years were employed or permitted to work, or in a mill, cannery, workshop, factory, or manufacturing establishment in which within thirty days prior to the removal of such goods therefrom no children under the ages of fourteen years were employed or permitted to work, nor children between the ages of fourteen years and sixteen years employed or permitted to work more than eight hours in any day or more than six days in any week or after the hour of seven o'clock postmeridian or before the hour of six o'clock antemeridian; and in such event, if the guaranty contains any false statement or a material fact the guarantor shall be amenable to prosecution and to the fine or imprisonment provided by this section for violation of the provisions of this Act. Said guaranty, to afford the protection above provided, shall contain the name and address of the person giving the same: And provided further, That no producer, manufacturer, or dealer shall be prosecuted under this Act for the shipment, delivery for shipment, or transportation of a product of any mine, quarry, mill, cannery, workshop, factory, or manufacturing establishment, if the only employment therein within thirty days prior to the removal of such product therefrom, of a child under the age of sixteen years has been that of a child as to whom the producer, or manufacturer has in good faith procured, at the time of employing such child, and has since in good faith relied upon and kept on file a certificate, issued in such form, under such conditions, any by such persons as may be prescribed by the board, showing the child to be of such an age that the shipment, delivery for

shipment, or transportation was not prohibited by this Act. Any person who knowingly makes a false statement or presents false evidence in or in relation to any such certificate or application therefor shall be amenable to prosecution and to the fine or imprisonment provided by this section for violations of this Act. In any State designated by the board, an employment certificate or other similar paper as to the age of the child, issued under the laws of that State and not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, shall have the same force and effect as a certificate herein provided for.

SEC. 6. That the word "person" as used in this Act shall be construed to include any individual or corporation or the members of any partnership or other unincorporated association. The term "ship or deliver for shipment in interstate or foreign commerce" as used in this Act means to transport or to ship or deliver for shipment from any State or Territory or the District of Columbia to or through any other State or Territory or the District of Columbia or to any foreign country; and in the case of a dealer means only to transport or to ship or deliver for shipment from the State, Territory or district of manufacture or production.

SEC. 7. That this Act shall take effect from and after one year from the date of its passage.

Approved, September 1, 1916.



<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=59&page=transcript>

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<http://www.earlham.edu/%7epols/globalprobs/children/Julie.html>

III.

Activities

KWL chart
Creating discussion questions from Photographs
Writing editorial from reading text
Interpreting policies (laws)

IV.

Assessment

Assessment through observations, student editorials, and student questions
Student can read from the article: History of Child Labor and create a timeline for events that led to the abolishment of child labor.

History of Child Labor

Child Labor is a social problem associated with the rise of industrial production and capitalism. It appeared in earlier ages in agricultural societies, but during the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century in Great Britain it was especially conspicuous and began to be opposed. It was one of the biggest scandals of the 19th century, spreading to other countries as they industrialized. The problem arose when children, many younger than ten years old, were employed by factories and mines. They were forced to work long hours under dangerous conditions for little pay. Social reformers began to condemn child labor because of its detrimental effect on the health and welfare of children. Among those helping to incite public opinion against it were Karl Marx and Charles Dickens, who worked at a factory himself at age twelve. One of the most effective attacks came from Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*, which was widely read in Britain and the United States.

With the Industrial Revolution machinery took over many functions formerly performed by hand and was centralized in large factories. Children often tended these machines in ever-increasing numbers from as young as age five, especially in the textile industry. Child labor also occurred in coal-mining, where children would labor for long hours in the dark, damp mines, carrying coal on their backs up to the surface.

In the 1830's the English Parliament set up a commission to investigate the problems of child laborers. One worker in a textile mill testified that since the age of 8 he had worked from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M., with an hour off at noon. When business was busy, however, he worked 16 straight hours, from 5 A.M. to 9 P.M. Another boy, whose parents had sold him to a mill owner, testified that the child laborers were locked up in the mill night and day. He ran away twice, and was caught and whipped by his overseer. Stories as horrible as these are common from the child laborers in the coal-mines.

Many British children had no parents that could support them, if they had parents at all. These children were called "pauper children," and under the English Poor Laws, local government officials were supposed to arrange for them to become apprentices, to learn a trade and be cared for. However, thousands of children were turned over to a distant mill owner, leaving no one to intercede for them. Others were indentured by their parents, sold to a mill owner for a period of years. Still others lived with their families and supplemented the family income with their hard-earned wages.

Child labor first became an issue in the U.S. in the 1850's in large Northern cities like New York, worsening with increased industrialization. The problem also worsened with the increasing immigration at the turn of the century, and with the South's late and slow industrial development.

Poor children in the large cities were sent out by parents as young as age 6 or 7 to earn their keep and contribute to the household economy. The youngest worked as scavengers, gathering salable trash- cinders, rope, metal bottles. They brought them home, sold them to junk dealers, or peddled them to neighbors. Older kids street-peddled or worked at huckstering. Several low-paying trades were reserved for children, like street-sweeping for girls, and bootblacking and newspaper selling for boys. These children who worked in the streets far away from adult supervision often fell into gambling, prostitution, or theft. Children also worked in glass factories in front of fiery furnaces, in dark textile mills, in coalfields breathing in coal dust for 10 hours at a time.

In 1870, the first time the census reported child laborers, there were 750,000 workers 15 and under, not including family farms or businesses. Rapid industrialization increased these numbers, resulting in a campaign for child labor laws that became an important movement for over fifty years. It sprang from several sources. Crowded and unsanitary conditions in factories and factory dormitories gave rise to disease. The rigors of child labor resulted in a permanently weakened labor force, even in premature death. The lack of education that child laborers received also was a prime concern.

England, in 1802, passed the first child labor legislation, but it only applied to pauper apprentices and was not enforced. It was followed in 1819, 1825, 1833, 1844, and 1878 Factory Acts, gradually strengthening inspection, shortening hours, and raising ages at which children could work.

In the United States, numerous organizations worked to eliminate child labor, including the National Child Labor Committee, launched in 1904 by social workers. Public support was mobilized by several "muckrakers," journalists exposing horrible conditions and social ills everywhere. In 1916, at the height of the progressive movement, President Wilson passed the Keating-Owen Act through Congress. This banned articles produced by child labor from interstate commerce. A 1918 Supreme Court ruling declared it unconstitutional. It was not

until 1938, with the far-reaching Fair Labor Standards Act, did any attempt at child labor legislation succeed. This requires the employers to pay child laborers the minimum wage. It also limits the age of child laborers to 16 and over, 18 if the occupation is hazardous. Children 14 and 15 are permitted to work in certain occupations after school hours.

In the United States today, child labor remains a problem in agriculture, especially among migrant farm families. It is also an issue that comes up in protests of U.S. companies who buy products made by child laborers abroad.

<http://www.earlham.edu/%7epols/globalprobs/children/Laila.html>

V.

Resources

<http://www.earlham.edu/%7epols/globalprobs/children/Julie.html>
<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/index.html>
<http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/hine.htm>
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=59&page=transcript>
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=59>
<http://www.earlham.edu/%7epols/globalprobs/children/Janet.html>
<http://shopping.msn.com/Reviews/shp/?itemId=2289526>