

THE GEORGE MEANY MEMORIAL ARCHIVES

Pathfinders

Child Labor

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EVOLUTION OF THE CHILD WORKER



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Introduction

The purpose of this pathfinder is to provide researchers with a guide to records at the George Meany Memorial Archives related to child labor. The records consist primarily of documents, images, and other materials produced by the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and various materials from outside sources. The majority of the records associated with child labor are from the AFL and primarily cover the late 1890s to the early 1930s. Child labor in the U.S. is dealt with the most.

Child labor is best defined for the purposes of this pathfinder as the harmful exploitation of children in industry. This pathfinder consists of a bibliography and a guide to potentially useful records at the GMMA, which primarily consist of documents, images, and published materials from various AFL-CIO affiliates. [[TOP](#)]

Bibliography

- American Federation of Teachers. *Child Labor: A Selection of Materials on Children in the Workplace*. Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers, 1994.

This book, intended primarily for teachers as a teaching guide, includes more than a dozen assorted articles about child labor around the world, along with sample lesson plans and questions.

- Child Labor Coalition. *Child Labor Update and Recommendations for Action*. Washington, D.C.: Child Labor Coalition, 1993.

Publication details status of child labor in America, focusing on teenage employment and offering a list of suggestions for new laws and revisions of existing ones.

- Clopper, Edward N. *Child Labor in City Streets*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1912.

A thesis written about the various occupations and conditions of children in the cities, with supporting tables and graphs.

- Felt, Jeremy P. *Hostages of Fortune*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965.

History of child labor in New York state, including details of legislative and legal battles over child labor laws.

- Holland, Ruth. *Mill Child*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1970.

A history of children in textile mill work in America and various pieces of legislation affecting child labor.

- International Labor Organization. *Child Labor: Targeting the Intolerable*. Geneva: International Labor Office, 1996.

Published for the 86th convention of the ILO in 1998, this booklet identifies trouble areas in the world with regard to child labor and outlines legislative goals for reform.

- Johnson, Julia E. *Child Labor*. New York, NY: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1926.

An overview of the issues involved in the Child Labor Amendment, with an outline, bibliography, and selection of essays from various viewpoints.

- Parker, David L. *Stolen Dreams*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Company, 1998.

A book aimed at introducing the problem of child labor to children. Contains many recent photographs of child laborers.

- Lumpkin, Katharine and Dorothy Wolff Douglass. *Child Workers in America*. New York, NY: Robert M. McBride and Company,

1939.

Arguments in favor of the Child Labor Amendment, with excerpts from congressional testimony.

- Markham, Edwin, Benjamin B Lindsey, and George Creel. *Children in Bondage*. New York, NY: Hearst International Library Co., 1914.

An overview of the problems of child labor, with suggested solutions.

- McCurry, Dan C. *Children in the Fields*. New York, NY: Arno Press, 1975.

A collection of reports and essays on child labor in farms and canneries in the U.S.

- Meltzer, Milton. *Cheap Raw Material*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1994.

Designed for employed teenagers and those seeking employment, this book provides anecdotes about accidents and provides information on basic federal safety standards.

- National Research Council, Institute of Medicine. *Protecting Youth at Work*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1998.

A report investigating the negative effects of employment on the health of children employed in a variety of industries. The book is filled with informative charts and statistics on modern child labor and offers recommendations for further federal regulations to protect children.

- Schnapper, Morris. *American Labor: A Pictorial Social History*. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1972.

This book provides an illustrated history of the labor movement in America from the 1700s to the 1960s. "The Disgrace of Child Labor" is a chapter devoted to the history of child labor.

- Trattaner, Walter I. *Crusade for the Children*. Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1970.

Provides a history of child labor in the United States, placing emphasis on the Child Labor Committee and the efforts to enact child labor laws.

- U.S. Department of Labor. *State Child Labor Standards*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965.

A review of child labor laws in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. [[TOP](#)]

Other Published Sources

American Labor Yearbook

Published by the Rand School of Social Science, the yearbook offers a leftist perspective on events pertinent to labor in an annual volume. Most volumes have two areas where information on child labor can be found: in the legislation section, regarding child labor laws; and in the yearly report on social conditions of laborers (the title of this section varies from year to year). The *American Labor Yearbook* was succeeded by the *Labor Fact Book*, also published by the Rand School, which offers volumes starting in 1934, when the yearbook stops.

The CIO News

The *CIO News* was the weekly newspaper of the CIO, published from 1937 to 1955. Issues are bound in volumes by year of publication. No indexes to articles are currently available.

The A.F. of L. News Reporter/AFL-CIO News

The *A.F. of L. News Reporter* was the weekly newspaper of the AFL, published from 1951 to 1955. After the 1955 merger, the federation issued a new publication, the *AFL-CIO News*--"the official organ of the AFL-CIO"--which was published until 1995. Issues are bound by year of publication. No indexes are available.

America@work

America@work, first issued in October 1996, is the AFL-CIO's monthly magazine, issued 11 times a year. Issues are bound by year of publication. No indexes are available.

American Federationist/AFL-CIO American Federationist

The *American Federationist* was the monthly magazine published by the AFL from 1894 to 1955, when its name was changed to the *AFL-CIO American Federationist* after the AFL-CIO merger. Articles are organized in the indexes by article titles either alphabetically or by subject for the years 1915 to 1982. An index for 1894 to 1915 lists article titles by subject and volume. Following is a listing of articles related to child labor, primarily consisting of editorials by Samuel Gompers:

- "Child Labor." Vol. 1, 1894-1895, p. 67.
- "The Crime of '94-5." Vol. 4, 1896-1898, p. 278.
- "The Fight Against Child Labor in Alabama." Vol. 8, 1901, p. 150.
- "Subterfuge and Greed in North Carolina." Vol. 8, 1901, p. 163.

- "Child Labor in the South." Vol. 8, 1901, p. 262.
- "No Children in Tennessee Factories." Vol. 8, 1901, p. 401.
- "Three Notable Lines of Labor Work." Vol. 8, 1901, p. 457.
- "An Appeal to Humanity and Reason." Vol. 9, 1902, p. 236.
- "Just a Hint." Vol. 9, 1902, p. 812.
- "Child Labor in Austria." Vol. 10, Part 1, 1903, p. 565.
- "New German Child Labor Law." Vol. 10, Part 1, 1903, p. 566.
- "Child Labor Verified by Disaster." Vol. 10, Part 1, 1903, p. 576.
- "Slaughter of the Innocents." Vol. 12, Part 1, 1905, p. 205.
- "Child Labor Legislation." Vol. 16, Part 2, 1909, p. 672.
- "Making Child Labor Laws Effective." Vol. 17, Part 1, 1910, p. 331.
- "The AF of L's Successful Fight for Child Labor Laws." Vol. 19, Part 1, 1912, p. 209.
- "Child Labor in Mines." Vol. 20, Part 1, 1913, p. 32.
- "Shall Humane Laws be Suspended for Business?" Vol. 22, Part 1, 1915, p. 41.
- "Root Out Child Labor." Vol. 23, Part 1, 1916, p. 124.
- "Lift the Burdens from Child Life." Vol. 23, Part 2, 1916, p. 843.
- "Let's Save Our Children." Vol. 24, Part 2, 1917, p. 860.
- "Tax Child Labor Out of Sugar Beets." Vol. 29, Part 1, 1922, p. 57.
- "To Protect Child Life." Vol. 30, Part 1, 1923, p. 232.
- "Fighting the Children's Battle." Vol. 38, Part 1, 1931, p. 162.
- "Safeguarding the Rights of Childhood." Vol. 38, Part 1, 1931, p. 537.
- "The State's Responsibilities for Its Working Children." Vol. 38, Part 1, 1931, p. 598.
- "Living on Children." Vol. 38, Part 2, 1931, p. 1459.
- "Child Labor Conference." Vol. 40, Part 1, 1933, p. 10.
- "Controlling Child Labor." Vol. 40, Part 2, 1933, p. 1177.
- "Child Labor Amendment." Vol. 41, Part 1, 1934, p. 16.
- "Controlling Child Labor Through Code Procedure." Vol. 41, Part 1, 1934, p. 34.
- "The Child Labor Amendment." Vol. 41, Part 2, 1934, p. 949.
- "Hell." Vol. 41, Part 2, 1934, p. 1064.
- "Child Labor Elimination by the Federal Treaty-Making Power." Vol. 42, Part 2, 1935, p. 1209.
- "Back to Child Labor." Vol. 43, Part 1, 1936, p. 168.

Labor's Heritage

Labor's Heritage is the George Meany Memorial Archives' journal. Published since 1989, *Labor's Heritage* has featured several articles related to child labor, with associated images in various issues.

ARTICLES:

- Gladstone, John. "Working Class Imagery in *Harper's Weekly*." Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 42-61.

A look at several different portrayals of labor in *Harper's Weekly*

between 1865 and 1895. Of particular interest is a quote from Winslow Homer, commenting on the conditions of children in the factories in reference to an engraving (p. 42-43).

- Parker, David L. "Stolen Dreams: Portraits of the World's Working Children." Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 22-45.

This article relates child labor in America to the situation around the world and discusses issues that have yet to be resolved.

- Stepenoff, Bonnie. "Papa on Parade: Pennsylvania Coal Miners' Daughters and the Silk Worker Strike of 1913." Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 4-21.

This article focuses on the silk mill strike in Pennsylvania and discusses the relative unwillingness of the young female workers to strike for better conditions.

- Schwartz, Marie Jenkins. "One Thing, Then Another: Slave Children's Labor in Alabama." Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 22-33, 56-61.

This article discusses work performed by slave children and their living conditions. Contains oral histories of several former slaves from a 1930 national program that give an excellent idea of the type of work done by the children.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

- Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 66-67. Photograph of a girl in a mill.
- Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 80. Young workers in a match factory.
- Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 27. Group photograph of Cuban cigarmakers, including child workers.
- Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 42-43. Engraving of children and adults on their way to work.
- Vol. 6, No. 1, cover. Child painting a wall.
- Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 1. Young Nepalese brick worker.
- Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 22-45. Numerous photographs of early 20th century child workers and recent photographs of children around the world performing similar tasks.
- Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 81. Photograph of an Indian garbage picker.
- Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 16-17. Group picture of young and old silk mill strikers.
- Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 18. Young female silk workers.
- Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 22-33, 56-61. Images of slave children.
- Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 47. Photograph of a girl doing farm work.
- Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 27. Lacemakers learning from an instructor. [[TOP](#)]

Institutional Archives and Personal Papers

RG1-027: Office of the President. President's Files: George Meany, 1944-1960.

Series 6: Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1960.

Box 25/Folder 21: Child Labor, 1954-1960.

Correspondence primarily between Meany and the National Child Labor Committee. Topics include 50 year anniversary (1954), accomplishments of the NCLC, migrant workers, and solicitations.

Box 25/Folder 22: Children's Societies, 1952-1960. Mainly solicitations and correspondence with the Easter Seals and other organizations for disabled children, but contains a few items from the National Child Labor Council.

RG1-012: Office of the President. Correspondence with Politicians, 1908-1944.

Series 2: Letters to William Green, 1925-1944.

Box 1/Folder 15: Lehman, Herbert Henry, March 20 1934. Letter confirming arrival of materials for the New York state legislature supporting ratification of the Child Labor Amendment.

RG21-001: Department of Legislation, 1906-1978.

At the AFL's founding in 1886, the legislative department of the Federation of Trade and Labor Unions (the AFL's predecessor) was reorganized and given a role as an organization for lobbying Congress, in addition to its duties of administering conventions and monitoring legislation affecting labor.

The legislative records are a compilation of correspondence, speeches, transcripts, statements, and other documents dealing with legislative issues. Records are arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically. Records relating to child labor are found in their own subject category, although additional information may be found in the neighboring subject areas of Children's Bureau; U.S. Department of Labor; Child Welfare; and Children: Child Relief; Child Health.

Series 1: Legislative Reference Files, 1921-1978.

Box 8/Folder 5: Child Labor, 1924-1934. Records are mainly about the Child Labor Amendment. Contains general Child Labor Amendment related information and propaganda, testimonies and hearings, requests for child labor information, diagrams, and letters from the AFL to legislators.

Box 8/Folder 6: Child Labor, 1935-1943. Continued emphasis on Child Labor Amendment. Contains issues of the *American Child* (magazine concerned with children's health and education issues), reports from legislative

assemblies, maps and charts, and requests for information.

Box 8/Folder 7: Child Labor, 1944-1946. Child labor during wartime is the main topic. Contains information on child labor in wartime from the federal government and Fair Labor Standards Act information.

Box 8/Folder 8: Child Labor, 1947-1953. Issues include the Child Labor Amendment, Fair Labor Standards Act, and D.C. child labor laws. Contains requests for information, an outline for a study and the finished product found in the *American Child*, other reports, and correspondence/minutes regarding D.C. labor law as changed by Congress.

Box 8/Folder 9: Child Welfare, 1933-1951. Issues of the *American Child*, reports, and commentary on work vs. education.

Box 8/Folder 10: Child Health, 1939-1945. Contains reports on child labor in wartime, among other child health issues.

Box 8/Folder 11: Child Health, 1946-1951. Contains records regarding child labor in agriculture and Fair Labor Standards Act revisions/details.

Box 8/Folder 12: Children's Bureau, 1942-1947. Primarily concerned with the employment of youth during wartime.

Box 8/Folder 16: Children's Bureau, 1957-1973. Contains correspondence regarding child labor in agriculture, proposed changes to child labor laws, and a report on work exploration programs and how they conflict with Fair Labor Standards Act. [[TOP](#)]

Pamphlets

- Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. *Report of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor*. 1924. Box 8, folder 6.
- Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. *Child Labor Remedies*. 1927. Box 8, folder 16.
- Noll, Miriam. *Child Labor and Workmen's Compensation*. 1928. Box 9, folder 2.
- Moore, A. *Hell*. 1934. Box 10, folder 12.
- Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. *Child Labor: A Primer for Trade Unions and Study Classes*. 1940 (latest revision). Box 12, folder 2.
- AFL-CIO Department of Research. *Labor Standards are Lower in Right-to-Work States*. 1958. Box 2, folder 36.
- Burkhardt, Francis X. *Up From the Sweatshop- 50 Years of Minimum Wage*. 1969. Box 13, folder 19. [[TOP](#)]

Vertical Files

RG98-002: George Meany Memorial Archives. Vertical Files, 1882-1990.

The vertical files are an artificial collection of assorted reports, clippings, news releases, and other miscellaneous documents. Records are arranged by subject and then chronologically. The vertical files contain a large number of records on child labor. Many magazine and newspaper clippings can be found here, although most of the pamphlets can also be found in the pamphlet and legislative holdings.

Box 5/Folder 8: Child Labor, 1907-1929. Fact sheets, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and broadsides. Numerous reports on conditions experienced by child workers and efforts to pass the Child Labor Amendment.

Box 5/Folder 9: Child Labor, 1930-1939. Several notable broadsides and fact sheets detailing accidents and conditions of child workers. Includes material on child labor in Canada.

Box 5/Folder 10: Child Labor, 1930-1939. Several newspaper clippings of interest, as well as essays and articles. Includes an anti-Child Labor Amendment booklet from 1935.

Box 5/Folder 11: Child Labor, 1940-1959. Topics include education of young workers and potentially hazardous environments for children working in the wartime industries.

Box 5/Folder 12: Child Labor, 1940-1959. Reports on the conditions of children at the mid-century, a useful chronology of child labor law and newspaper clippings. Includes a report on conditions of workers in New York bowling alleys.

Box 5/Folder 13: Child Labor, 1960-1987. Child labor in foreign nations, migratory workers in America, and the loosening of restrictions on teenage employment in the U.S. [[TOP](#)]

Images

RG96-001: Photographic Prints.

This still image collection consists of pictures taken by AFL-CIO photographers and other images collected by the organization. Images are arranged alphabetically by subject and divided into three sub-series.

Series 1: Subject Files, 1890-1995.

Subseries 1: Photographs, 1890-1993.

Box 7/Folder 5: Children - child labor. File contains large numbers of images of children working in various activities, including manufacturing, mining and agriculture. Most images are pre-1940. Also contains numerous pictures of children at home.

Subseries 3: Photographs, 1975-1995.

Box 1/Folder 19: Children - child labor. Contains two early 20th century images of children at work.

Box 1/Folder 20: Children - general. Several recent images of child labor, particularly of Asian sweatshops.

RG96-004: Morris B. Schnapper Collection.

This collection contains materials used by Schnapper in his research for *American Labor: A Pictorial Social History*.

Series 1: Reference Files, 1700-1980.

Subseries 2: Subject Reference Files.

Box 3/Folder 37: Child Labor: Text. Contains photocopies of most of the images used in the book, as well as notes, clippings, and copies of articles.

Box 3/Folder 38: Child Labor: Photographs. Contains all the photographs used in the child labor section of the book, as well as unused images. [[TOP](#)]

Graphics

RG99-001: Posters, Broadsides, and Art, 1892, 1900-1995.

This graphics collection consists of newspaper clippings, posters, broadsides and other oversized graphics issued by the AFL, CIO, AFL-CIO, and other organizations.

Series 1: AFL Posters and Broadsides, 1917-1951.

Poster, "Legislative Record on Measures of Interest to the Members of Congress From Chicago, Illinois, and State at Large," American Federation of Labor. Shows labor laws including child labor laws and voting records of members of Congress on those laws.

Poster, "American Federation of Labor Non-Partisan

Political Campaign Committee," American Federation of Labor (1926-1930 versions). Chart outlining political positions of politicians on points of interest to labor.

Series 16: News Clippings and Off-Prints, 1924-1963.

Pamphlet, "Down Tools on May Day!" Daily Worker Publishing Co. 1925. Encourages strikes to stop child labor.

Series 17: Newsletters, 1912, 1918-1929, 1950.

Newsletter, "American Federation of Labor Reconstruction Program," American Federation of Labor. Article on AFL's stand towards child labor.

Newsletter, "American Federation of Labor Weekly News Letter - Labor's 1912 Political Programme," American Federation of Labor. Progressive Party's platform seeks outlawing of child labor.

Newsletter, "American Federation of Labor Weekly News Service," American Federation of Labor, Jan. 7, 1933. Article on hazardous conditions of child workers.

Newsletter, "American Federation of Labor Weekly News Service," American Federation of Labor, Sept. 2, 1933. Editorial on the Bar Association's condemnation of the Child Labor Amendment.

Newsletter, "International Labor News Service," International Labor News, March 14, 1925. Article on the Child Labor Amendment, other child labor articles, report on child rug-makers in China.

Newsletter, "Workmen's Education News," May 12, 1928. Contains a brief note on a New York youth conference on child labor.

Newsletter, "International Labor News Service," International Labor News, June 2, 1928. Article on safeguarding employed minors. [[TOP](#)]

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