

HD
6243
.V8
M3
1910

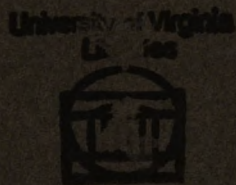
CHILD LABOR IN VIRGINIA

BY

A. J. MCKELWAY

University of Virginia Library
HD:6243;.V8;M3;1910
ALD Child labor in Virginia / Phot

NX 002 256 011



LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



GIFT OF
REV. JAMES E. BEAR

National Child Labor Committee

INCORPORATED
105 EAST 22D STREET
NEW YORK CITY



Child Labor in Virginia



A YOUNG GLASS-WORKS BOY.

No regulation of night-work in the Virginia law.

default
By A. J. McKELWAY

Secretary for the Southern States, National Child Labor Committee.

Photographs by
Lewis W. Hine,
Staff Photographer

5

ack -

And these are not the youngest at the Danville Knitting Works.

Many of these young girls roll cigarettes.

At an Alexandria glass factory.

Group of doffers in a cotton mill, Fries, Va.

presented by
The Rev. James E. Benson
from the office of the
Rev. W. C. White, C. I.

HD
6243
.V8
M3
1910

185617

CHILD LABOR IN VIRGINIA



BY A. J. McKELWAY

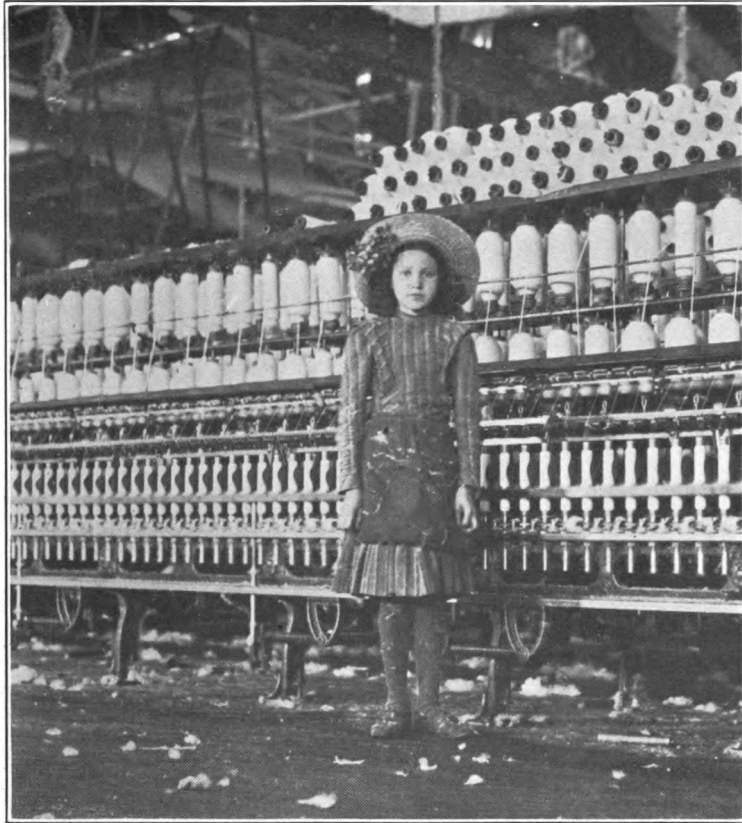
Secretary for the Southern States, National Child Labor Committee.

Virginia, as the oldest of the English Colonies of America, is rightly credited with originating many of the institutions of the New World, some excellent, some not so good. It is only natural, therefore, that the beginnings of child labor in America should be found in her history. In short, the Virginia of the seventeenth century reflects the English theories of that period regarding the employment of children of tender age.

In 1619, the year before the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock, there is an acknowledgment of the General Court of Virginia, of one hundred children sent over from England "save such as dyed in the waie." A letter from England in 1627 mentions incidentally the fact that "there are many ships going to Virginia, and with them fourteen or fifteen hundred children." These were mostly paupers, but children were often kidnapped and bound out to service. In 1646, two houses were erected in Jamestown

(1)

for the manufacture of linen, and the different counties were "requested to send two poor boys or girls, at least seven or eight years old, to be instructed in the art of carding, knitting and spinning." The textile industry did not flourish in Virginia, however, on account of its greater agricultural opportunities, but found its most congenial home in New



Young spinner in a Roanoke cotton mill.

England; and, until the development of her manufacturing industries and the growth of her cities in the last few decades, Virginia has been comparatively free from the curse of child labor. I recall distinctly that as a boy, growing up in Charlotte county, Virginia, I had never heard of child labor, except as a remote evil of distant England, and I never witnessed any form of it until, on a visit to New Jersey, I saw the little boys of the glass

factories at work and was told that they had to be put to work at a very early age in order to get used to the heat of the glass factory!

The fight to protect children in this industry, with a fourteen-year age-limit for day work and a sixteen-year age-limit for night work, has just been won in New Jersey, after a long and bitter struggle.

VIRGINIA'S GROWTH.

But now, Virginia has become a great manufacturing state, ranking first among the southern states in the amount of capital invested in manufactures. It is in factory work, where through the continual improvement in machinery the human touch becomes less necessary, that children have been employed to their greatest physical injury. The forms of factory labor in which children are employed in Virginia are numerous. Unlike some other states of the South, the employment of children is by no means confined to the cotton factories, though, according to the Manufacturers' Census of 1908, there were thirty cotton manufacturing establishments with about 300,000 spindles in Virginia. In the same year an investigation was made by agents of the Federal Bureau of Labor in those industries which were conspicuous for the employment of women and children throughout the nation. First among these was the cotton manufacturing industry, and the agents of the bureau investigated three of the cloth mills and one of the yarn mills of Virginia, the four containing 62 per cent. of the spindles. Fifteen per cent. of the employees were found to be children under sixteen years of age. In the yarn mill investigated, 32 per cent. were children under sixteen. In these four establishments, 434 children were enumerated, under sixteen years of age, nine of them being under twelve, and the report is careful to say that the figures relating to the numbers of children under certain ages are "far below the truth," for the reason that the burden of proving these ages was put upon the agents, and no estimates of age were accepted. Of the children six to eleven years of age in the cotton factory families, 13 per cent. were at work, 22 per cent. were at school and 54 per cent. were at home, while of the children twelve and thirteen years of age, 91 per cent. were at work, 2 per cent. were at school and 2 per cent. were at home.

ILLITERACY.

The cotton mills have often put themselves forward as patrons of education. The figures of the Federal Bureau of Labor do not bear out this claim. **The Census shows that 9 per cent. of the white children ten to**

fourteen years of age throughout the state are illiterate. In the cotton mills 70 per cent. of the children under fourteen were found to be illiterate by the agents of the Bureau of Labor, a greater percentage than are to be found, even in the cotton mill families of any other state, north or south.

AN UNFORTUNATE EXEMPTION.

Since this investigation was made, however, the amended Virginia law went into effect, making an age-limit of fourteen, with an unfortunate



A Kindergarten in one cotton mill community. The schools for older children were a long distance away and not well attended by the children of the mill families.

exemption of the children of dependent parents, the law allowing these to go to work as early as twelve years. Among southern states, Virginia, Georgia and Arkansas are now the only ones which allow such an exemption, most of the states which have tried it having given it up, for the double reason that it renders the enforcement of the child labor law exceedingly difficult, and that it is an error to put the burden of family support upon the shoulders of an immature child, since this merely perpetuates and multiplies ignorance and poverty for another generation to relieve. A

photographic investigation, was made in May and June of 1911, by an agent of the National Child Labor Committee, Mr. Lewis W. Hine. He quotes from the report of the Virginia Bureau of Labor, that 150 permits were issued for children from twelve to fourteen years old. In twenty-five cases no reason was given for issuing the permit, fifty reported invalid fathers, eighty-five reported widowed mothers, but the real need for the earnings was probably not scrutinized. It was found by the investigations of the Federal Bureau of Labor that in eleven families of widows, deserted mothers or incapacitated fathers, the average income exclusive of the wages of children under fourteen years of age is \$351 a year, while in the families having as many as six children, the income exclusive of the wages of children under fourteen was \$548 a year. These figures are borne out by similar statistics gathered in other states, showing conclusively that there was no necessity for the labor of these children under fourteen; while



Some of the workers in the Stearns Silk Factory. Many of the little ones would not be photographed.

it is admitted by all philanthropic agencies that even if there were in individual cases such need, the last expedient that should be adopted is the putting of the burden of family support upon the shoulders of the immature child. The fourteen-year age-limit for the employment of children is recognized as the standard for such employment in the great majority of the states of America, and of European states as well.

WHERE THE CHILDREN WORK.

Mr. Hine visited in Virginia thirteen cotton mills, ten knitting mills, three woolen mills, five silk mills, five glass factories, two shoe factories, twelve cigar, cigarette and tobacco factories and twenty-five miscellaneous

factories, including those for the manufacture of shirts, overalls, candy, boxes, furniture and trunks. A number of department stores and bowling alleys were included in this investigation, and there was a special report on the night messenger service. On account of the activity of the Virginia Bureau of Labor in the enforcement of the child labor law, the children in these factories almost universally said that they were fourteen years of age. To all appearances, however, and the photographs published in this pamphlet will furnish ocular demonstration, many children were employed under the age of fourteen.

In the Washington Cotton Mills, at Fries, Virginia, Mr. Hine counted six sweepers, sixteen doffers and twelve spinners, apparently from twelve to thirteen years of age. In the Roanoke Cotton Mills he reported that for such a small mill there is a large proportion of children under fourteen years of age. At the Lynchburg Cotton Mills he counted eleven children whom he judged to be under fourteen, which was not a bad showing for a mill employing 700 hands. At the Lynchburg Hosiery Mills he found six who appeared to be between twelve and fourteen. In the large mills at Danville, Virginia, he found only a few children apparently under fourteen, but at the Danville Knitting Works he saw eighteen apparently under fourteen, several under twelve and one who seemed to be not older than nine. The prosecution of the child labor law has had a good effect here. One of the boys asked whether the camera would tell the ages of the children.

In the cotton mills at Martinsville, Mr. Hine found five who appeared to be between eleven and fourteen. He reported not many children at the Matoaca Cotton Mill; at the Suffolk Knitting Mills, a few boys under fourteen and at the Bell Hosiery Company, several. The Norfolk Knitting Mill he reported as complying with the child labor law. At the Tidewater Knitting Mill, Portsmouth, he found ten children under the age of fourteen, and at the Chesapeake Knitting Mills at Berkley he reported several undoubtedly under the age of fourteen. The West End Shoe Factory in Lynchburg was the only one of the shoe factories which seemed to be employing children under fourteen, nor were children under fourteen to be found in the Lynchburg Paper Factory, the N. & W. Overall Factory, the Moore Planing Mill, the laundries of Lynchburg or the largest department stores. In the Danville branch of the American Tobacco Company, Mr. Hine found conditions as to child labor much worse than in the cotton mills at Danville. He found many children under fourteen years of age and some certainly only ten or eleven. A city missionary said that many

girls in her clubs told her that they were under fourteen, but they were nevertheless at work.

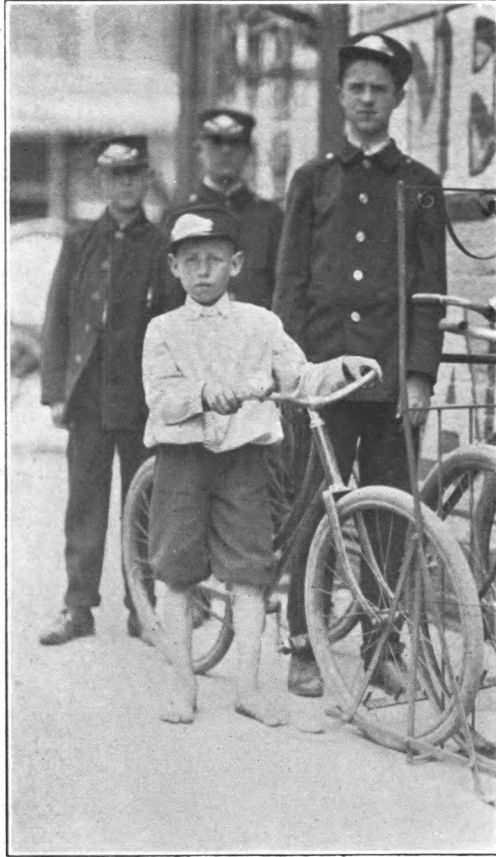
At the Allen and Ginter cigarette factory in Richmond, Mr. Hine counted thirty girls and boys who seemed to be under the age of fourteen, and at the cigarette factory of the American Tobacco Company



"Been rolling cigarettes six months."

in Petersburg he "saw dozens working and helping, who ranged from eleven to fourteen years of age." The woolen mills employed few if any children under fourteen as did the overall factories. At the American Glass Works in Richmond there seemed to be a dozen negro boys under eighteen years of age, and in the four glass factories of Alexandria many

boys were found, both white and colored, under fourteen years of age. Several under fourteen were found at the Bliss Silk Factory in Alexandria, none at the Berkley Silk Factory, but a large number of young children were found at the Stearns Silk Factory, Petersburg. At the Boston Manu-



The smallest boy, Western Union, No. 5, is only ten years old, and is working as extra boy.

facturing Company, a shirt factory, of South Boston, he found several boys and girls certainly under fourteen, but at the cotton mills of South Boston he found only a few children employed. In the cigar factories in Roanoke, a candy factory and a box factory there, a woolen mill at Bedford, the tobacco factories at South Boston, the Marchant Woolen Mill and

Marchant Overall Factory at Charlottesville and the Klots Silk Factory at Fredericksburg, he found few, if any, children under fourteen years of age. It is true, therefore, that **a large majority of the industries of Virginia do not employ children under fourteen, and these establishments should be protected from the competition of the child-employing industries, which are here mentioned and illustrated.**

THE NIGHT MESSENGER SERVICE.

So much for the physical and educational aspects of the child labor problem. There are also moral questions, which need to be considered in the protection of children in certain occupations. Chief among these occupations in the demoralizing effect upon boyhood is the night messenger service. An investigation of the night messenger service in the two largest cities of Virginia, Richmond and Norfolk, was made in 1910, but the facts ascertained were not recorded soon enough to secure favorable action by the Virginia Legislature of that year. These facts served to crystallize sentiment, however, in favor of a bill that had already been offered, prohibiting the sending of boys under seventeen years of age to disorderly houses. But this law has been ineffective in other states, since its enforcement is complicated by the necessity for proving the character of the resorts to which the messenger boys are sent.

It is impossible to publish for general circulation the complete story of this particular investigation, which was supplemented in 1911 by the investigations of Mr. Hine, in Roanoke, Danville, Lynchburg, Richmond and Norfolk. It was fully proved that the conditions of the night messenger service in these cities of Virginia did not differ from those in other cities of the country, from Hartford, Connecticut, to New Orleans, Louisiana. Most of us who have been occasionally served by a night messenger in the delivery of a telegram have never thought that the majority of the calls which the messenger boys receive after nine or ten o'clock at night are to the worst resorts of the city; that these boys are the go-betweens for bad women and bad men; that they are the purveyors of whiskey, opium and cocaine; that they become intimately acquainted with the habits and customs of the underworld and with its denizens. But such is the fact, and it is the fact in Virginia cities. The only remedy for this is the absolute prohibition of night work for minors in the messenger service. Such laws are already on the statute books of New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Utah, with the unfortunately lower age-limit of eighteen in Michigan, New Hampshire, Oregon, Ohio, Tennessee and California.

The New York law, the first to be passed on this subject, was enacted without opposition from the two great telegraph companies, whose headquarters are in New York City, though they have attempted to modify this age-limit elsewhere.



A young newsboy teaching his five-year-old brother the ways of the street.

DELINQUENCY AMONG MESSENGERS.

Statistics recently secured by an agent of the Federal Bureau of Labor by an examination of the records of the juvenile courts of typical cities, show that **messengers and errand boys constitute 20 per cent. of the**

juvenile delinquents, while we have the published statement of Prof. T. A. E. Means, of the Fulton County Reformatory, Georgia, that 50 per cent. of the boys that were sent to his care came from the messenger service of Atlanta, and that when he paroled a boy, leaving the reformatory, he did not permit him to enter the messenger service. Certainly the state has a right to protect its minor children from being employed in a business in which they are sent perforce to the evil resorts of the city and made acquainted with its vice. Frequently the day and night shifts alternate, so that the boys of both shifts become familiar with the evils of this service. We hope that Virginia will put an end to this abuse of boyhood.

THE STAGE CHILDREN.

Quite a large number of children of tender years are employed in the nickel and vaudeville theaters and, less frequently, in the legitimate drama, in plays that are supposed to require children in certain parts. The laws of Louisiana, Illinois and Massachusetts, to mention three states in which there are large cities with many theaters, have had for some time laws prohibiting the employment of children under sixteen years of age in the theaters at night. The attempt made by the organized theatrical companies to break down the laws of these states was successfully resisted by the friends of the children and, instead, other states have awakened to this abuse of childhood. Careful investigation made in New York City has shown that stage children are exposed to many dangers and temptations, going to and returning from theaters, that the life is an unnatural one for a child, and interferes greatly if not entirely with securing an education, without which the child is handicapped for any profession, the theatrical included.

The traveling companies do not by any means protect the children from hardships as is so eloquently claimed by those interested commercially in the employment of children on the stage, while the facts that "Peter Pan" has been successfully produced in Chicago and that the "Blue Bird" has been running for several weeks in Boston, prove that there is no necessity for exposing immature children, especially girls, to the moral hazards connected with theatrical life. Nor do the facts substantiate the claim that many of the great actors began their careers as stage-children.

It is hoped that the new Virginia law will include stage children in the prohibition of night work for children in other occupations.

BOYS IN COAL MINES.

We have no facts concerning the employment of boys in the coal mines of Virginia, but the great coal mining states have adopted an age-limit of sixteen for this occupation, not only for the sake of the boys, but to prevent the coal-mine disasters which are frequently caused by the carelessness and recklessness of boys under sixteen years of age.

A UNIFORM CHILD LABOR LAW.

A uniform child labor law was adopted by the Commissioners on Uniform State Laws at their twenty-first annual meeting, in Boston, August 25th and 26th, 1911. It embodies the best provisions of the child labor laws already in existence in the several states, most of the provisions being already in force in many states. It is recommended to all the states for adoption.

The uniform child labor law may be summarized thus:

The law prescribes a general age-limit of fourteen for practically all employment, except agriculture and domestic service, and for all occupations during the hours when the public schools in the district in which the child resides are in session; an age-limit of twelve for newsboys; an age-limit of sixteen for certain specified occupations dangerous to life or limb, or injurious to the health or morals of the child, the specified occupations to be increased upon order of the State Board of Health; an age-limit of eighteen for children in specified extra-hazardous occupations; an age-limit of twenty-one for employment of boys in saloons, the employment of girls in mines, or quarries, in oiling or cleaning machinery in motion, or in any occupation where this employment compels them to remain standing constantly; an eight-hour day for boys under sixteen and girls under eighteen, with a fifty-four-hour week for boys under eighteen and girls under twenty-one; an age-limit of twenty-one for boys in the night messenger service.

Certificates of employment are to be issued by the local superintendent of schools or by a person authorized by him in writing, and the form of the certificate is carefully devised.

"The Mother of States and of Statesmen" has a splendid opportunity at the next legislative session to justify her ancient reputation for statesmanship and to set an example to all the younger states, while adopting an effective measure for the protection of her own children, by enacting in its entirety this model child labor law.

L
JAN 14 35
VPLC



A Richmond Newsboy.

Photomount
Pamphlet
Binder
Gaylord Bros., Inc.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

NX 002 256 011

ALDERMAN LIBRARY

The return of this book is due on the date
indicated below

DUE	DUE
MAY 30 1950	
JAN 23 1968	
5.20.94	

Usually books are lent out for two weeks, but there are exceptions and the borrower should note carefully the date stamped above. Fines are charged for over-due books at the rate of five cents a day; for reserved books there are special rates and regulations. Books must be presented at the desk if renewal is desired.

L-1

