

Impact Statement

Jasmine Abrams, Grade 12.

Children of Labor, 2022.

Acrylic on canvas and newspaper, 18 x 24 inches.

Mill Creek High School, Hoschton, GA

Unsung Hero: Lewis Hine

My name is Jasmine Abrams. I am currently a High School Senior at Mill Creek High School. My unsung hero is Lewis Hine. Lewis Hine, born in 1874, photographed children working under extreme conditions in factories, mills, and canneries. He published a series of photo essays that depicted the working conditions of the industrialized businesses. I originally learned about Lewis Hine through a photography class that I took during my Junior year in high school. My knowledge of Hine was further deepened as I learned about Muckrackers and how they used exposé writing and photography to provide detailed accounts of the social, political, and economic corruption in Industrialized businesses. I find Lewis Hine's battle and desire to expose the working conditions that children in the United States during the 1900s were pressured to work in inspirational. Hine was able to create a social movement through the use of photography. For my artwork, I wanted to use some of his photographs that were taken of the children working and their emotions in the picture. I wanted to showcase how the children felt during those times and why Hine thought it important to combat child labor in the 1900s. The three children that I painted each have their own emotions that are being showcased. The boy has a face that depicts tiredness. The little girl with curly hair has a sense of loss and worry painted on her face. The young girl wearing a scarf over her head has an expression of wanting help out of the situation that she was placed in. All these emotions and expressions shown in my artwork help show what those children experienced on a day-to-day basis as they worked. Lewis Hine's portrait was placed in the middle of the newspapers. The newspapers that were collaged in are prints from articles discussing child labor. Some of the articles are written about how people not only in the United States are trying to combat the dangers of child labor. Some articles write incidents that occurred in a workplace that either injured the child or lead to a fatal fate. The newspapers have been cut out and placed over one another. The newspapers start from the side where Hine is placed and then move toward the portraits of the children. As they come closer to the children, they each penetrate and break through the individual portraits of the children. This movement symbolizes Hine's contribution to helping shatter the heartbreaking reality of children in the work field during the 1900s. Each portrait of the children has cracks in their divided sections to show the removal of child labor which helps symbolize the effects of the Keating-Owen Child Labor Act passed in 1916 by congress. I shared my work with my community through an art class critique with my peers. I introduced Lewis Hine and his impact on anti-child labor laws, what my artwork represented, and why Hine is important to our society today. Lewis Hine is an Unsung Hero as many are unaware of how he helped create child labor laws that have freed many of today's children in the United States from harsh working conditions.