

Minors in the Mills

Overview

Students will learn about child labor at the Rocky Mount Mills. Included in the lesson, are Oral Histories/interviews from people who worked in the Mills and those whose family members worked at the mills as children. Students will also have the opportunity to analyze oral histories as a primary source through the use of a primary source analysis tool. The lesson is tailored to cover standard **8.H.3.2**: how changes brought about by technology and other innovations affected individuals and groups.

Course & Grade

8th Grade Social Studies (US/NC History)

Materials

- Pencil/pen and paper
- Image: Lewis Hine [images](#)
- Kermit Paris and Doris Williams Paris Oral History Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 0:21-6:50)
- Timothy Lee Parris Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 0:32-2:50)
- Lo Bowen Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 0:09-2:50)
- Jan Bowen Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 1:04-1:40 and 3:22-3:56)
- Allison Kea Sikes & Miriam Sykes Pridgen Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 1:09-2:10)
- Congressional Moments: Child Labor [video](#)
- [Primary Analysis Tool for Oral Histories](#)
- Primary Analysis Tool for Oral Histories [Teacher's Guide](#)

Duration

60 minutes

Procedure

1. As a warm up, project and instruct students to examine the attached Lewis Hines [images](#) and instruct students to take 3-5 minutes to respond to the questions provided. After sufficient time has passed, ask for student volunteers to share their thoughts out loud.
2. The teacher should play the Congressional Moments: Child Labor [video](#) (play only to 1 min., 45 seconds) and discuss with students the impact of child labor on America during the Industrial Revolution.
 - What was life for many children during the Industrial Revolution according to this video and the images you've examined?
 - What were conditions like in most of the mills children worked in?
 - Why do you think this was allowed to take place? How does life for children in the late 1800s and early 1900s compare to life for children today? (Teacher Note: This is a very broad question, and it is important to facilitate student understanding that while labor laws were created to determine ages and conditions for those working, there are still many situations in today's world where children are put to work and exploited around the world.)

This activity was completed in collaboration with Markevis Silver from Southern Nash Middle School as part of the 2018 workshop "History Unfiltered: Exploring the Local Textile Industry in Rocky Mount," hosted by [Carolina K-12](#) in partnership with [Community Histories Workshop](#), and funded by the National Archives.

- What was the Fair Labor Standards Act and why was it important?
3. Students will then be split into 5 groups. Each group will be given a link to an oral history of people who are connected to the local Rocky Mount Mills.
 - Kermit Paris and Doris Williams Paris Oral History Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 0:21-6:50)
 - Timothy Lee Parris Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 0:32-2:50)
 - Lo Bowen Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 0:09-2:50) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Khojv8Civkg>
 - Jan Bowen Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 1:04-1:40 and 3:22-3:56)
 - Allison Kea Sikes & Miriam Sykes Pridgen Interview [Excerpt](#) (play from 1:09-2:10)

These interviews will give students some insight into child labor nearby. As students listen to the oral histories in their groups, they should complete the [Primary Analysis Tool for Oral Histories](#) (each group will collaborate to complete 1 analysis for the entire group). The teacher will have a copy of the [teacher guide](#) with question prompts in the event that students need extra help.

- a. There is an online option for the tool for students to type responses on their devices. Primary Source Analysis [tool](#)
4. Groups of students should be given a total of 20 mins to both listen to the oral histories and fill out the Primary Source Analysis tool.
 5. After the completion of the tasks, students will be asked to present their oral histories using the information they included in the Primary Source Analysis tool.

Student Handouts

[Primary Analysis Tool for Oral Histories](#)

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