

Living and Working in the Gilded Age

Much of the documentation of life for working people during the Gilded Age was done by **MUCKRAKERS**: Journalists who used the media to raise awareness of problems in society.

A few examples of muckrakers include Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, and Upton Sinclair.

Muckraking Photographers

Jacob Riis

- Poor immigrant from Denmark, arrived in New York city at the age of 21 in 1870
- After struggling for several years, got a job as a newspaper police reporter
- One of first to use flash photography
- Captured images of poor in New York, most famously in *How the Other Half Live*, published in 1890

Lewis Hine

- Became known for his photographs of immigrants arriving in New York City in the early 1900's
- Hired as the photographer for the National Child Labor Committee to document child labor in the U.S.



Vanderbilt Mansion: Hyde Park, New York
Cornelius Vanderbilt made his fortune in railroads and was at one point the richest person in the world. This was his grandson's house.



The Breakers mansion Newport, Rhode Island

This “summer cottage” belonged to another of Vanderbilt's grandchildren. Today it is a museum and you can tour the inside and the grounds.



Biltmore Estate: Asheville, North Carolina
Also built for the Vanderbilt family, it has 250 rooms!

How did “The Other Half” Live?



Jacob Riis, “Dens of Death”



Riis, "Eldridge Street Police Station Lodgers"



Riis, "In a Sweatshop"



Riis, "In Poverty Gap, an English Coal-Heaver's Home"



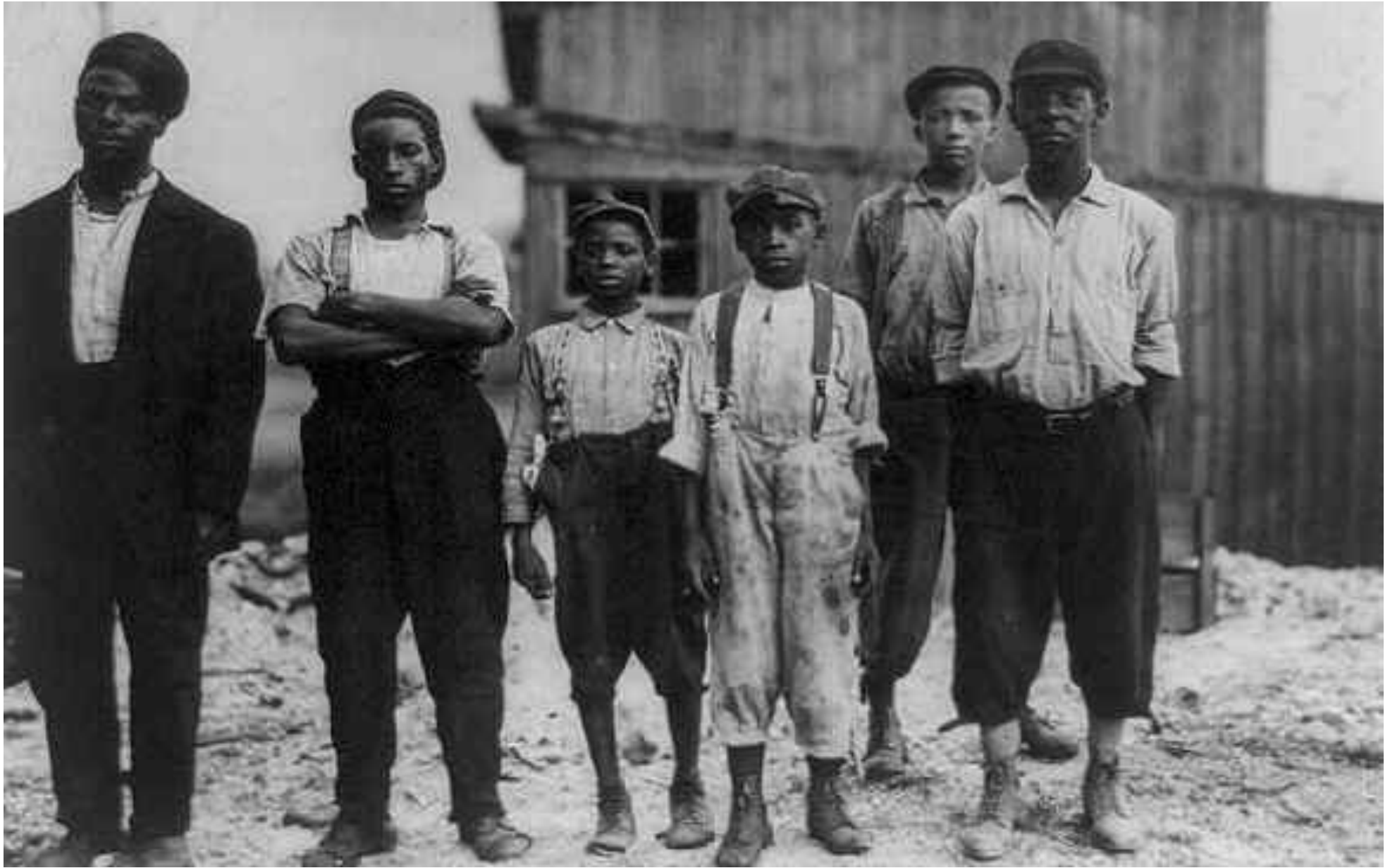
Riis, "It Costs a Dollar a Month to Sleep in These Sheds"



Lewis Hine, "Breaker Boys"



Hine, "Little Spinner Girl," Augusta, GA (1909)



Hine, "Glassworks"



Hine, "A Young Glassworker"



Hine: Avondale Mills in Birmingham, AL (1910)



Hine: Fish cutters at a Canning Co in Maine. Ages range from 7 to 12. They live near the factory. The 7 year old boy in front, Byron Hamilton, has a badly cut finger but helps his brother regularly. Behind him is his brother George, age 11, who cut his finger half off while working. Ralph, on the left, displays his knife and also a badly cut finger. They and many youngsters said they were always cutting themselves. George earns a \$1 some days, usually 75 cents. Some of the others say they earn a \$1 when they work all day. At times they start at 7 a.m. and work all day until midnight.

•**"SIXTEEN TONS"** By Merle Travis

Some people say a man is made out of mud
A poor man's made out of muscle and blood
Muscle and blood, skin and bones...
A mind that's weak and a back that's strong

Chorus You load sixteen tons, and what do you get?
another day older and deeper in debt
St. Peter, don't you call me, 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store

I was born one mornin' and the sun didn't shine
I picked up my shovel and I walked to the mine
I loaded sixteen tons of number nine coal and
the straw boss said, "well bless my soul!"
.....you loaded...

(Chorus)

I was born one mornin' it was drizzlin' rain
fightin' and trouble are my middle name
I was raised in a cane-brake by an old mama lion
can't no high-toned woman make me walk no line

(Chorus)

If you see me comin', better step aside
A lot of men didn't, a lot of men died
One fist of iron, the other of steel
If the right one don't get you, then the left one will

(Chorus)

You load sixteen tons, and what do you get?
Another day older and deeper in debt
St. Peter don't you call me, 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store

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Works Used

- Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. <http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/78vanderbilt/78visual2.htm>
- Biltmore Estate. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biltmore_Estate.
- Documenting “The Other Half”: The Social Reform Photographs of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hines. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma01/davis/photography/images/riisphotos/slideshow1.html>.
- The History Place – Child Labor in America, 1908-1912. <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/>.
- Tennessee Ernie Ford, *Sixteen Tons*. Lyrics written by Merle Travis. <http://www.ernieford.com/SixteenTons.htm>.