

*I'm Fred Olds,
founder of this museum.
Search this gallery and
see if you can answer
my questions!*

Fred's Finds

These photos are parts of bigger photos. Find where they come from!



Sock Turner

Crescent Hosiery Mill, Scotland Neck, Halifax County, November 1914

Mills often hired kids under 13, even though doing so was illegal. Hine knew the height of each button on his vest and could tell how tall a child was just by standing next to the child. This helped him estimate the age of kids who would not say how old they were.

? *Workers over 14 could legally work up to 66 hours a week. Do you work as long on school, chores, and homework?*



Spinner

Vivian Cotton Mills, Cherryville, Gaston County, November 1908

The textile industry in North Carolina began in the 1800s. Cheap labor and power—people who would work for low pay and rivers that could drive machinery—attracted mill owners. By 1900 there were 186 mills employing a total of 38,637 people across our state.

? *Textile mill workers were sometimes teased with the name "lint head." Can you tell where the term came from by looking at this photograph?*



Young Mill Girls

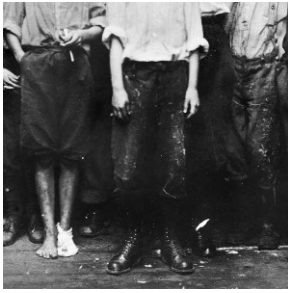
High Shoals Mills, High Shoals, Gaston County, November 1908

This picture was taken before the invention of air conditioning. Textile mills often roared away with windows shut because humidity helped keep the thread on the looms from drying out and snapping. This made for uncomfortable working conditions, especially in the summer. At least the large windows at this mill let in sunlight!

? *What do you think these two girls saw as they looked out the window on their lunch break?*

Please return this guide to one of the gallery racks when you are finished with it!

More Information & Questions ➔



Young Mill Boys

Cabarrus Mill, Concord, Cabarrus County, October 1912

Many kids were proud of their work and happy to contribute to the family's income. But mill jobs could also be dangerous. Feet, hands, hair, or clothing could get caught in fast-moving machinery, resulting in serious injuries. With every breath they took, workers sucked in lint, which could hurt their lungs. Their hearing could be damaged by the noise of the equipment. Lewis Hine wanted laws to protect child workers.

? What do you think had happened to the boy with the bandaged foot?



Mill Village

Cannon Mills, Cherryville, Gaston County, November 1908

Most mill workers lived in homes owned by the company, and rent was taken from their pay. The mill may have also owned the store, bank, church, and school and paid the doctor. Though mill village families were dependent on the company, they also formed strong connections among themselves. Many workers described village life as being part of a large family.

? How would you like to live at work? Do you know your neighbors?



Marble Player

Salisbury Cotton Mill, Salisbury, Rowan County, December 1908

Kids still found time to play! Here, boys shoot marbles. Others played baseball, football, and, later, basketball, against workers from other mills on mill-supported teams. Villages whose mills used water to power the machinery had rivers close by for swimming. Those in the country had woods for hunting and exploring.

? What are some games you play that do not plug in or run on batteries?



Workers Heading Home

Loray Mill, Gastonia, Gaston County, November 1908

Loray Mill was called the "Million Dollar Mill" when completed in 1902. But in 1929 its workers went on strike to protest poor working conditions and low wages. The strike turned violent, and people on both sides died. Workers received some help from federal and state legislation in the 1930s. But the failure of this strike and another larger one in 1934, along with threats from mill owners, left workers wary of joining unions.

? Look at the feet of these boys. What time of year was this picture taken?

**Where are the African American kids?
Where are the Indian kids?**

When Lewis Hine was taking photos in North Carolina (1908–1918), textile mill work was segregated. Nearly all the jobs inside the mills went to white workers.