

✓ Question ^[6]

What's the image's date, title, and creator: January, 1909...
Doffer Boys: Bibb Mill No. 1, Macon, GA... Lewis Hine.

Guess what type of person might have created this image and for what purpose: Photographer Lewis Hine was a well-known social reformer. 1909 is during the Progressive Era when Hine and others (e.g., Riis, Byron) used provocative photos of child labor to reveal and hopefully end unfettered capitalism's ability, perhaps tendency, to exploit workers, especially children and women who were – and still are to this day – often employed at far lower wages than men. Hine often worked for the National Child Labor Committee, a non-profit organization to end child exploitation.

Guess was it personal or published, candid or posed, is it amateur or professional: Published, likely to have been posed, and professional: This seems to be a posed photograph, while the kids are not looking at the camera (the child in the back ground may be looking at the camera), they are still and seem “posed.” Hine was a professional and often published his photos in an investigative, journalistic style.

There are only two children in the photograph; they are probably each younger than 10 years of age. The child in focus is without shoes; the child in the background is wearing shoes. They are in a large enclosure, or building (a factory, or a “mill” as the photograph's title indicates) that seems to have many of the same type of machines. There is only one window and there are no visible light fixtures.

At this time, children worked in all areas of a mill, but most often in the “spinning room” where cotton was rolled-out, made thin, and fed into a machine called a “spinning frame” that twisted the stands of fiber together and made them into thread. The thread was then spun onto a spool, called a bobbin, that held the thread for future use. As the spinning frame ran, children replaced the filled bobbins with empty bobbins. This job was called “**doffing**” (doff means to remove: someone can doff a cap) and the children completing this task were called “**doffers**.” To replace bobbins, the doffers had to climb the spinners and thus were at risk for injury. [2]

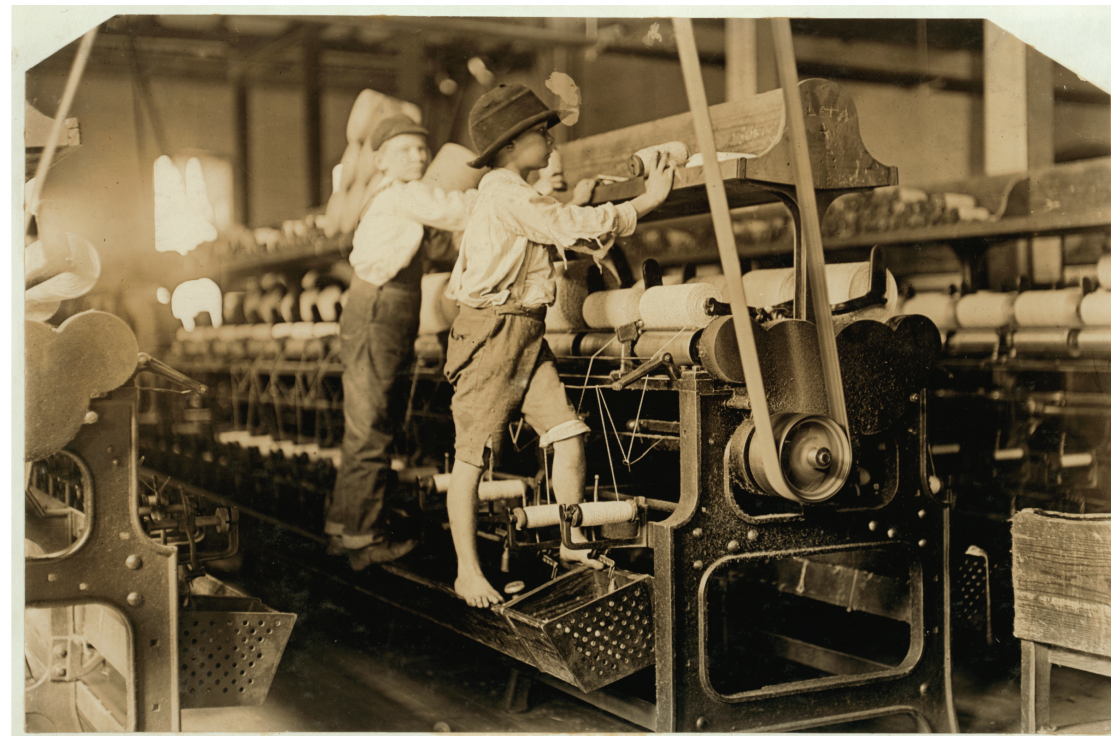
In about one sentence, state the image's overall message. Hine is using his photography to combat the injustice of child exploitation; he is using the emotions associated with protecting innocence to motivate, perhaps shame, community members into acting to protect children. [5]

Citations: [#] throughout the primer: 1. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004001388/PP/> 2. Hall, J.D., Murphy, M., Jones, L. & Daly, C. (1987). Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 49 3. Hindman, H. D. (2002). Child labor: An American history. ME Sharpe. P.161 4. *ibid* 5. Nordstrom, A. & McCausland, E. (2012). Lewis Hine. Distributed Art: New York. 6. Informed by the Library of Congress's “Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tools” webpage found: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>, and Wineburg, S. (1991). Historical problem solving: A study of the cognitive processes used in the evaluation of documentary and pictorial evidence *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83, 73-87.

The children are standing on a machine that looks like it may rotate (there is a belt looping around a wheel, which suggests that the machine turns or spins). The machine has a lot of thread and spools, which strongly suggests the machine is for the textile industry. There are metal baskets at the bottom on the machine that may collect something from the machine (i.e., debris, a finished product, extra or unused parts).

✓ Observe

Lewis Hine. (1909). *Doffer boys: Bibb Mill No. 1, Macon, GA* (photograph).
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. [1]



“Spinners” were workers who tended machines called spinning frames. Their's was difficult and nearly continuous work as each spinning frame contained many spindles (as many as 25 spindles on each). Each spindle had its own bobbin. Spinners often had to tie together broken threads to keep the machine working. They were usually paid by the number of bobbins filled each day. While not physically strenuous work, it required constant attention of the spinners. [4]

Doffing was intermittent work. There were short bursts of activity (changing the bobbins) with extended pauses between them. **Doffers** were often required to sweep the floors of the mill when they were not **doffing** the spinning frame. Sometimes, however, a **doffer** was a type of part-time worker who could leave the mill for hours at a time between **doffing** the spinning frame. Lewis Hine (the photographer) visited the Bibb Mill No. 1 in Macon, GA and said “there were dozens of youngsters, some so small that they could reach their work, at times, only by climbing up onto the spinning frames.” [3]

Some people at the time advocated putting children to work, at labor-intensive jobs, as a way to eliminate poverty. Some thought that short-term stability (money and food), although shortening their lives and perhaps perpetuating poverty, was better than long-term health... These boys do not seem entirely hopeless, yet the photo suggests they are resigned to a life of drudgery and are in the need of help; opportunities for a better life.

✓ Reflect

How does this image compare with other evidence? Many other historical photos depict aspects of industrialization (e.g., textile factories, urbanization) and also indicate the influence of working conditions on the lives of the poor and those who were employed. This photo seems similar to those revealing lives of the children in Pennsylvania (breaker boys), Massachusetts (spinners), Indiana (glassworkers) who also worked in cruel and dangerous conditions for little pay.

Why might other evidence (messages and data) agree or disagree with this image? Other photos by Hine are likely to support his message. Perhaps journal and diary accounts from these workers would, too. Newspaper articles and, sadly, obituaries, from this era may also support the message that children across the nation are suffering from such exploitation. Factory owners and managers may have refuted the claims. Some parents, too, may have wanted their children to work in financial support of their family.

What else do you need or want to know about this image? Did the children consider themselves “adults”? What protections, legal or by social convention, did child-workers have? What symbol is on many of the workers' caps? Where other child-workers' experiences in the American North, Midwest, and West similar? Were girls' experiences comparable? Did Hine ask the child in the foreground to take off his shoes?