TEACHER'S GUIDE

All Primary Source Documents

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

Table of Contents

Part 1

1. List of Passengers on the *Batavia*……p. 1
2. Pauline Newman Describes Her Family's Journey to New York City……p. 2
3. Ellis Island Eye Inspection Photo……p. 4
4. Sylvia Bernstein on Arriving at Ellis Island……p. 5
5. Table of Immigrant Origins, 1880-1920……p. 7
6. "The High Tide of Immigration – A National Menace"……p. 8
7. "The Surrender of New York Town" Cartoon……p. 9

Part 2

1. An Immigrant Writes to the Bintel Brief for Advice……p. 10
2. Report on Food Expenses for a Working Family in 1909……p. 11
3. Garment Workers in a Home Sweatshop Photo……p. 12
4. Floor Plan of a Typical Tenement, c. 1905……p. 13
5. "Immigration and the Public Health" Article……p. 14
6. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Magazine Cover……p. 15

Part 3

1. Lillian Ward on Establishing the Henry Street Settlement……p. 16
2. A Journalist Warns of the Dangers of Dance Halls……p. 18
3. "Far from the Fresh Air Farm" Painting……p. 19
4. "The Story of a Sweatshop Girl"……p. 20

Part 4

1. Interior of a Garment Factory, photo……p. 22
2. "The Return from Toil"……p. 23
3. Clara Lemlich Describes Life in the Shop……p. 24
4. Report on the Clothing Industry in New York, 1905……p. 25
5. A Journalist Defends the New Picture Shows……p. 27
6. Luna Park Photo……p. 29
7. Coney Island Postcard……p. 30

Part 5

1. "30,000 Waist Makers Declare Big Strike" Article Excerpt……p. 31
2. Rules for Pickets……p. 33
3. Striking Garment Workers Holding "The Call" Photo……p. 34
4. "Incident in the Shirtwaist Strike"……p. 35
5. "Women in a Labor War" article……p. 36
6. "Record of Police Persecution in the Waist Makers' Strike"……p. 39

Epilogue

1. Triangle Fire Survivors' Accounts……p. 40
2. "Placing the Responsibility" article……p. 44
3. Factory Safety Report, 1912……p. 45
4. Results of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, 1915……p. 47
5. Interior of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory after the Fire, photo……p. 49

TEACHER'S GUIDE

All Primary Source Documents

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

List of Passengers on the *Batavia*

Between 1880 and 1924, approximately three million Eastern European Jews emigrated to the United States. Many of them left from ports in Germany, such as Hamburg. The following document is a list of passengers on the S. S. Batavia, a ship that sailed from Hamburg to New York, arriving on July 9, 1907. The list records passengers' names, destinations, health conditions, finances, and other traits.

SALOON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.
THIS SHEET IS FOR STEERAGE PASSENGERS.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE U. S. IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL.

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved March 3, 1903, to be delivered to the U. S. Immigration Officer by the Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States.

Source: The Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. (www.libertyellisfoundation.org)

Pauline Newman Describes Her Family's Journey to New York City

In 1901, Pauline Newman left her native village in Lithuania and came to the United States. In the following account, she explains why her family left and describes the difficult conditions of their journey aboard a ship bound for New York.

The village I came from was very small. One department store, one synagogue, and one church. There was a little square where the peasants would bring their produce, you know, for sale. And there was one teahouse where you could have a glass of tea for a penny and sit all day long and play checkers if you wanted.

In the winter we would skate down the hilltop toward the lake and in the summer we'd walk to the woods and get mushrooms, raspberries. The peasants lived on one side of the lake, and the Jewish people on the other, in little square thatched-roof houses. In order to go to school you had to own land and we didn't own land, of course. Very few Jews did.

That was the time, you see, when America was known to foreigners as the land where you'd get rich. There's gold on the sidewalk—all you have to do is pick it up. So people left that little village and went to America. My brother first and then he sent for one sister, and after that, a few years after that, my father died and they sent for my mother and my other two sisters and me. I was seven or eight at the time. I'm not sure exactly how old, because the village I came from had no registration of birth, and we lost the family Bible on the ship and that was where the records were.

Of course we came steerage. That's the bottom of the ship and three layers of bunks. One, two, three, one above the other. If you were lucky, you got the first bunk. Of course you can understand that it wasn't all that pleasant when the people on the second bunk or the third bunk were ill. You had to suffer and endure not only your own misery, but the misery from the people above you.

My mother baked rolls and things like that for us to take along, because all you got on the boat was water, boiled water. If you had tea, you could make tea, but otherwise you just had the hot water. Sometimes they gave you a watery soup, more like a mud puddle than soup. It was stormy, cold uncomfortable. I wasn't sick, but other members of my family were.

When we landed at Ellis Island our luggage was lost. We inquired for it and they said, "Come another time. Come another time. You'll find it. We haven't got time now." So we left and we never saw our luggage again. We had bedding, linen, beautiful copper utensils, that sort of thing.

From Ellis Island we went by wagon to my brother's apartment on Hester Street. Hester Street and Essex on the Lower East Side. We were all bewildered to see so many people. Remember we were from a little village. And

here you had people coming and going and shouting. Peddlers, people on the streets. Everything was new, you know.

Source: Joan Morrison and Charlotte Fox Zabusky, *American Mosaic: The Immigrant Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It*, 8-9.

Ellis Island Eye Inspection Photo

When immigrants arrived at Ellis Island, United States officials examined them for evidence of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis and trachoma (an eye disease). Although relatively few were turned away, it was a nerve-wracking experience for new arrivals. This photograph depicts an immigrant couple undergoing an eye examination at the hands of a United States Public Health Service officer.

Source: "U.S. inspectors examining eyes of immigrants, Ellis Island, New York Harbor," Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. (http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/97501532/)

Sylvia Bernstein on Arriving at Ellis Island

In 1914 Sylvia Bernstein left Austria to join her brother in New York City. In this interview, she recounts her experiences at Ellis Island, the main immigrant inspection station for New York City and the busiest in the United States. The term "white slavery" referred to the practice of forcing young girls into prostitution.

I had a brother that came here in 1911. He was a tailor in New York. So I wrote to my brother, he should send me money, a ticket, I'll be glad to pay him back. I was fourteen years old. But you must remember, at fourteen they wouldn't leave you in without parents. You have to be sixteen. I says, "I'll try to pass for sixteen."

So I come on the boat, I can't speak English. It's sas—you don't understand what they say, only by the faces.

In Ellis Island it was very exciting. There you can talk Jewish (Yiddish) and you can talk Polish and you can talk everything. I came on a Friday. They go into a big room, and they feed you and they watch you. They give you a room with another girl—after all, it wasn't a hotel, darling! But it was of comfort. You're constantly watched. They watch you. If you go out, there's a woman go after you. "Where do you want to go?" You should excuse me, you have to go to the bathroom, and you don't know . . . I come from a very small town. So they show you—and they were very nice.

But they're very strict; because that time was white slavery. An agent came over to me and says, "How old are you?"

I says, "I'm sixteen." And I had a big head of hair, so I made braids I should look taller.

He says, "You're sixteen? Where is your sixteen years? You're so little. You're going to a brother?"

"Yes, I'm going to a brother."

"How long you didn't see your brother?"

I says, "Two years."

"Would you recognize your brother, if you see him?"

"Yes."

They bring in a man, they say, "Is this your brother?"

"No."

They know who my brother was—they did this more or less to see. They were very careful and very cautious, very nice.

Sunday my brother picked me up, Monday I got a job, and Tuesday I went to work in a dry-goods store, a haberdashery.

Source: Joan Morrison and Charlotte Fox Zabusky, *American Mosaic: The Immigrant Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It*, 85-86.

Table of Immigrant Origins, 1880-1920

This chart shows the numbers of immigrants that came to the United States by country of origin for each of the census years between 1880 and 1920.

Region and country or area	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920
Northern and Western Europe	5,499,889	7,288,917	7,204,649	7,306,325	6,241,916
Southern Europe	66,249	216,387	539,968	1,544,149	1,939,600
Greece	776	1,887	8,515	101,282	175,976
Italy	44,230	182,580	484,027	1,343,125	1,610,113
Portugal (incl. Azores)	15,650	25,735	40,376	77,634	103,976
Spain	5,121	6,185	7,050	22,108	49,535
Eastern Europe	182,371	512,464	1,134,680	2,956,783	3,731,327
Czechoslovakia (former)	85,361	118,106	156,891	219,214	362,438
Hungary	11,526	62,435	145,714	495,609	397,283
Poland	48,557	147,440	383,407	937,884	1,139,979
Romania	(not available)	(not available)	15,032	65,923	102,823
Russia (1920-Soviet Union)	35,722	182,644	423,726	1,184,412	1,400,495
Asia	107,630	113,383	120,248	191,484	237,950
Africa	2,204	2,207	2,538	3,992	16,126
Oceania	6,859	9,353	8,820	11,450	14,626
Latin America	90,073	107,307	137,458	279,514	588,843
Northern America	717,286	980,938	1,179,922	1,209,717	1,138,174
Region or country not reported	4,068	6,012	10,742	9,614	8,925
Born at sea	4,068	5,533	8,196	6,927	5,336
Not reported	(not available)	479	2,546	2,687	3,589
Total	6,679,943	9,249,547	10,341,276	13,515,886	13,920,692

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division
(http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab04.html)

TEACHER'S GUIDE

All Primary Source Documents

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

"The High Tide of Immigration—A National Menace" Cartoon

This cartoon appeared in the weekly humor magazine, Judge, in 1903. It reflects the alarm among some Americans at the growing number of immigrants from countries in Southern and Eastern Europe (such as Italy, Russia, and Austria-Hungary) and the declining number of immigrants from countries in Northern and Western Europe (such as Ireland and Germany).

THE HIGH TIDE OF IMMIGRATION—A NATIONAL MENACE.
Immigration statistics for the past year show that the influx of foreigners was the greatest in our history, and also that the hard-working peasants are now being supplanted by the criminals and outlaws of all Europe.

Source: Louis Dalrymple, "The High Tide of Immigration—A National Menace," *Judge Magazine*, August 22, 1903, OSUCGA – The Ohio State University Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum, https://cartoonimages.osu.edu/MbVmUnGXa

MISSION US

"The Surrender of New York Town" Cartoon

This cartoon, published in 1910, depicts a fictional "surrender" of New York to Jewish immigrants. The Jewish figures are portrayed according to common anti-semitic (anti-Jewish) stereotypes of the time about what Jewish immigrants looked like and what occupations they dominated.

Source: Harrison Cady, "The Surrender of New York Town," *Life*, May 12, 1910.

An Immigrant Girl Writes to the Bintel Brief for Advice

The Jewish Daily Forward was a Yiddish-language newspaper established in 1897 by a group of Jewish socialists. By 1912 the paper had a circulation of 120,000. The "Bintel Brief" ("Bintel" means "bundle" in Yiddish; "Brief" means "letter") was the paper's advice column. In the following document, a young girl writes to the paper's editors seeking advice on whether she should go to work or stay in school.

1907
Worthy Editor,

Allow me a little space in your newspaper and, I beg you, give me some advice as to what to do.
There are seven people in our family—parents and five children. I am the oldest child, a fourteen-year-old girl. We have been in the country two years and my father, who is a frail man, is the only one working to support the whole family.

I go to school, where I do very well. But since times are hard now and my father earned only five dollars this week, I began to talk about giving up my studies and going to work in order to help my father as much as possible. But my mother didn't even want to hear of it. She wants me to continue my education. She even went out and spent ten dollars on winter clothes for me. But I didn't enjoy the clothes, because I think I am doing the wrong thing. Instead of bringing something into the house, my parents have to spend money on me.

I have a lot of compassion for my parents. My mother is now pregnant, but she still has to take care of the three boarders we have in the house. Mother and Father work very hard and they want to keep me in school.

I am writing to you without their knowledge, and I beg you to tell me how to act. Hoping you can advise me, I remain,

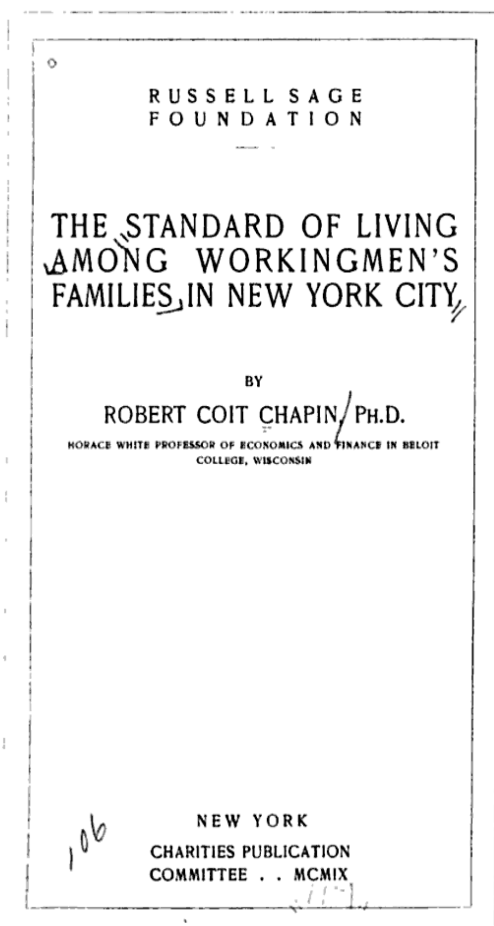
Your reader, S.

Answer:
The advice to the girl is that she should obey her parents and further her education, because in that way she will be able to give them greater satisfaction than if she went out to work.

Source: Isaac Meltzer, ed., *A Bintel Brief: Sixty Years of Letters from the Lower East Side to the* Jewish Daily Forward (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

Report on Food Expenses for a Working Family in 1909

In 1909, a charitable foundation compiled a report on food expenses for working-class families in New York City. This document details the weekly expenses for an Italian family living on West Houston Street. The father of this family worked as a longshoreman (a person who loads and unloads ships).



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

THE STANDARD OF LIVING AMONG WORKINGMEN'S FAMILIES IN NEW YORK CITY

BY

ROBERT COIT CHAPIN, PH.D.

HORACE WHITE PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE IN BELOIT COLLEGE, WISCONSIN

NEW YORK

CHARITIES PUBLICATION COMMITTEE . . MCMIX

5. An Italian family living on West Houston Street makes the report of food-expenditures that follows. The father is a longshoreman, earning $14 a week, or allowing for unemployment, $672 a year. The family consists of the parents, the woman's father, a girl of 13, a boy of 9 and a boy of 14 months. The nutriment required amounts to 4.2 in terms of an adult man, and the weekly requirement is the equivalent of food for 1 man for 29 days. The dietary analysis shows 106 grams of protein and 3888 calories per man per day, at a cost of 24 cents per man per day, or of 20 cents for everything except beer.

	Weekly Expenditure.	
Meats and fish:		
11 lbs. beef	$0.90	
3 lbs. fish	$0.30	$1.20
Eggs, dairy products, etc.:		
7 lbs. lard	.50	
½ lb. cheese	.15	
8 eggs	.20	
7 qts. milk	.35	1.20
Cereals:		
21 loaves bread	1.05	
4 lbs. flour	.14	
14 lbs. macaroni (American)	.98	2.17
Carried forward		$4.57

THE STANDARD OF LIVING

Brought forward		$4.57
Vegetables, fruit, etc.:		
3 qts. potatoes	.15	
Onions	.05	
Fresh vegetables	.10	
2 lbs. dried beans	.15	
Fresh fruits	.10	.55
Sugar, tea, etc.:		
1 lb. coffee	.35	
3 lbs. sugar	.18	
1 qt. olive oil	.20	.73
Alcoholic liquors:		
14 pints beer	1.40	1.40
Total		$7.25

Source: Robert Coit Chapin, "The Standard of Living Among Workingmen's Families in New York City," Russell Sage Foundation, 1909.

Garment Workers in a Home Sweatshop Photo

Many Jewish immigrants found work in New York's booming garment industry. Often they worked in "sweatshops," like this one, where they assembled garments under the supervision of a contractor. Most sweatshops were located in people's homes, and the workers were paid a "piece work" rate (according to how many items they finished). The work was difficult and low paid.

Source: Lewis Hine, "Group in Sweatshop," 1908. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress (http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004000050/PP/)

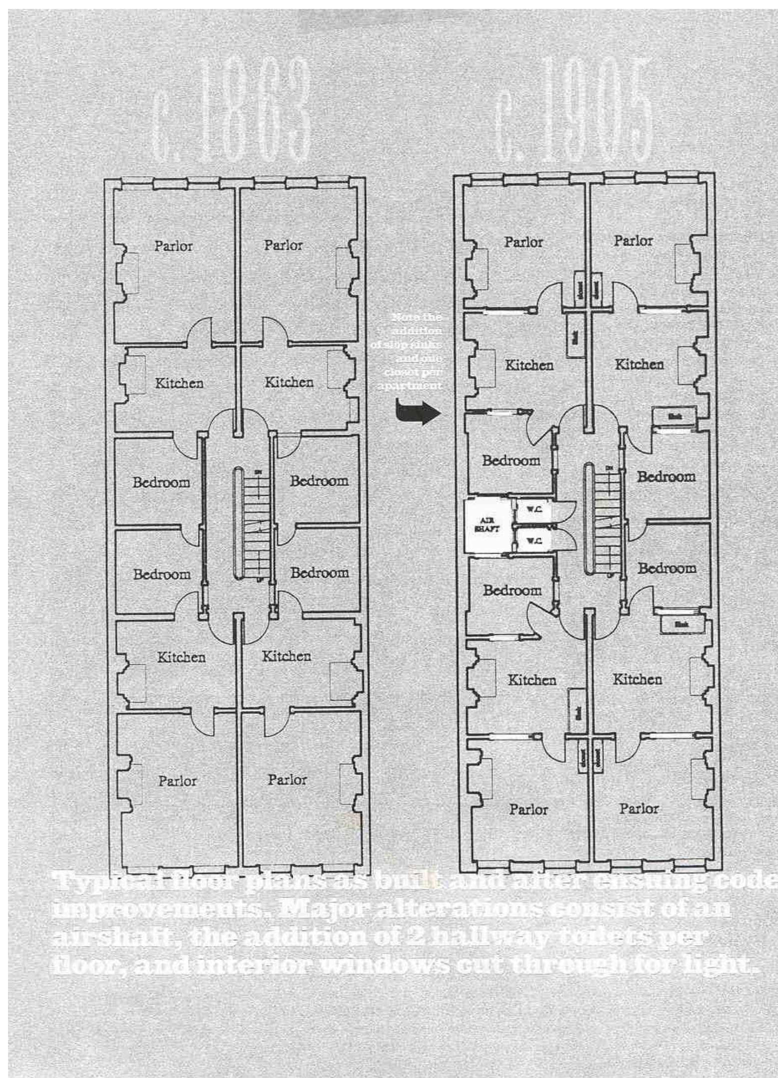
TEACHER'S GUIDE

All Primary Source Documents

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

Floor Plan of a Typical Tenement, c. 1905

This diagram depicts the changes in tenement house construction mandated by the Second Tenement House Act of 1879. On the left is a diagram of a "Pre-Law" tenement; the right side contains a diagram of a post-1879 "Old Law" tenement. Major changes include the addition of an air shaft for light and ventilation, extra windows, hallway toilets, and slop sinks for the kitchen.



Source: Unknown

"Immigration and the Public Health" Article

Some Americans feared new immigrants, believing that the way they lived in crowded neighborhoods spread disease. In this 1904 article from a popular magazine, a doctor specifically blames the new immigrants—"Hebrews, Syrians, Greeks, and southern Italians"—for spreading disease and being a "menace to the public health."

Thousands of immigrants of poor physique (body type) are recorded as such by the medical inspectors at Ellis Island, and a card to this effect sent to the registry clerk or immigrant inspector with the immigrant, but this mere note of physical defect carries little significance under the present law, and the vast majority of them are admitted by the immigration authorities, because it does not appear that the physical defect noted will make the immigrant a public charge. . . .

The real danger to the public health from immigration lies in that class of immigrants whose physique is much below American standards, whose employment is in the sweat-shop, and whose residence is the East Side tenement in New York City. The Mediterranean races, Syrians, Greeks and southern Italians, who are unused to a cold climate, and who often have insufficient clothing, also establish in their crowded quarters [neighborhoods] splendid for the dissemination [spread] of disease. The Hebrews, Syrians, Greeks, and southern Italians invariably crowd the most unsanitary quarters of the great centers of population. And the various filthy and infected, though perhaps picturesque, foreign quarters constitute to-day the greatest existing menace to the public health.

Source: Dr. Allan McLaughlin, "Immigration and the Public Health," *Popular Science* (January 1904), 232, 236-237

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Magazine Cover

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society was established in 1881 in New York City to assist Jews who had fled pogroms (massacres) in Russia and Eastern Europe. The Society helped new immigrants in a number of ways—providing food, shelter, and transportation; locating relatives; and helping new arrivals understand United States laws. This cover of the Society’s magazine, The Jewish Immigrant, *includes the organization’s motto and a drawing of Jewish immigrants entering the United States.*

Source: *The Jewish Immigrant.* Vol. 2, no. 1 (January 1909). New York: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, 1909 (http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/haventohome/haven-century.html#obj7)

Lillian Wald on Establishing the Henry Street Settlement

In the 1890s, Lillian Wald was working as a nurse in New York City. When she visited a patient in the immigrant neighborhood of the Lower East Side, she was shocked at the poor living conditions residents were forced to endure. With a friend, she decided to move to the neighborhood and soon opened the Henry Street Settlement, an organization dedicated to providing social services to the urban poor. Henry Street Settlement was not the only institution of its kind; other settlement houses emerged across England and the United States during this period. In her memoir, Wald describes the experiences that prompted her to establish Henry Street Settlement.

Two decades ago the words "East Side" called up a vague and alarming picture of something strange and alien: a vast crowded area, a foreign city within our own, for whose conditions we had no concern. Aside from its exploiters, political and economic, few people had any definite knowledge of it, and its literary discovery " had but just begun. The lower East Side then reflected the popular indifference—it almost seemed contempt—for the living conditions of a huge population. And the possibility of improvement seemed, when my inexperience was startled into thought, the more remote because of the dumb acceptance of these conditions by the East Side itself. Like the rest of the world I had known little of it, when friends of a philanthropic institution asked me to do something for that quarter. . . .

From the schoolroom where I had been giving a lesson in bed-making, a little girl led me one drizzling March morning. She had told me of her sick mother, and gathering from her incoherent account that a child had been born, I caught up the paraphernalia of the bed-making lesson and carried it with me.

The child led me on through a tenement hallway, across a court where open and unscreened closets were promiscuously used by men and women, up into a rear tenement, by slimy steps whose accumulated dirt was augmented that day by the mud of the streets, and finally into the sickroom. . . . [A]lthough the sick woman lay on a wretched, unclean bed, soiled with a hemorrhage two days old, they were not degraded human beings, judged by any measure of moral values. In fact, it was very plain that they were sensitive to their condition, and when, at the end of my ministrations, they kissed my hands (those who have undergone similar experiences will, I am sure, understand), it would have been some solace if by any conviction of the moral unworthiness of the family I could have defended myself as a part of a society which permitted such conditions to exist. That morning's experience was a baptism of fire. Deserted were the laboratory and the academic work of the college. I never returned to them.

To the first sympathetic friend to whom I poured forth my story, I found myself presenting a plan which had been developing almost without conscious mental direction on my part. It was doubtless the accumulation of many reflections inspired by acquaintance with the patients in the hospital wards, and now, with the Ludlow Street experience, resistlessly impelling me to action. Within a day or two a comrade from the training-school, Mary Brewster, agreed to share in the venture. We were to live in the neighborhood as nurses, identify ourselves

with it socially, and, in brief, contribute to it our citizenship. That plan contained in embryo all the extended and diversified social interests of our settlement group to-day. . . .

The mere fact of living in the tenement brought undreamed-of opportunities for widening our knowledge and extending our human relationships. That we were Americans was wonderful to our fellow-tenants. They were all immigrants—Jews from Russia or Roumania. . . .

From this first house have since developed the manifold activities in city and country now incorporated as the Henry Street Settlement. I should like to make it clear that from the beginning we were most profoundly moved by the wretched industrial conditions which were constantly forced upon us. In succeeding chapters I hope to tell of the constructive programmes that the people themselves have evolved out of their own hard lives, of the ameliorative measures, ripened out of sympathetic comprehension, and, finally, of the social legislation that expresses the new compunction of the community.

Source: Lillian D. Wald, *The House on Henry Street* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), 2-25.

A Journalist Warns of the Dangers of Dance Halls

During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, dance halls became increasingly popular hangouts for young people, in part because they offered an opportunity to mingle and flirt away from parental supervision. But not all New Yorkers approved of the dance-hall craze. In this article, published in 1911, a journalist warns of the "dance madness" sweeping over New York City and points out the perils of the new establishments, especially for young women.

Diverting a Pastime: How Are We To Protect the City's Youth and Yet Provide for the Natural Demand for Entertainment? By Belle Lindner Israels (Excerpt)

The storm of dance madness has come over the young people of New York. Streets in which the dance halls are located are picturesque enough [on the outside]. The hall is usually up one or two flights of stairs and [is] framed in big windows of plate glass. Brilliant lights shine through. The sounds of a waltz or two-step pounded on the piano and emphasized by an automatic drum flow out to the passer-by. Boys and girls flit past the windows or slip into the doorway in twos and threes, and managers remain outside, announcing the special features of their halls. The noise, the lights, the air of excitement and good time all attract.

In studying the dance hall one comes continually against the liquor problem, so that it is claimed with much reason that the liquor interests control the amusement. In the small saloon dance hall, which is open nightly without an admission fee, it is understood that the dancing is permitted simply as a [way to get people to buy] liquor. The music plays for three or four minutes, and there are intermissions covering a period of from fifteen to twenty minutes between the dances. During these times the people at the tables are constantly [pestered] to buy drinks. Girls not being entertained at the tables rush over to the dressing-rooms to avoid being seen on the floor.

The city, the town, the village must all recognize that playgrounds for children solve only half the problem. The dangerous period in the life of the young girl is during adolescence, between fourteen and twenty. If she can be guided through these years with proper [opportunities] for the wholesome expression of her emotional and mental needs, she will add to the glory of our American womanhood. If she is forced into the [streets] guided by the lowest types of commercialized amusements, there is small hope for her.

Source: *Leslie's Weekly* July 27, 1911 p. 94.

"Far From the Fresh Air Farm" Painting

As New York's immigrant districts became more and more crowded, reformers worried that without places to play, children would either be denied a healthy upbringing or be forced to play in the street, exposed to its numerous dangers. This 1911 painting carries the subtitle: "The Crowded City Street, with its Dangers and Temptations, is a Pitiful Makeshift Playground for Children."

Source: William Glackens, "Far From the Fresh Air Farm: The Crowded City Street, with its Dangers and Temptations, is a Pitiful Makeshift Playground for Children." 1911, crayon heightened with watercolor on paper. Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, Nova Southeastern University. Bequest of Ira Glackens.

"The Story of a Sweatshop Girl"

Immigrant worker Sadie Frowne's story was originally published the New York Independent, *a reform-minded newspaper, and later collected into the 1906 book* The Lives of Undistinguished Americans as Told by Themselves. *The book was remarkable in a time when most biographies or memoirs were by and about political leaders, prominent writers, or wealthy industrialists. In this section, she describes her life outside of work, including a very busy social life.*

Aunt Fanny had always been anxious for me to get an education, as I did not know how to read or write, and she thought that was wrong. Schools are different in Poland from what they are in this country, and I was always too busy to learn to read and write. So when mother died I thought I would try to learn a trade and then I could go to school at night and learn to speak the English language well.

It cost me $2 a week to live, and I had a dollar a week to spend on clothing and pleasure, and saved the other dollar. I went to night school, but it was hard work learning at first as I did not know much English. Sometimes we go to Coney Island, where there are good dancing places, and sometimes we go to Ulmer Park to picnics. I am very fond of dancing, and, in fact, all sorts of pleasure. I go to the theater quite often, and like those plays that make you cry a great deal "The Two Orphans" is good. Last time I saw it I cried all night because of the hard times that the children had in the play. I am going to see it again when it comes here.

For the last two winters I have been going to night school at Public School 84 on Glenmore avenue. I have learned reading, writing and arithmetic. I can read quite well in English now and I look at the newspapers every day. I read English books, too, sometimes. The last one that I read was "A Mad Marriage," by Charlotte Braeme. She's a grand writer and makes things just like real to you. You feel as if you were the poor girl yourself going to get married to a rich duke.

I am going back to night school again this winter. Plenty of my friends go there. Some of the women in my class are more than forty years of age. Like me, they did not have a chance to learn anything in the old country. It is good to have an education; it makes you feel higher. Ignorant people are all low. People say now that I am clever and fine in conversation.

I pay 25 cents a month to the union, but I do not begrudge that because it is for our benefit. The next strike is going to be for a raise of wages, which we all ought to have. But tho I belong to the union I am not a Socialist or an Anarchist I don't know exactly what those things mean. There is a little expense for charity, too. If any worker is injured or sick we all give money to help.

Some of the women blame me very much because I spend so much money on clothes. They say that instead of a dollar a week I ought not to spend more than twenty five cents a week on clothes, and that I should save the rest But a girl must have clothes if she is to go into high society at Ulmer Park or Coney Island or the theatre. Those

who blame me are the old country people who have old-fashioned notions, but the people who have been here a long time know better. A girl who does not dress well is stuck in a corner, even if she is pretty, and Aunt Fanny says that I do just right to put on plenty of style.

I have many friends and we often have jolly parties. Many of the young men like to talk to me, but I don't go out with any except Henry.

Lately he has been urging me more and more to get married — but I think I'll wait.

Source: "The Story of a Sweatshop Girl," Independent, 25 September 1902, 2279-82.

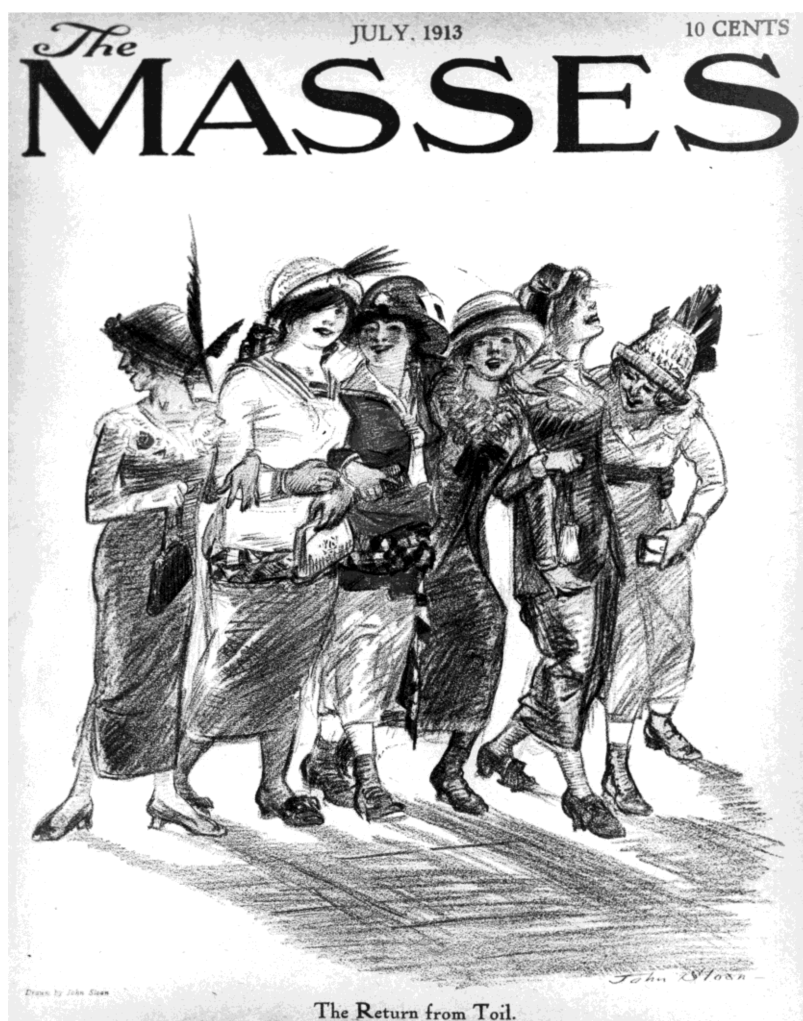
Interior of a garment factory, photo

During the first years of the twentieth century, garment manufacturing began to shift from the tenements of the Lower East Side to factories located in other parts of lower Manhattan. This photograph shows one such factory, which could accommodate a far greater number of workers than the average home-based sweatshop.

Source: Unknown.

"The Return from Toil"

The Masses *was an illustrated radical magazine based in New York and published between 1911 and 1917. The magazine was notable for its striking artwork. This cover, by the American artist John Sloan, depicts a group of women walking home from work. Sloan presents these working girls as strong, independent, and exuberant individuals.*



Source: John Sloan, "The Return from Toil," *The Masses*, July 1913, Front Cover. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Clara Lemlich Describes Life in the Shop

Clara Lemlich sparked the 1909 walkout of shirtwaist makers when she called for a strike at a mass meeting of garment factory workers. This piece was first published in the New York Evening *Journal on November 28, 1909, four days after the strike began.*

First let me tell you something about the way we work and what we are paid. There are two kinds of work - regular, that is salary work, and piecework. The regular work pays about $6 a week and the girls have to be at their machines at 7 o'clock in the morning and they stay at them until 8 o'clock at night, with just one-half hour for lunch in that time.

The shops. Well, there is just one row of machines that the daylight ever gets to - that is the front row, nearest the window. The girls at all the other rows of machines back in the shops have to work by gaslight, by day as well as by night. Oh, yes, the shops keep the work going at night, too.

The bosses in the shops are hardly what you would call educated men, and the girls to them are part of the machines they are running. They yell at the girls and they "call them down" even worse than I imagine the Negro slaves were in the South.

There are no dressing rooms for the girls in the shops. They have to hang up their hats and coats - such as they are - on hooks along the walls. Sometimes a girl has a new hat. It never is much to look at because it never costs more than 50 cents, that means that we have gone for weeks on two-cent lunches - dry cake and nothing else.

The shops are unsanitary - that's the word that is generally used, but there ought to be a worse one used. Whenever we tear or damage any of the goods we sew on, or whenever it is found damaged after we are through with it, whether we have done it or not, we are charged for the piece and sometimes for a whole yard of the material.

At the beginning of every slow season, $2 is deducted from our salaries. We have never been able to find out what this is for.

Source: Leon Stein, ed., *Out of the Sweatshop: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy* (New York: Quadrangle/New Times Book Company, 1977)

Report on the Clothing Industry in New York, 1905

Clothing manufacturers constantly sought ways to pay workers less. One way was to divide the task of assembling a garment into a series of small, repetitive operations. This report describes how one manufacturer divided the assembly of a coat into thirty-nine separate steps.

There is a constant tendency in industry to make use of cheaper labor where it is possible. In England the custom grew up of subdividing the work . . . Male labor was still largely retained to do the operating work, but the greater subdivision [of tasks] made it possible to employ a lower grade of that labor, not controlled by the union. . . .

The principle of this system has been widely adopted but the extent to which the division of labor has been carried varies greatly. The extreme of this division is seen in one of the leading contractor's shops in New York City, where thirty-nine different processes, carried on by the same number of people, are represented in the manufacture of a coat.

This shop turns out a very high grade of work, and two-thirds of its employees are women. Those who carry on the processes of manufacture spoken of above are as follows:

(1.) The fitter, who also cuts the linings, marks the pockets, and puts on tickets,
(2.) pocket maker,
(3.) canvas baster,
(4.) padder of lapel,
(5.) bar tacker (on pockets),
(6.) seam presser,
(7.) lining maker,
(8.) lining operator,
(9.) sleeve maker,
(10.) lining presser,
(11.) sleeve presser,
(12.) collar padder,
(13.) shaper,
(14.) baster and fuller of stay tape,
(15.) lining baster, prepares for machine,
(16.) operator,
(17.) presser,
(18.) edge cutter,
(19.) edge baster,
(20.) lining baster for shoulders,

(21.) operator for shoulders,
(22.) sleeve baster around edge,
(23.) collar and sleeve baster, prepares for operator,
(24.) presser on sleeve,
(25.) joiner of collar to lapel,
(26.) arm-hole baster,
(27.) operator who sews in sleeves,
(28.) garment examiner,
(29.) J collar finisher,
(30.) lining finisher, around arm-hole,
(31.) basting puller,
(32.) edge presser,
(33.) button hole cutter,
(34.) button-hole maker,
(35.) general busheler and hanger sewer,
(36.) presser of entire coat,
(37.) button marker,
(38.) button sewer,
(39.) busheler.

With the single exception of the pocket maker, a highly skilled mechanic, every one of these workers can become proficient in his line within a few months.

Source: Jesse Eliphalet Pope, *The Clothing Industry in New York* (University of Missouri), September 1905, pp. 69-71.

A Journalist Defends the New Picture Shows

At the beginning of the twentieth century, movies, still in their infancy, began to replace stage shows as favorite sources of entertainment for the working classes. In this article, published in 1911, a journalist explains the allure of the “picture shows” for young, working-class audiences.

It is drama, and it is travel, and it is even beauty, all in one. A wonderful thing it is, and to know how wonderful I suppose you must be poor and have in your life no books and no pictures and no means of travel or seeing beautiful places, and almost no amusements of any kind; perhaps your only door of escape or only means of forgetfulness more drink than is good for you. Then you will know what a moving-picture show really means, although you will probably not be able to put it into words.

We talk a good deal about the censorship of picture shows, and pass city ordinances (laws) to keep the young from being corrupted by them: and this is all very well, because a great amusement of the people ought to be kept clean and sweet; but at the same time this discussion has left a sort of feeling in the minds of people who do not need to go to the picture show that it is a doubtful sort of a place, where young girls and men [make] undesirable acquaintances, and where the prowler lies in wait for the unwary, and where suggestive films of crime and passion are invariably displayed. But I think that this is an unjust idea, and that any one who will take the trouble

to amuse himself with the picture show audiences for an afternoon or two will see why it is that the making of films has become a great industry, why it is that the picture show has driven out the vaudeville and the melodrama.

You cannot go to any one of the picture shows in New York without having a series of touching little adventures with the people who sit near you, without overhearing chance words of a naiveté and appreciation that make you bless the living picture book that has brought so much into the lives of the people who work.

Source: Excerpt from Mary Heaton Vorse, "Some Picture Show Audiences," illustrated by Wladyslaw T. Benda. Outlook 98, 24 June 1911, p. 442.

All Primary Source Documents

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

Luna Park, photo

Amusement parks (built at the end of trolley lines to stimulate traffic) achieved broad appeal in the early 1900s, especially among the legions of young immigrant men and women who flocked to parks and beaches on their days off. New York's Coney Island (which included the amusement parks Steeplechase Park, Luna Park, and Dreamland) was the most famous of the new resorts, attracting more than 20 million visitors a year. The photo below depicts Luna Park during its heyday.

Source: "Coney Island, in Luna Park." Bain News Service. ca. 1910 and ca. 1915]. Library of Congress. http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ggbain.09490/

Coney Island Postcard

While men and women had once amused themselves separately, new entertainment districts like Coney Island offered beachgoers an opportunity to mingle with the opposite sex. This postcard presents one instance of the new mixed recreation.

Source: Dancing in the Sand at Coney Island, N. Y., 1905. Published by S. Hirschberg.
http://collections.mcny.org/Collection/Dancing in the Sand at Coney Island, N. Y.-2F3HRG2LZ1R.html

All Primary Source Documents

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

"30,000 Waist Makers Declare Big Strike" Article Excerpt

This 1909 newspaper article describes a gathering of thousands of female shirtwaist makers. During the meeting, the workers made the decision to go on strike from their jobs to demand better working conditions. The article features quotations from strike supporters Samuel Gompers, the head of the American Federation of Labor union and Clara Lemlich, a young female worker.

Thirty thousand ladies waist makers, driven to desperation by the in tolerable conditions prevailing in their trade, voted to go on a general strike last night at four enormous mass meetings which packed Cooper Union, Astoria Hall, Beethoven Hall, and Manhattan Lyceum.

The decision to strike was first reached at the Cooper Union meeting, which was addressed by Samuel Gompers, president of the A.F. of L (American Federation of Labor Union).

Gompers said: "I have never declared a strike in all my life. I have done my share to prevent strikes, but there comes a time when not to strike is but to rivet (fasten) the chains of slavery upon our wrists."

"This is the time and the opportunity, and I doubt if you let it pass whether it can be created again in five or ten years or a generation. I say, friends, do not enter too hastily but when you can't get the manufacturers to give you what you want, then strike. And when you strike, let the manufacturers know you are on strike!

"I ask you to stand together," said Gompers in conclusion, "to have faith in yourselves, to be true to your comrades. If you strike, be cool, calm, collected and determined. Let your watchword be: Union and progress, and until then no surrender!"

This was greeted with a storm of applause.

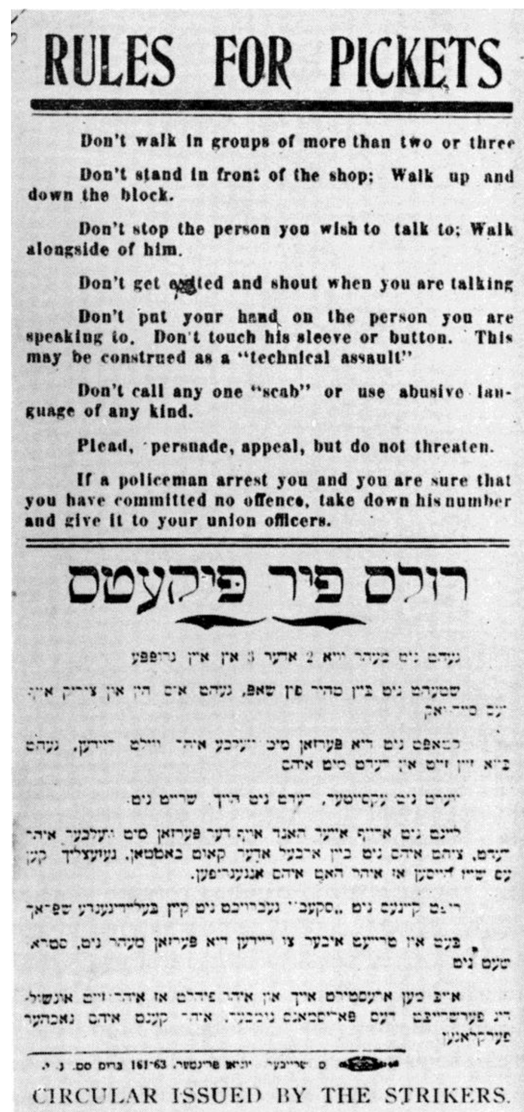
Clara Lemlich, who was badly beaten up by thugs during the strike in the shop of Louis Leiserson, interrupted Jacob Panken just as he started to speak, saying: "I wanted to say a few words." Cries came from all parts of the hall, "Getup on the platform!" Willing hands lifted the frail little girl with flashing black eyes to the stage, and she said simply: "I have listened to all the speakers. I would not have further patience for talk, as I am one of those who feels and suffers from the things pictured. I move that we go on a general strike!"

As the tremulous voice of the girl died away, the audience rose en masse and cheered her to the echo. A grim sea of faces, with high purpose and resolve, they shouted and cheered the declaration of war for living conditions hoarsely

Source: "30,000 Waist Makers Declare Big Strike," *The Call*, November 23, 1909, in Leon Stein, ed., *Out of the Sweatshop: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy* (New York: Quadrangle/New Times Book Company, 1977), 68-70

Rules for Pickets

During the 1909 strike, picketers marched outside of the factories where they worked to draw attention to poor working conditions and to try and keep others from going into work. Written in both English and Yiddish, the strikers distributed this circular (flier) to tell picketers how to behave, and what to do to keep from being arrested.



RULES FOR PICKETS

Don't walk in groups of more than two or three

Don't stand in front of the shop; Walk up and down the block.

Don't stop the person you wish to talk to; Walk alongside of him.

Don't get excited and shout when you are talking

Don't put your hand on the person you are speaking to. Don't touch his sleeve or button. This may be construed as a "technical assault"

Don't call any one "scab" or use abusive language of any kind.

Plead, persuade, appeal, but do not threaten.

If a policeman arrest you and you are sure that you have committed no offence, take down his number and give it to your union officers.

רולס פיר פיקעטס

געהט ניט מעהר ווי 2 אדער 3 אין איין גרופפע

שטעהט ניט ביים טהיר פון שאפ, געהט אים הין און צוריק אין דעם בלאק

שטאפט ניט דיא פערזאן מיט וועלכע איהר ווילט רעדען, געהט ביי זיין זייט און רעדט מיט איהם

ווערט ניט עקסייטעד, רעדט ניט הויך, שרייט ניט.

לייגט ניט אייער האנד אויף דער פערזאן מיט וועלכער איהר רעדט, ציהט איהם ניט ביים ארבעל אדער קנאפ באטאן, געזעצליך קען עס זיין געזעהן אז איהר האט איהם אנגעגריפען.

רופט קיינעם ניט „סקעב" געברויכט ניט קיין בעליידיגענדע שפראך

בעט און טרייט איבער צו רעדען דיא פערזאן מעהר ניט, סטראשעט ניט

אויב מען ארעסטירט אייך און איהר ווייסט אז איהר זייט אונשולדיג פערשרייבט דעם פאליסמאנ'ס נומער. איהר קענט איהם נאכהער פערקלאגען

CIRCULAR ISSUED BY THE STRIKERS.

Source: Morris U. Schappes, *The Jews in the United States: A Pictorial History 1654-present* (Tercentenary Book Committee, 1958).

Striking Garment Workers holding *The Call* photo

The Socialist Party, which supported improved conditions for workers, donated a special edition of "The New York Call" newspaper to the strikers so that they could sell it to raise money for the strike fund. The special edition described the strike from the union's perspective, and women raised awareness of the strike by selling the paper all across Manhattan. This photograph from 1910 shows the shirtwaist workers, wearing sashes that identify them as strikers, selling copies of the newspaper.

STRIKING SHIRTWAIST-MAKERS SELLING COPIES OF THE CALL, THE NEW YORK SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER

Source: Kheel Center, Cornell

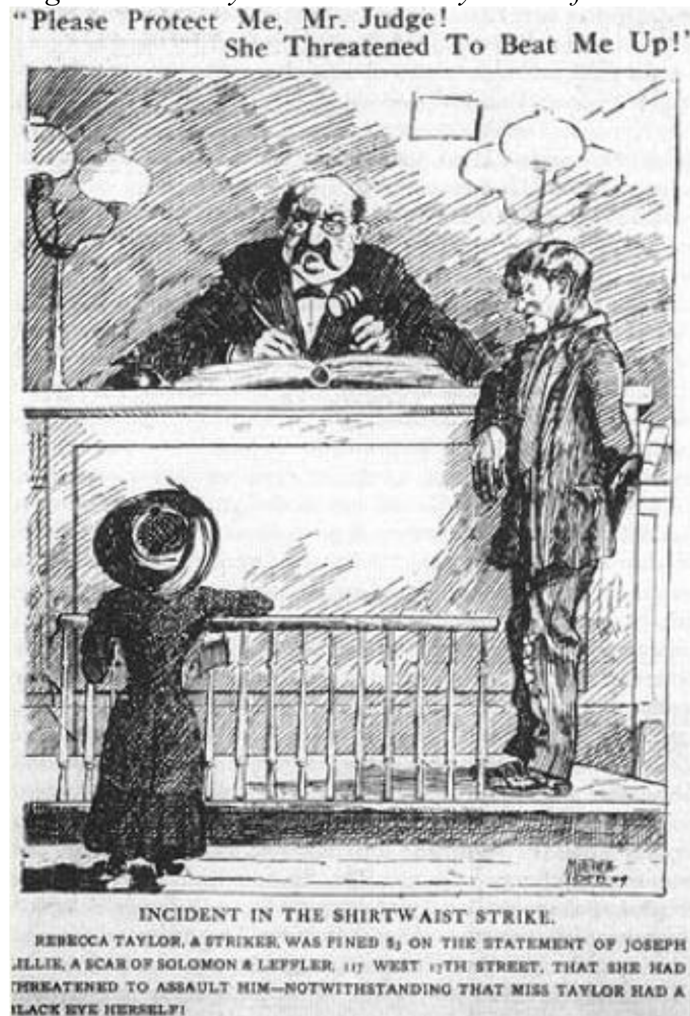
TEACHER'S GUIDE

All Primary Source Documents

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

"Incident in the Shirtwaist Strike"

This cartoon appeared in the Socialist newspaper The Call, which supported the shirtwaist strike, in 1909. During the strike, some women were arrested and fined on charges of beating up male scabs (people who worked during the strike). The caption below the cartoon reads, in part: "Rebecca Taylor, a striker, was fined, on the statement of Joseph Lillie, a scab of Solomon & Leffler, that she had tried to assault him—notwithstanding that Miss Taylor had a black eye herself!"



INCIDENT IN THE SHIRTWAIST STRIKE.

REBECCA TAYLOR, A STRIKER, WAS FINED $5 ON THE STATEMENT OF JOSEPH LILLIE, A SCAB OF SOLOMON & LEFFLER, 117 WEST 17TH STREET, THAT SHE HAD THREATENED TO ASSAULT HIM—NOTWITHSTANDING THAT MISS TAYLOR HAD A BLACK EYE HERSELF!

Source: "Incident in the Shirtwaist Strike," *New York Call*, December 29, 1909.

MISSION US

"Women in a Labor War" Article

This article was published in "Munsey's Magazine," a popular weekly magazine, in April 1910. The article describes the shirtwaist strike and the young women's efforts to win better working conditions and the right to organize labor unions. The article aims to show the women's strength and commitment—that they went without wages and sometimes even food, and refused to stop striking before all of their demands were met.

Women Using Men's Weapons
Times had changed, and women had been changed by them. The invention of the steam-engine and the introduction of machinery had compelled many women to seek to earn their living in a new way. They found themselves in a tight corner—pressed by hunger, pressed by cold, pressed by unfulfilled desires of many sorts. Concerted action promised the only hope of success. None could win unless all would stand together; and these Jewish girls fitted the old weapon to the new emergency. They invoked the subtle power of the ancient oath of their race.

Some of the richest women in the country felt it. Mrs. O.H.P. Belmont, mother of the Duchess of Marlborough, felt it. Miss Anne Morgan, daughter of J. Pierpont Morgan, felt it. Mrs. Belmont sat up nearly all night in the night court to save some accused strikers from the necessity of spending Sunday in the Tombs, and, at three o'clock in the morning gave her Fifth Avenue mansion as security for the appearance of the girls in court the following day.

The daughter of another rich woman induced (convinced) her mother to deed (transfer ownership of) the family mansion to her in order that she might sit in court, day after day, and give bail for arrested girls. Miss Morgan showed her interest by attending a demonstration given in honor of a poor girl returned from the workhouse. Girls from Vassar… showed their interest by giving up their holiday vacations, going on picket duty, and doing everything else that they could do to promote the cause of their suffering sisters.

But the spur [of economic necessity] did more. It caused the women whom it had driven into factories to act like men who work in factories. Men who thus work do not weep or mourn when things in the factories pass beyond what they conceive to be their endurance. They strike. Not only do they strike, but they stick to their colors and battle for their cause as long as they have strength to do so. Yet no man ever gave a greater exhibition of dogged determination to persevere in the end than did these girls not yet out of their teens.

A Typical Labor War
When they "picketed" the factories and tried to prevent other women from taking their places, there were excitement and some disorder in the streets. In the scuffling, some of the girls were grabbed by the hair, and their heads were bumped against the curbstones. Never mind—let the strike go on!

More than six hundred were arrested, and a score were sent to the workhouse. What of it? Merely incidents of industrial warfare—let the strike proceed!

The six thousand who stayed out to the bitter end after the other twenty-four thousand had won their victory were actually starving. One day, on a single street, out of thirty pickets, twenty-eight fell in their tracks. It was not magnificent—just industrial war. Forget it, and remember the strike!

Then came the day when the employers of the remaining six thousand offered terms of peace. Back to the Cooper Union—read the terms. What were they?

As terms go, they were liberal. Every demand was granted except one. But that one rejected grievance—no union! Not recognized! Spurned, ignored, thrown out of court!

Starving girls were called upon to say what they would do. They filled the hall. A patriarchal Jew of seventy began to speak. He told his hearers that he was one of the few men engaged in the shirtwaist industry. He was the father of nine children. he knew what hunger was; he knew what cold was; he knew what work was. Also, he knew what visions were made of, for he himself had dreamed of a happier day when the union should protect them all.

In the same simple Yiddish that Clara Lemlich had employed at the beginning of the strike, he counseled the most careful consideration. They had struck for the union, it was true; but winter had come. The valiant remnant of the strikers had been reduced to bread and soup. Some of them had only an apple for breakfast, and nothing afterward. If the strike were to be ended upon the proffered terms, conditions would be better than they had ever been before. If the strike were to go on, there would be an indefinite continuation of bread and soup—and, in a little while, there might be no bread. An advance (progress) of twenty years had been made in the last two months; wouldn't it be better to rest content for a while—even without the union?

When he finished speaking, no one replied. Three thousand girls sat in stunned silence. For twenty full seconds, there was not the rustling of a foot nor the sound of a voice. Then, in unison, as if the three thousand girls had been trained for a month to do what they were about to do, there swept over the hall a mighty sob. . . . But the assembled girls had not yet spoken. Having sobbed, they were ready to speak. And, what was the order that these starving strikers unanimously gave? Here it is:

"Burn the [offered] terms of the employers and go on with the strike."

And they went out again into the cold, with their shivering bodies, their empty stomachs, and their heavy hearts. They had kept their oath.

Yes, indeed, women have changed.

Fifty years ago, women would never have waged such a desperate fight, in mid-winter, against five hundred employers. They hadn't been prepared. They hadn't learned to fight the world as men fight it for a living. But they are learning—learning in the same school in which man learned.

Source: Allan L. Benson, "Women in a Labor War," *Munsey's Magazine* xliii:1 (April 1910): 68-76.

"Record of Police Persecution in the Waist Makers' Strike"

The "New York Evening Call" newspaper was sympathetic to the cause of the shirt waist strikers, who began their strike on November 23, 1909. After five weeks of striking, as the year 1909 drew to a close, the Call published a day-by-day listing of the number of strikers arrested and fined by police, the number discharged (let go), the number held in jail, the total amount of fines collected, and the number of strikers sentenced to the workhouse (a prison where offenders are required to work).

Record of Police Persecution In the Waist Makers' Strike

Number of strikers arrested since general strike began 653
Number of strikers arrested in Leiserson and Triangle strikes 118
TOTAL NUMBER STRIKERS ARRESTED.... 771
STRIKERS SENTENCED TO WORKHOUSE.. 19
TOTAL FINES.......... $1,296
AVERAGE DAILY AMOUNT OF BAIL AND BONDS $2,500

Date.	No. fined.	No. disch'g'd.	No. held.	T'tal of fines.	W'kh'se sent'cen.
November 23	1	2	—	$10.00	—
November 24	1	1	—	1.00	—
November 25	—	—	1	——	1
November 26	7	—	—	29.00	—
November 27	4	2	2	20.00	—
November 29	7	5	—	27.00	—
November 30	24	2	—	84.00	—
December 1	8	2	2	24.00	—
December 2	27	15	2	65.00	—
December 3	12	8	2	62.00	—
December 4	21	3	—	147.00	—
December 6	3	1	4	15.00	—
December 7	5	17	24	20.00	—
December 8	19	16	7	108.00	—
December 9	4	10	12	16.00	—
December 10	17	7	11	135.00	3
December 11	2	8	13	6.00	—
December 13	9	10	7	25.00	—
December 14	2	10	—	15.00	—
December 15	7	7	5	35.00	1
December 16	19	22	5	129.00	7
December 17	12	6	8	96.00	—
December 18	6	7	9	30.00	2
December 20	5	3	4	35.00	2
December 21	3	3	4	20.00	2
December 22	14	1	32	25.00	1
December 23	—	18	11	.....	—
December 24	7	—	8	25.00	—
December 27	3	4	5	30.00	—
December 28	—	—	6	.....	—
Totals	248	190	202	$1,296.00	—

Christmas and Sundays there were no pickets on duty at the shops, hence no arrests.

Source: *New York Evening Call,* December 29, 1909.

Triangle Fire Survivors' Accounts

These four interviews were done in 1957 with four women who had worked at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory and survived the fire of March 25, 1911. In the interviews the women describe what happened on the day of the fire, and how they were able to escape. The doors on each floor of the factory were kept locked so that workers could not leave without permission, leaving many women trapped inside the factory during the fire because of the locked doors.

Dora Appel Skalka
Job: Blouse Maker, 8th floor
Interview: July 31, 1957

I worked at the Triangle Shop for nine weeks before the fire.

I came up to work with my girl friend named Pauline and I worked together with her. I remember on the day of the fire she said to me let's stop early today and let's go home earlier. We got paid at a quarter to four and I said why should we lose an hour work but she would not listen. She went home early and left me to work alone. This time because she went home earlier I decided to stop earlier too. So I went to the dressing room earlier than I usually did. I was at the door of the dressing room and was about to go in when I heard screaming in the back of me.

I turned around and saw that the fire was already burning at the cutting table. My machine was in the first row next to the cutting table and if my girl friend did not go home earlier, I am sure I would have been one of the first victims.

But I was standing at the door of the dressing room with two or three other girls and we ran to the door of the Greene St. staircase. It was closed. All around me there was hollering. In a split second the place filled up with black smoke. I remained at the door. I did not move. I could not holler. I thought to myself at least I want to die by the door.

I don't remember exactly how it happened but somebody opened the door from the outside. It was either a fireman or policeman who smashed in the door, which was always locked. He grabbed us and told us to go down the staircase and he took us down to the 6th floor and left us there. He must have gone back upstairs.

When I finally came downstairs in the lobby they were crying and hysterical but they would not let us out. There were maybe 20 or 30 people in the lobby. Some were crying and hysterical but they would not let us out. When we finally got out of the lobby into the street I could see why - because there, smashed on the sidewalk, were the beautiful faces of those who were my neighbors at the machines.

Rose Indursky
Job: Sleeve Setter, 9th floor
Interview: September 19, 1957

I was a sleeve setter. That day everybody couldn't wait to go home. There was a Ball or something and everybody was going. When I went out into the hall staircase I bent down and looked downstairs and I could see the fire come up. In the shop the girls were running around with their hair burning.

First I ran into the dressing room with the machinist and some of the others. Then the walls in the dressing room began to smoke. The machinist had a wild look in his eye. We ran back into the shop; girls were lying on the floor, fainted, and people were stepping on them. Some of the other girls were trying to climb over the machines. I remember the machinist ran to the window and he smashed it to let the smoke that was choking us go out. Instead, the flames rushed in. I stood at the window; across the street people were hollering "don't jump, don't jump." I turned around and ran to the hall staircase door. My hair was smoldering -- my clothes were torn. I put my two hands on my smoldering hair and ran up the stairs. I went into the 10th floor. Nobody was there except one man, bookkeeper. He was picking up papers and he hollered to me, can you come to the roof, can you come to the roof. By that time, all the windows on the 10th floor were burning. My life was saved on account of the bookkeeper. I didn't know that the next floor was the roof. I think if not for him I would have stayed on the 10th floor and maybe had been killed.

Rose Hauser
Job: Unknown, 9th floor
Interview: September 4, 1958

On the floor a gong used to ring when the day was over. About five minutes before quitting time I sneaked into the dressing room. There were a few girls in the dressing room. I used to sing a lot in the shop, some of the girls asked me to sing a song while we were getting dressed. They asked me to sing -- I still remember the name of the song -- "Every Little Movement Has a Meaning of Its Own". They insisted that I sing so I did my little act in the dressing room. As soon as I finished the song I heard the bell ring but it seemed to me that it was a little bit too soon.

We were never allowed to go down the front way -- either by elevator or staircase. We always went by the freight [elevator], which was in the back. When I got out of the dressing room I looked toward the freight elevator and I saw smoke pouring up. The smoke was also coming out of the staircase. I ran with some of the other girls to the front door. I put my hand on the knob and tried to open it and I stood there screaming that the door was locked. I tried to force it open with all my strength but it would not move.

I looked around and I saw the flames coming in all the windows. The fire was in the shop and was coming toward us. There was a fire escape at the windows near the freight side. The fire escapes had iron doors and shutters. Everybody was running and hollering and people were choking from the heavy smoke. I took my muff

(a warm, fur covering for the hands) and put it over my head. I ran back to the front elevator and there was no chance there. I kept my muff on my head and ran toward the freight side again. I found that the door to the back staircase was open and that is how I got out.

When I began to go down to the 8th floor, I was choking. The fire was in the hall on the 8th floor. I put my muff around my head tightly and I ran right through the fire. The fur caught on fire. When we got down stairs they kept us in the hall and they wouldn't let us go into the street because the bodies were falling down.

Celia Walker Friedman
Job: Examiner, 9th floor
Interviewed: August 8, 1957

On the day of the fire I had gotten my clothes. I stood at my table ready to leave. I looked across the shop. In front of me I saw flames on the outside of the windows shooting up. The flames were climbing up from the 8th floor. I was scared and it seemed to me that even before I could move, everybody in the shop started to scream and holler. The girls at the machines began to climb up on the machine tables maybe because it was that they were frightened or maybe they thought they could run to the elevator doors on top of the machines. The aisles were narrow and blocked by the chairs and baskets. They began to fall in the fire. I know now that there was a fire escape in back of me but I ran to the elevator because that was the only place to run to.

The door to the stairway was completely blocked by the big crates of blouses and goods. The fire crept closer to us and we were crowded at the elevator door banging and hollering for the elevator. The first time it came up, the girls rushed in and it was crowded in a half a second. The elevator driver struggled with the door and finally closed it and went down with the screaming girls. I was left with those who didn't make the first trip. Then the elevator came up a second time. The girls were all squeezing against the door and the minute it was opened they rushed again. This time I was sure I would be lucky and get in. I rushed with the other girls but just as I came to the door of the elevator it dropped down right in front of me. I could hear it rush down and I was left standing on the edge trying to hold myself back from falling into the shaft. I held on to the two sides of the open door. Behind me the girls were screaming and I could feel them pushing me more and more. I knew that in a few seconds I would be pushed into the shaft and I made a quick decision. Maybe through panic or maybe through instinct I saw the center cable of the elevator in front of me. I jumped and grabbed the cable. That is all I remember.

My next thing I knew was when I opened my eyes and I was lying on my back and I looked up into the faces of a priest and a nun who were trying to help me. I was in St. Vincent's Hospital. Everybody thought I was going to die. They found me at the bottom of the [elevator] shaft. I had saved myself by my jumping. I was very lucky. My head was injured and I had a broken arm and a broken finger. I had a large searing scar down the middle of my body, burned by the friction of the cable, which had cut through my clothing. In the hospital, later, I was shown a large ripped piece of fur and fabric.

One of the nurses said she thought it was wonderful that I had enough presence of mind when I jumped to wrap something around my hands in order to save them and to be able to hold on to the cable. I know it was not presence of mind or courage. I think the right word is vanity (too much pride in one's appearance). This was a new muff (warm, fur covering for the hands) that I had bought after saving for it many weeks and fire or no fire, something in me made me hold on to it even while I jumped to save my life. I don't know how long I stayed in St. Vincent's but when I was well the Red Cross came with my clothing which they got from my family and took me straight to the mountains for a rest. At the same time, the Red Cross paid my family $10 a week for 10 weeks. I never got a dime's worth of help from the company.

Source: Survivor Interviews, *Remembering the 1911 Triangle Fire and Its Aftermath* website, Kheel Center, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University (http://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/primary/survivorInterviews/)

"Placing the Responsibility" Article

This newspaper article, published in 1911 one month after the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, describes the findings of the Grand Jury in the cases of two women who died in the fire. The jury decided that conditions in the factory, such as locked doors and cramped work areas, prevented women from escaping the fire. The jury also urged new laws and reforms, such as regular inspections by the Fire Department, to be made to make factories safer for workers in the future.

Harris and Blanck, who comprise the firm whose employees *were* burned, and who had been already indicted (charged) by the Grand Jury, were declared responsible for the death of the two women whose cases were presented to the coroner's jury, because of culpable and criminal negligence (lack of care or attention) in leaving a door locked which should have permitted these women to escape.

Furthermore, the jury declared that no attention had been given or means provided for quick exit of the employees, but that, on the contrary, their safety had been utterly disregarded. The crowding of tables and lack of passageways are instanced, as well as the locking of doors.

The jury declared that the conditions obtaining in this factory were such that, if they were not forbidden by law, such a law should be instantly framed (proposed).

The jury recommends that fire-escapes should be regularly inspected by the Fire Department and reported to the Bureau of Buildings, and that then the latter should order changes made and have power to enforce such orders.

Concentration of responsibility is strongly urged, and there are specific recommendations for improvement of the laws or practice as regards inspection of factory buildings, the construction of stairways, the use of automatic sprinklers, and the posting of rules in the buildings.

The public continues to take the strongest possible interest in the investigation as to the cause of this fire, and will agree with the coroner (public official who determines the cause of death when people die in sudden or violent ways) in his thanks to the jury for doing a work of great benefit to the public, and also in his hope that the jury's recommendation will result in immediate and practical reform.

Source: "Placing the Responsibility," *The Outlook*, April 29, 1911, p. 949.

Factory Safety Report, 1912

Published by the New York State Factory Investigating Commission in 1912, and in response to the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, this report calls for new laws that will make factory work safer and healthier, and will prevent future tragedies. The report notes that factory work is more dangerous and leads to more disease than other types of work, and that making factories safer will not only save lives, but will be less expensive for companies than paying for damages after another fire.

REPORT to the LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
By the NEW YORK STATE FACTORY INVESTIGATING COMMISSION (EXCERPT)

On Saturday afternoon, March 25, 1911, a fire took place in the business establishment of the Triangle Waist Company, at No. 23-29 Washington Place, in the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York, in which 145 employees, mainly women and girls lost their lives.

This shocking loss of life aroused the community to a full sense of its responsibility. A superficial (quick) examination revealed conditions in factories and manufacturing establishments that constituted a daily menace to the lives of the thousands of working men, women and children. Lack of precautions to prevent fire, inadequate fire-escape facilities, insanitary (sic) conditions that were insidiously undermining (harmful to) the health of the workers were found existing everywhere. The need of a thorough and extensive investigation into the general conditions of factory life was clearly recognized.

The commission was authorized by the Legislature to inquire into the existing conditions under which manufacturing was carried on in so-called loft buildings and otherwise, including matters affecting the health and safety of the operatives (workers) as well as the security and best interests of the public.

IMPORTANCE OF INVESTIGATION

Health is the principal asset of the working man and the working woman. The state is bound to do everything in its power to preserve the health of the workers who contribute so materially to its economic wealth and its industrial prosperity.

Aside from the humanitarian aspect of the situation, economic considerations demand from the State the careful supervision and protection of its workers. Failure to perform this obligation will produce serious results in the workers of the future. It will affect the working capacity of the future generation.

The State not only possesses the power and the right, but it is charged with the sacred duty of seeing that the worker is properly safeguarded (protected) in case of fire; that he is protected from accidents caused by neglect or indifference; that

proper precautions are taken to prevent poisoning by the materials and processes of his industry, and that he works under conditions conducive to good health, and not such as breed disease.

Factory workers particularly need protection and supervision. Among them disease more easily finds its victims than among other classes of workers. Statistics show the greater mortality of those engaged in factory work, as compared with those in other occupations.

Fires and industrial accidents are fortunately only occasional and extraordinary events. Their effects are visible and immediate so they are impressed forcibly upon our minds. But the common, everyday incidents of industrial life, the lack of ventilation (fresh air), the long hours of labor amid insanitary (sic) surroundings, these work unnoticed, but the toll of human life they exact (take) is very great.

A general awakening has taken place throughout the State. A far larger number of inspections by authorities have been made than ever before. No great reliance, however, can be placed upon such a momentary or spasmodic awakening. When its cause is no longer present, conditions relapse into their former state, and there is little real improvement.

To improve the industrial situation permanently, clear, concise and comprehensive legislation (law-making) is needed.

Source: New York (State) Factory Investigating Commission, Preliminary Report of the Factory Investigating Commission, 1912. (Albany, New York: The Argus Company, 1912), vol. 1, pp. 13-20.

Results of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, 1915

This report, published by the New York State Factory Investigating Commission in 1915, lists the laws enacted by the New York State Legislature from 1912-1914 (in response to the Triangle Shirtwaist fire) to make factory work safer and healthier.

Results of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, 1915

Laws Enacted as a Result of the Commission's First Year's Work

The following bills recommended by the Commission in its preliminary report were passed by the Legislature during the session of 1912, and became laws:

1. Registration of factories.
2. Physical examination of children before employment certificate is issued.
3. Fire drills.
4. Automatic sprinklers.
5. Fire prevention; removal of rubbish; fire-proof receptacles for waste material; protection of gas jets; prohibition of smoking in factories.
6. Prohibition of the eating of lunch in rooms where poisonous substances are prepared or generated in the process of manufacture; adequate hot and cold washing facilities for such establishments.
7. Employment prohibited of women within four weeks after child-birth.
8. Summary power of Commissioner of Labor over unclean and unsanitary factories.

Laws Passed as a Result of the Commission's Second Year's Work

The following bills recommended by the Commission in its second report were enacted into law by the Legislature during the session of 1913:

1. Reorganization of Labor Department; Industrial Board.
2. Penalties for violation of Labor Law and Industrial Code.
3. Fire-proof receptacles; gas jets; smoking.
4. Fire alarm signal system and fire drills.
5. Fire escapes and exits; limitation of number of occupants; construction of future factory buildings.
6. Amendment to Greater New York charter with reference to the Fire Prevention Law.
7. Prohibition of employment of children under fourteen, in cannery sheds (factory for the canning of foods) or tenement houses; definition of factory building; definition of tenement house.
8. Manufacturing in tenements.
9. Hours of labor of women in canneries.
10. Housing conditions in labor camps maintained in connection with a factory.

11. Physical examination of children employed in factories.
12. Amendment to Child Labor Law; physical examination before issuance of employment certificate; school record; supervision over issuance of employment certificate.
13. Amendment to Compulsory Education Law; school record.
14. Night work of women in factories.
15. Seats for women in factories.
16. Cleanliness of workrooms.
17. Cleanliness of factory buildings.
18. Ventilation; general; special.
19. Washing facilities; dressing rooms; water closets.
20. Accident prevention; lighting of factories and workrooms.

Laws Passed as a Result of the Commission's Third Year's Work

The following laws, recommended by the Commission in its third report, were passed by the Legislature in 1914 and have become laws:

1. Sanitation in mercantile establishments. This covered provisions for seats for female employees; cleanliness of rooms; cleanliness of buildings; size of rooms; ventilation; drinking water; wash rooms and dressing rooms; and water closets.
2. Hours of labor of women in mercantile establishments limited to fifty-four hours a week in the entire State.
3. Hours of labor of children between fourteen and sixteen in mercantile establishments reduced from fifty-four to forty-eight hours a week and their employment prohibited for more than eight hours a day or after 6 o'clock in the evening of any day.

Source: New York (State) Factory Investigating Commission, Fourth Report of the Factory Investigating Commission, 1915. 5 vols. Albany, J.B. Lyon company, printers, 1915, vol. 1, pp. 2-11; https://archive.org/details/fourthreportoffa01newyiala

Interior of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory after the Fire Photo

On March 25, 1911, a fire spread through the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. This photograph, taken shortly after the fire, shows the destruction done to the factory.

Source: National Archives and Records Administration