

TEACHER'S GUIDE
Primary Source Document Collection
MISSION 5: "Up from the Dust"

"Boys Hopping Freight"

During the Great Depression, an estimated 250,000 youths left home to search for work, to ease the burden on their families, to escape an abusive home life, or to find adventure. Opportunities for work were rare and never long-term, and most young transients hitchhiked or illegally rode freight trains, traveling from town to town. Empty and unlocked boxcars offered shelter from the weather but could also invite danger. In 1932, the Interstate Commerce Commission reported 425 deaths and 1,344 injuries of people getting on or off moving trains.



Source: Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information, "Boys Hopping Freight," c. 1935-1942, Library of Congress, American Memory Collection, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8e03154>
<http://herb.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1080>
