

40 Books about LABOR

for Children & Youth

*one of a twelve-part series marking
the fortieth anniversary of the
Cooperative Children's Book Center*

Compiled by Merri V. Lindgren
*Cooperative Children's Book Center
University of Wisconsin-Madison
School of Education*



thrill them. Kate Banks and Georg Hallensleben once again combine their considerable talents to create a poetic, multilayered story set firmly in the province of early childhood. Ages 2-5."

On the Job

1. The Night Worker

Banks, Kate. *The Night Worker*. Illustrated by Georg Hallensleben. 1st ed. New York: Frances Foster Books/Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000. ISBN 0-374-35520-7. [32] p. Ages 2-5. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2001): "To little Alex, his dad has the most exciting job in the world: he's an engineer on a nighttime construction project. Not only does his dad get to stay up all night, he has close contact with bulldozers, excavators, cement mixers, cranes, and loaders. So when Alex's dad gives him his very own hardhat and lets him come to work with him one night, it's a dream come true! Astute readers may surmise that Alex's night on the construction site is indeed a dream, and that Alex's "night work" is that of all young children—to get a good night's sleep. But the lyrical words and the boldly colored paintings provide enough detail for a literal interpretation as well, so that young construction enthusiasts will not feel the least bit cheated, and the close-up illustrations of heavy machinery at work will

2. Garbage Collectors

Bourgeois, Paulette. *Garbage Collectors*. Illustrated by Kim LaFave. 1st U.S. ed. Niagra Falls, N.Y.: Kids Can Press, 1998, ISBN 1-55074-826-2; Buffalo, N.Y.: Kids Can Press, 1998, c1991, ISBN 1-55074-440-2. [32] p. (In my neighborhood) Ages 3-6. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1999): "The first two entries in the "In My Neighborhood" series made available in the United States deal with high-interest community helpers. Fire Fighters shows the team at Station Number 45 from the moment they get the dispatcher's call about a fire in on the top floor of an apartment building to the time they return to the station and clean up the equipment. Compelling information is accompanied by engaging watercolor and pen-and-ink illustrations that add a lot of character to the story. Additional details about how fires are fought in rural areas, on boats, and in forests are briefly noted, as are some fire-safety tips. Garbage Collectors follows a similar pattern, showing us a typical day in the work life of Sam and Mabel, who work on the same garbage truck. As an added bonus, we get to accompany Mabel as she drives her full truck to the transfer station to dump the garbage, which is then pushed by a bulldozer into a tractor-trailer that will take it to the landfill site. Author Paulette Bourgeois conducted in-person interviews with fire fighters and garbage collectors to find out exactly how they do their jobs. She has shaped this information into stories that

will easily hold the interest of preschoolers in general. But the prime audience for both books will be those young children whose hearts skip a beat whenever they hear a fire truck's siren or the grinding blade of a garbage truck. Ages 3-6."

3. Police Officers

Bourgeois, Paulette. Police Officers. Illustrated by Kim LaFave. 1st U.S. ed. Niagra Falls, N.Y.: Kids Can Press, 1999, ISBN 1-55074-787-8; Buffalo, N.Y.: Kids Can Press, 1999, ISBN 1-55074-502-6. [32] p. (In my neighborhood) Ages 3-6. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2000): "When Natalie hears suspicious noises outside her house at night, her mother calls the police. Two officers come to investigate and fill out a report. Natalie's tip eventually leads to the arrest of two bicycle thieves and we briefly see the process they undergo once they are taken into custody. Day-to-day responsibilities of different kinds of police officers are touched upon, as are some safety tips for kids who are sometimes left home alone without an adult. An emphasis on criminal investigation (rather than giving directions to lost children) make this introduction to police work especially notable. Ages 4-8."

4. Mama and Papa Have a Store

Carling, Amelia Lau. Mama and Papa Have a Store. 1st ed. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1998. ISBN 0-8037-2044-0. [32] p. Ages 4-8. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1998): "This distinctive autobiographical picture book features a Chinese immigrant family living in Guatemala City. Told from the point of view of their youngest daughter, the story centers on all the activity in and around the family's busy store on a typical day. Aspects of the family's Chinese heritage are interwoven with cultural details relating to their new home in Guatemala; the brightly colored Chinese thread the family sells, for example, is popular with Mayan weavers, who take a bus from their village far away to shop in the Chinese store. Carling's detailed watercolor paintings give a good sense of life in on a bustling city street in Central America, as well as the specifics of little Amelia's family life. Ages 4-8."

5. An Auto Mechanic

Florian, Douglas. An Auto Mechanic. 1st ed. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991. ISBN 0-688-10635-8. [24] p. (How we work) Ages 2-5. "Simple text and illustrations introduce the daily work of an auto mechanic." -- OCLC's Worldcat database. [no CCBC annotation available]

6. A Carpenter

Florian, Douglas. A Carpenter. 1st ed. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991. ISBN 0-688-09760-X. [24] p. Ages 2-5. "A simple description of what a carpenter does in his daily work." -- OCLC's Worldcat database. [no CCBC annotation available]

7. Bread is for Eating

Gershator, David, and Phillis Gershator. Bread is for Eating. Illustrated by Emma Shaw-Smith. 1st ed. New York: Henry Holt, 1995. ISBN 0-8050-3173-1. [28] p. Ages 4-8. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1995): "When her little boy leaves bread on his plate, Mamita says, 'Bread is for eating.' Gently she reminds him of the elements ripening the seeds and the people harvesting grain. She sings of these things, of millers and bakers, of family members working to earn money to buy bread, and "...of people around the world, dreaming of bread." Readers are invited to think in new ways because of the warm, rich colors of the ink drawings on every page and the endpages, too. Spanish and English words are provided along with a musical notation for the short title song, the Spanish language refrain of which is part of the English language text. The book's restrained energy combined with the unusual perspectives and detailed borders of the art makes it one to re-read, sing, remember. Ages 4-8."

8. Good-bye, Curtis

Henkes, Kevin. Good-bye, Curtis. Illustrated by Marisabina Russo. 1st ed. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1995. ISBN 0-688-12827-0. [24] p. Ages 3-6. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1995): "Retiring after 42 years as a mail carrier, Curtis's last day making his rounds is filled with memories, good wishes and small gifts from an appreciative community. "We'll miss you, Curtis," they all tell him and it is obvious that Curtis will miss his customers, too. Kevin Henkes's simple, patterned text will hook young listeners who are already tuned in to the comforting predictability of neighborhood routines. Marisabina Russo's brightly colored gouache paintings bring the neighborhood filled with shops and houses, children and grownups, and cats and dogs to life. Ages 3-6."

9. Women Working A to Z

Kunstadter, Maria A. Women Working A to Z. Photographs by Shari Standberry. Fort Atkinson, Wis.: Highsmith Press, 1994. ISBN 0-917846-25-7. [32] p. Ages 5-8. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1994): "When you grow up, what do you want to be? A girl can be anything from A to Z. Look through this book and see the many things girls just like you have become. Then, think some more. Your opportunities are

endless.' Twenty-five women in traditional and non-traditional vocations such as airplane pilot, engineer, mother, postmaster and zookeeper are briefly profiled in this text that includes two photos of each woman - one of her at work today, and one of her as a child. The entry for the letter Y is 'You...When you grow up, just like the girls in this book, you can use your special talents to be anything you want to be.' Ages 5-8."

10. Century Farm: One Hundred Years on a Family Farm

Peterson, Cris. Century Farm: One Hundred Years on a Family Farm. Photographs by Alvis Upitis. 1st ed. Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 1999. ISBN 1-56397-710-9. [32] p. Ages 5-8. "The story of a 100-year-old family farm in Wisconsin is told in photographs and in anecdotes about the three generations of Petersons who have owned and farmed the land."-- OCLC's Worldcat database. [no CCBC annotation available]

11. Farmer's Market: Families Working Together

Rendon, Marcie R., and Cheryl Walsh Bellville. Farmer's Market: Families Working Together. Photographs by Cheryl Walsh Bellville. Minneapolis, Minn.: Carolrhoda Books, 2001. ISBN 1-57505-462-0. 48 p. Ages 7-11. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2002): "Farmer's Market focuses on two Minnesota families who grow vegetables and flowers that they sell at the St. Paul Farmer's Market. The Thaos are a Hmong family whose first members came to the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. The Kornder's German and Polish ancestors first came to this country in the 1890s. For both families, farming involves multiple generations, with everyone from children to elders sharing in the year-round work. The text evokes the colorful sights and delicious smells of an abundant farmer's market. It also affirms the strong sense of cooperation and commitment present in each of the farming families. Information about farm equipment and techniques is a seamless part of the narrative, while the color photographs provide a lively, eye-catching accompaniment. Ages 7-11."

12. A Chair for My Mother

Williams, Vera B. A Chair for My Mother. 1st ed. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1982. ISBN 068800914X. [32] p. Ages 4-9. CCBC (Cooperative

Children's Book Center Choices, 1983): "A tender picture story of a grandmother, mother and young daughter saving their money to replace a favorite chair lost in a fire. Bright watercolor illustrations within imaginative, decorative borders capture the upbeat tone of the story as a jar becomes filled with coins and the family's dream chair finally selected, brought home and enjoyed! Sheer joy! Ages 4-9."

Kids at Work

13. Growing Up in Coal Country

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. Growing Up in Coal Country. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. ISBN 0-395-77847-6. 127 p. Ages 9-16. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1996): "An account of work and childhood chronicles the horrific circumstances in which children labored and lived in the coal mining towns of northeastern Pennsylvania during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Stimulated by hearing the personal stories of her husband's grandparents, the author began to record many oral histories. She read old mining records, visited museums and studied old photographs. She reports how women and children worked at home, how children's schooling and health suffered, and how the cycle was repeated from generation to generation. Bartoletti's masterfully developed narrative allows her human subjects to speak for themselves. The varied array of memorable black-and-white photos documents their experience. Ages 9-16."

14. Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor

Freedman, Russell. Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor. Photographs by Lewis Hine. New York: Clarion, 1994. ISBN 0-395-58703-4. 104 p. Ages 8-14. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1994): "As an investigative reporter for the National Child Labor Committee during the early 20th century, photographer Lewis Hine documented the fact that children were being

exploited in factories, mills, mines and fields across the nation. Just as Hine had found ways earlier to set up his camera quickly to record the faces of immigrant families in the harsh, poorly lit circumstances of Ellis Island, he brashly entered domains where he was unwelcome to document evidence of the little boys and girls laboring. Fifty-nine of Hine's photographs are reproduced here with great technical skill. His works retain the power to astonish and anger, as does Freedman's account of the psychological and physical oppression of children used as beasts of burden. Freedman's written portrait of Hine at work is equally moving; Hine was a man who defined his work and was later defined by that work. Born in 1874, Hine grew up in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Ages 8-14."

15. Joshua's Song

Harlow, Joan Hiatt. *Joshua's Song*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2001. ISBN 0-689-84119-1. 176 p. Ages 8-11. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2002): "Joshua Harper and his mother are struggling financially since his father died of influenza. Even though his family lives in a wealthy Boston neighborhood, Joshua's father had few assets when he died. Filled with grief, anger, and not a little self-pity at having to find a job, Joshua gets work as a newsie at age 13. Joshua is good at hawking newspapers. And, in getting to know one of the other newsies, Angelina (a young girl who poses as a boy), Joshua learns about the poverty in Boston's North End. He is dismayed that the newspapers haven't written about the conditions there, and that the government hasn't done more to help the people in the neighborhood. On one of his visits to the North End, Joshua gets caught in what is known as Boston's "Great Molasses Flood" of 1919, when a tank holding 2.5 million gallons of raw molasses burst, killing and injuring those in its path. There is a tense, dramatic climax before loose ends are neatly tied for young readers. An author's note provides a lengthy discussion of the "molasses flood," as well as information on the influenza pandemic of 1918 and newsies. Ages 8-11."

16. The Bobbin Girl

McCully, Emily Arnold. *The Bobbin Girl*. 1st ed. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996. ISBN 0-8037-1827-6. [32] p. Ages 8-11. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1996): "Ten-year-old Rebecca Putney has to stand on a box to reach the company ledger and sign her name after working all week with other girls and women in a New England textile mill in the 1830s. Rebecca is less naive than she might appear because innocence disappeared quickly in a workplace replete with injustices, injuries, and 12-hour work days. Loosely basing the story on the

well-documented childhood experiences of Harriet Hanson Robinson, McCully focuses on the Lowell mill workers' first strike in Lowell, Massachusetts. Watercolors and pastels illustrate each page of a picture book story replete with written and visual historical details. A page of historical information concludes the book. Ages 8-11."

17. True Heart

Moss, Marissa. *True Heart*. Illustrated by C.F. Payne. 1st ed. San Diego, Calif.: Silver Whistle, 1999. ISBN 0-15-201344-X. [32] p. Ages 6-9. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2000): "A picture book story based on true railroad history involves a teenage girl left to take care of her eight brothers and sisters after her parents' death from typhus in 1893. At first 16-year-old Bee took in laundry. After she found out that railroad work paid better, she got a job loading freight for Union Pacific. It wasn't easy for her to get the job, and then it was difficult for her to ignore the taunts of fellow workers who had never worked along side a female, but Bee established herself as a reliable worker. She actually loved the trains and the names of their destinations. She enjoyed imagining where the passengers were traveling, and why, and she wanted to take them there herself. Sometimes she was allowed to back up the engine and couple it to cars on side tracks. Now and then Ole Pete, one of the engineers, let Bee drive all the way to the next station. Train robberies weren't uncommon in those years; during a robbery one day Ole Pete and the coal feeder were wounded. The delayed passengers let it be known that all they wanted was to get going, even with a substitute engineer who was a young woman, at that. Bee later established herself as an engineer, and her favorite engine to drive had the official name, "True Heart." Although Bee's own true heart and life are fictional, at the back of the book one can see the black-and-white archival photograph of a female train crew that supports Moss's personal research into the role of women as workers within U.S. railroad history. The illustrations were done in mixed media by Payne in this, his first book for children, although he has a long, distinguished career as an artist in other areas. His beautiful work shows a clear understanding of the story, landscapes, trains, and time period. Although the events of the story itself may seem coincidental, it brings to life a fragment of the hidden history of women laborers as well as of railroad history. As Moss writes at the end of her notes: "...there's truth in fiction, and there's truth in the many stories of people like Bee - whose names we'll never know but can only imagine - people who had the determination to live out their dreams." *True Heart* is a uniquely inspirational historical story representing some of the young women of America's past, girls who had to become breadwinners and who worked hard at manual labor to realize their dreams. Ages 6-9."

18. Lyddie

Paterson, Katherine. Lyddie. 1st ed. New York: LoDESTAR Books/Dutton, 1991. ISBN 0-525-67338-5. 182 p. Age 12 and older. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1991): "When Lyddie calmly faces a black bear intruding in her family's cabin, it is only the first of many potential disasters she must confront. Soon after the bear incident her family disintegrates and is scattered, and from that time on Lyddie works continually toward her goal of returning to the cabin and regaining the farm. From being hired out as a tavern drudge to choosing to work as a factory girl in the mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts, Lyddie stolidly continues to believe she will return home one day. Her singlemindedness powers her determination to continue working toward her goal, but her exposure to the situations of others eventually enables Lyddie to focus outward as well. In helping her mill co-workers and becoming involved in labor politics, she broadens her own outlook and heightens her chance for a fulfilling future. The accurate historical depiction of the time and working conditions at the mill is impressive and abundant, yet does not burden Lyddie's personal story. Ages 12 and older."

19. We Want to Go to School: Voices of the Rugmark Children

Roberts-Davis, Tanya, comp. We Want to Go to School: Voices of the Rugmark Children.

Toronto, Ont.: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001. ISBN 0-88899-425-7. 48 p. Age 10 and older. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2002): "Childhood Matters" is the title of the opening chapter of this singular documentary, which presents the voices of children in Nepal who are former carpet factory workers. Once exploited and abused as cheap labor, the 23 children who speak in this volume are now living in, and attending school at, facilities run by Rugmark, an organization that monitors carpet factories in Nepal, India, and Pakistan and certifies carpets made by adults who earn a decent wage. An outgrowth of that work has been Rugmark's efforts to remove children from the harsh conditions in other factories and provide them with a safe place to live and go to school. Author Tanya Roberts-Davis is barely out of childhood herself, but she has been involved with Free the Children, a Canadian organization that focuses on child-labor issues, since she was 12. In 1999, at age 16, Roberts-Davis traveled to Nepal and spent six weeks living with and talking to children at the Rugmark Centers. The personal stories, poems, and artwork those children presented to Roberts-Davis are collected here, along with the author's overview of the economic conditions in Nepal that have led to so many exploited children, and information on organizations around the world that are working toward change. Ages 10 and older."

20. Listen to Us: The World's Working Children

Springer, Jane. Listen to Us: The World's Working Children. Toronto, Ont.: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997. ISBN 0-88899-291-2. 96 p. Age 9 and older. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1998): "A nine-chapter presentation about child labor developed by a Canadian author and publisher spans the globe, beginning with definitions of childhood and child labor. Children who do household, farm or family business chores are typically not considered child laborers while children officially considered to be child workers are "paid to work in factories...hired out or even sold by their families to do farm work, domestic work, or to work as soldiers." The book addresses children who have been "thrown out of their homes by their parents, or who have run away and who will do any kind of work in order to survive." Major reasons why children work are covered, such as poverty, caste system, being female, and/or the globalization of many industries. Although employment in U.S. fast-food enterprises is briefly explored, that is not the largest workplace for child laborers; a chart cites 900,000 U.S. workers under the age of 16 in three other categories of labor: agriculture, garments, and sex work. The total estimated number of children "at work worldwide" is "at least the size of the U.S. population; these youth are "not just missing out on schooling and an opportunity for a better life, but cutting their lives perilously short." Moving accounts of specific child workers include several references to Iqbal Masih. Clearly reproduced black-and-white and full-color photographs on every page spread and a highly visual format for information within a global context earmark Springer's book. A list of goals to help child workers, and a list naming ways to help achieve those goals, offers hope. Ages 9-adult."

21. Boy of the Deeps

Wallace, Ian. Boy of the Deeps. 1st ed. New York: DK Ink, 1999. ISBN 0-7894-2569-6. [32] p. Ages 8-11. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2000): "The "deeps" were the coal mines of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, a virtual city under the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. James is the boy, and like many boys working in mines across the globe, his childhood is actually behind him. Each day James now goes underground to work with his father in the deeps. He started out above ground as a breaker boy, doing the difficult job of sorting pieces of sharp slate from coal. He's now headed regularly a thousand feet underground to the tedious, dangerous, health-robbing, rat-filled environment where boys and men work side by side to mine the rich coal deposit under the sea. Wallace's story captures the ominous nature of this work, as well as the life-threatening event James' father experiences one day. He ingeniously created sources of light for the acrylic paintings he developed to illustrate a story set mostly in dark, dank places. Wallace's picture book story is based on his grandfather's experiences as a boy working in a coal mine in England. The Cape Breton coal field was still in production at the time this book was published. Ages 8-11."

22. Wandering Girl

Ward, Glenyse. Wandering Girl. 1st U.S. ed. New York: Henry Holt, 1991. ISBN 0-8050-1634-1. 183 p. Age 13 and older. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1991): "A rare glimpse into the life of a mid-20th century Australian Aboriginal woman is offered in this autobiographical account which reads like a novel. After being taken from her mother in infancy and raised in a Catholic mission, Glenyse Ward is hired out as a domestic servant to an upper-class white family when she is fifteen. Working for an employer who refers to her as "my dark slave," Ward successfully struggles to maintain dignity and an identity in harsh, humiliating circumstances. Ages 13 and older."

The Migrant Experience

23. Amelia's Road

Altman, Linda Jacobs. Amelia's Road. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. 1st ed. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1993. ISBN 1-880000-04-0. [32] p. Ages 7-9. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1993): "A young child living in a Mexican migrant family hates "the road," which to her symbolizes another round of backbreaking work, degradation and insecurity. More than anything else she would like to feel a sense of belonging in one place, but it is unlikely that will ever happen. Then she discovers the "accidental road," an overgrown path that leads to a place no one else frequents, and she claims it for her own. A poignant yet realistic story of a plucky young girl who comes up with her own solution to a problem is stunningly illustrated with full-color acrylic paintings. Ages 7-9."

24. Harvest

Ancona, George. Harvest. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2001. ISBN 0-7614-5086-6. 48 p. Ages 7-11. [no CCBC annotation available] Illustrated with bright, beautifully-shot photographs, this book describes the harvesting of commercially-grown food crops in California and the state of Washington from the point of view of the migrant farm workers doing the work in the fields and orchards. The difficult and physically-challenging occupational conditions faced on the job by the workers (many of whom are from Mexico), as well as their hopes and dreams for the future of their families, are conveyed throughout with great dignity. The book carefully does not broach the issue of farm labor by

children. Improvements brought about in the work as a result of the long-term efforts of the United Farm Workers union movement are highlighted, in addition to the beneficial changes for the workers which result as more and more farms convert to organic farming methods. [Annotated by Laurie Wermter]

25. Voices From the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories

Atkin, S. Beth, interviewer and photographer. Voices From the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories. 1st ed. Boston: Joy Street Books/Little, Brown, 1993. ISBN 0-316-05633-2. 96 p. Ages 9-14. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1993): "First-person narratives and/or poems represent ten voices representative of Hispanic migrant children and teenagers working in the Salinas Valley of California. This unparalleled photodocumentary children's book originated in migrant programs or in the fields where some of the children and teenagers agreed to tell their stories and be photographed. Atkin's brief introductory passages establish a context for each commentary. These children of Mexican heritage speak about work, family, fitting in, the gang, teen parents. Spanish was used in most of the interviews, the English translations of which offer an urgent witness and testimony to certain realities and experiences and, sometimes, also to hopes, as well. Ages 9-14."

26. Going Home

Bunting, Eve. Going Home. Illustrated by David Diaz. 1st ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. ISBN 0-06-026296-6. [32] p. Ages 5-9. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1996): "After sleeping under the stars for three nights, Carlos and his family finally arrive by car in time to celebrate Christmas in La Perla, Mexico. Even though there is no work for Mama and Papa in their home village, La Perla is still home for them. Mama even blew kisses "at the sun-filled winter sky" as soon as the family car crossed the border from the USA into Mexico. Warm welcomes and celebrations of Christmas await the family in La Perla, along with expressions of pride in the English language Carlos and his sisters acquired since their last visit. The walls of Grandfather's La Perla house "bulge with talk and rememberings." Distant La Perla has never felt like home to five-year-old Nora, ten-year-old Delores and young Carlos. Home for them is the house where they live all year while working in the fields with their parents. During this visit Carlos begins to understand about the "opportunities" his parents and grandparents hold in

such high regard. Exuberant paintings superimposed over full-color photographs of folk art assemblages detail the specific people and locales of a joyous reunion. The composition of several paintings suggests the traditional Christmas story. A font designed especially for the dialogue-filled text is set on sun-colored pages. This rich story for all seasons has multi-dimensional characters and a plot that does not minimize hard labor at the expense of hope. Ages 5-9."

27. Breaking Through

Jimenez, Francisco. Breaking Through. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. ISBN 0-618-01173-0. 195 p. Age 12 and older. [N.B. This is the sequel to his The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child.] CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2002): "I lived in constant fear for ten long years, from the time I was four until I was fourteen years old." In this opening sentence of Breaking Through, Francisco Jiménez summarizes much of the emotional landscape chronicled in his first novel, The Circuit (University of New Mexico Press, 1997). In this new book, Jiménez picks up his story at age 14. No longer on the migrant circuit, Francisco and his family relish the stability of living in one place. This is threatened when the border patrol finds out that Francisco, his older brother, Roberto, and their mother are in the United States illegally. Rather than separate, the whole family returns to Mexico. When they come again to the United States, it is with the paperwork that means they will no longer have to fear discovery. Francisco and Roberto contribute more and more to the economic support of their family, living by the incredible work ethic their father has modeled. They go to school during the day, working evenings and weekends. At school, Francisco shines with the support of some wonderful teachers, counselors, and friends, who help him toward college and his hope of becoming a teacher. At home, years of constant struggle have taken a physical and emotional toll on their father. His dark moods are exacerbated when Francisco begins to act "American," taking interest in popular music and talking back. Their mother smooths things over, holding her family together and encouraging her children's dreams in this inspiring and compelling work of autobiographical fiction. Ages 12 and older."

28. The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child

Jimenez, Francisco. The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child. 1st ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999. ISBN 0-395-97902-1. 116 p. Age 12 and older. [N.B. This story is continued by his Breaking Through.] CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2000): "Jiménez's memoir of his childhood and adolescence is presented in this collection

of 12 hauntingly spare short stories that can either stand alone or be read as a continuous narrative. A poignant, childlike voice is maintained throughout, even as he writes of the subhuman living conditions and constant fear that were realities for his migrant family. This collection, which won the Américas Award, the Boston Globe-Horn Book Fiction Award, and a Jane Addams Honor, was first published as a paperback original by University of New Mexico Press in 1997. Age 12 and older."

29. Tomas and the Library Lady

Mora, Pat. Tomas and the Library Lady. Illustrated by **Raul Colon**. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. ISBN 0-679-80401-3. [32] p. Ages 4-7. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1997): "When a family of migrant farm workers from Texas stops in Iowa to pick corn, Tomás's grandfather, Papá Grande, suggests that he spend part of each day at the public library because it is filled with stories he can read and then bring back to share with the family at night. While Tomás expects to find good books at the library, he doesn't expect to find a new friend--but he does. From the beginning the librarian welcomes him. She shows him where the water fountain is, suggests books he might enjoy, and helps Tomás feel at home whenever he comes to the library. In return, Tomás teaches her some Spanish phrases and she is able to greet Papá Grande in Spanish when Tomás brings him to the library to meet his new friend. Based on an event that occurred in the childhood of national education leader Dr. Tomás Rivera, Pat Mora brings the story to life through excellent characterization and natural-sounding dialogue. Raul Colón's warm earthtone illustrations give a strong sense of action occurring in the past. Also available in a Spanish-language edition as Tomás y la Señora de la Biblioteca (ISBN 0-679-94173-8; pbk: 0-679-84173-3). Ages 4-7."

30. First Day in Grapes

Perez, L. King. First Day in Grapes. Illustrated by **Robert Casilla**. 1st ed. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2002. ISBN 1-58430-045-0. [32] p. Ages 5-8. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2003): "Moving from one migrant camp to another as his parents follow the crops throughout California, Chico has started at new schools many times. Yet it never gets any easier being the new kid. At the start of third grade, Chico is dreading another first day once again. Even getting on the bus is scary when the driver greets him gruffly. But his new school turns out to have Ms. Andrews, a teacher who makes Chico feel welcome and who quickly recognizes and praises his math abilities. When two kids start to tease and verbally bully Chico, he understands for the first time the meaning behind his mother's simple act of having him stand tall at the start of the day. She is telling him to be proud and have

courage. He is able to draw upon his math skills, not his fists, to stand up to the boys in a hopeful story that will resonate with many children. Ages 5-8."

31. Esperanza Rising

Ryan, Pam Munoz. Esperanza Rising. 1st ed. New York: Scholastic Press, 2000. ISBN 0-439-12041-1. 262 p. Ages 10-14. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2001): "Living on her family's ranch in Mexico in the years following the Revolution, 12-year-old Esperanza has always had all the material things she could want. More important, she has had the love and devotion of her parents. But on the eve of her 13th birthday, Esperanza's world is shattered when bandits kill her father. With the help of a Zapotec Indian family, Esperanza and her mother flee to the United States, escaping Esperanza's despicable uncles, who now own their land. Thousands upon thousands of workers have come to California looking for work during the Great Depression. Esperanza's mother tells her daughter they must be grateful for the shelter and the jobs they have found in a field labor camp. But Esperanza's privileged childhood has not prepared her for the harsh, overcrowded conditions, nor for the housework and childcare she is expected to do. Initially determined to succeed at her tasks as a matter of pride, Esperanza soon develops a fierce determination based on more compelling need. She wants to provide for her mother, who has fallen ill. But the generosity, hopes, and heartbreak Esperanza witnesses among the workers, who live with dignity in almost unbearable conditions--teach her that the fate of many cannot be isolated from the fate of one. Pam Muñoz Ryan's novel, inspired by events in the life of her grandmother, deftly weaves social issues into a novel that is first and foremost a compelling story of family and coming of age. Ages 10-14."

32. Jesse

Soto, Gary. Jesse. 1st ed. San Diego, Cal.: Harcourt Brace, 1994. ISBN 0-15-240239-X. 166 p. Age 15 and older. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1994): "By the time I was seventeen, in junior college, and living on fruit snatched from neighborhood trees and Top Ramen, I no longer thought God was the creaks rising from the wood floor. I knew God was found in prayer, not in the sudden closing of the hallway door just as you stepped from the bathroom." A provocative opening to a provocative novel about a young Mexican-American man coming face to face with adulthood, and the havoc it plays on his dreams. Jesse has left high school early, eager to start junior college and get an education. An aspiring artist, he lives with his older brother, Abel, and the two attend classes each weekday and then work as field laborers on the weekend to earn money for food. But Jesse sometimes wonders if he hasn't entered the adult world too quickly. His life at home with his mother and stepfather wasn't easy, but being out on his own means a struggling survival and decisions that can bring their own kind of difficulty and

pain. The political struggles of César Chávez and migrant laborers figure prominently in this novel set in the early 1970's, while the Vietnam war rages quietly in the background. Ages 15 and older."

Labor Activists

33. Kids on Strike!

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. Kids on Strike! Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999. ISBN 0-395-88892-1. 208 p. Ages 11-16. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2000): "Bartoletti's history of the child labor movement in the U.S. has as its focus the child activists who were at the forefront. She begins in 1836 with eleven-year-old Harriet Hanson who was one of the first to "turn out" or strike at the Lowell Textile Mill and ends with 15-year-old Camella Teoli who testified before Congress during the 1912 Lawrence Mill Strike, a time in which growing awareness of deplorable conditions began to turn the tide of public opinion. The author describes the typical working conditions of children in mills, coal mines, and factories; on city streets as newsies, messengers and bootblacks; and in rural areas as sharecroppers and fieldhands. Each type of work and organized protest is personalized with her accounts of the efforts of young workers, typically teenage girls, who helped to organize their co-workers to strike for better working conditions. Black-and-white documentary drawings and photographs, many by Winslow Homer and Lewis Hine, further illustrate the working lives of these young people. Ages 11-16."

34. Mother Jones: One Woman's Fight for Labor

Kraft, Betsy Harvey. Mother Jones: One Woman's Fight for Labor. New York: Clarion, 1995. ISBN 0-395-67163-9. 116 p. Ages 8-12. [no CCBC annotation available] Mother Jones led such a dramatic and inspiring life as a labor organizer that at least six biographies of her life have been published for juvenile readers in just the last ten years and this is one of the best. A gifted public speaker and skilled in creating needed publicity to sway public opinion regarding labor struggles, Mother Jones was a witness to, as well as a participant in, some of the most dramatic moments in our country's history from the Civil War until her death in 1930. Over seventy black-and-white illustrations (historical drawings, photographs and reproductions) are used to tell the turbulent history of the period and the story of Mother Jones' life from her birth, probably in 1837, as Mary Harris in Cork, Ireland, and then

immigration to the United States with her family, while she was still a young child. When she had grown up, she worked as a teacher and as a seamstress, until her marriage in 1861 in Memphis, Tennessee, to George Jones, who worked as an iron molder and was a member of the Iron Molders Union; tragically, her husband and all four of their small children died from a yellow fever epidemic in Memphis in 1867 and Mary Jones then moved to Chicago to work as a seamstress again.

After surviving the 1871 Chicago fire which devastated large portions of the city, her interest in labor organizing was sparked through attendance at lectures sponsored by the Knights of Labor, a labor organization prominent at the time and she supported their campaign in the mid-1880s to win an eight-hour day for all workers. She was still in Chicago in 1886 when on May 4 the controversial confrontation occurred between city police and workers gathered at a rally in the city's Haymarket Square to hear speakers urging a general strike to win the eight-hour day. In 1895 she was a co-founder of an important progressive magazine of the day, Appeal to Reason. By now she was becoming known for her gifts as a speaker and was being asked to travel around the country to wherever workers faced difficulty in organizing a labor union. Sometimes she wrote magazine articles exposing the true conditions faced by workers in different jobs. Then, in 1900, she got her first job as an organizer for a labor union, the United Mine Workers of America.

Mother Jones went all over the country to help expose the deplorable working conditions for men and women, as well as children, in all kinds of industries, whether cotton mills in Alabama, textile mills in New Jersey, or mines in Colorado and West Virginia. In 1910, she even came to MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, at the request of the women who worked in the city's breweries washing bottles—they wanted her to help them win a union to better their pay and working conditions (see p. 69 for the details about Mother Jones in Milwaukee). [Annotation by Laurie Wermter]

35. Iqbal Masih and the Crusaders Against Child Slavery

Kuklin, Susan. Iqbal Masih and the Crusaders Against Child Slavery. 1st ed. New York: Henry Holt, 1998. ISBN 0-8050-5459-6. 133 p. Ages 11-14. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1998): "Susan Kuklin has written a consciousness-raiser and a call to action for young readers as she tells the story of, Iqbal Masih, a child laborer in Pakistan, and details the tragedy of bonded child labor in southern Asian. She writes of the horrors of child slavery and the dedication of those who have worked within these countries to free children from bondage. Iqbal was sold into bondage at age 4 and freed at age 10 by the actions of Pakistani activists calling for enforcement of laws to free children in bondage. At age 11, he received the Reebok Youth in Action Human Rights Award for his own efforts to educate others and free children still in bondage. When he was 12, he was shot and killed under circumstances that may or may not have been accidental. Drawing on interviews with and articles about Iqbal, conversations with those who knew him, and research into child slavery and activist movements, Kuklin has written a narrative both compelling and compassionate. She places child slavery in an economic context by chronicling the cycle of poverty that leaves families dependent on the money that comes from "selling" their children into bondage, and in a global context by connecting products made by children in

bondage--especially carpets-- to consumers in the United States and other countries who purchase these lower-priced items. Kuklin also acknowledges the West's own exploitation of children as laborers during the industrial revolution in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Above all, she honors young adults' strong sense of justice and compassion by empowering them to help make a difference if they want to get involved. She offers inspiration for activism and examples of what some children have already done to support the ongoing work of activists in Pakistan to free and educate child laborers. Included is a list of organizations and individuals to contact for more information or to get involved in supporting the work of anti-slavery activists. Ages 11-14."

36. A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter

McKissack, Patricia, and Fredrick McKissack. A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter. New York: Walker, 1989. ISBN 0-8027-6884-9. 144 p. (Walker's American history series for young people) Age 11 and older. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1990): "The authors combined in-depth research from primary and secondary sources to provide an uncompromising account of the history of African-Americans who worked as porters aboard George Pullman's luxury sleeping cars. While the first generation of porters were newly freed from slavery and grateful for work, poor working conditions and mistreatment at the hands of management led succeeding generations to unite in a struggle for better pay and fair treatment, under the leadership of A. Philip Randolph. Songs, stories, first-person accounts and numerous black-and-white photographs accompany the narrative which is unique in its content. Age 11 and older."

37. Bread and Roses: The Struggle of American Labor, 1865-1915

Meltzer, Milton. Bread and Roses: The Struggle of American Labor, 1865-1915. New York: Facts on File, 1991, (ISBN 0-8160-2371-9), 167 p.; New York: Knopf, 1967, [no ISBN] 231 p. (The Library of American history) Ages 11-14. "Uses original source material to portray the momentous changes that took place in American labor, industry, and trade-unionism following the Civil War; focuses on the work environment in this early age of mass production and mechanization, and shows how abusive conditions often led to labor unrest." - OCLC's Worldcat database. [no CCBC annotation available]

38. This Land Was Made for You and Me: The Life and Songs of Woody Guthrie

Partridge, Elizabeth. **This Land Was Made for You and Me: The Life & Songs of Woody Guthrie.**

New York: Viking, 2002. ISBN 0-670-03535-1. 217 p. Age 11 and older. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2003): "Older children and teens who embark on this marvelous biography of Woody Guthrie will find at least one familiar reference point as they read. Most of them have probably joined in on a joyous rendition of "This Land Is Your Land" at school. They might be surprised, however, to learn that "This Land Is Your Land" was written in 1940 as a counterpoint to the romantic sentiments of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America." "His song caught the bittersweet contrasts of America: the beauty of our country, and the desperate strength of people making do in impossibly difficult times," writes Elizabeth Partridge in her preface to this beautifully designed, dynamic volume. "All you can write is what you see," Guthrie wrote across the bottom of his hand-written lyrics for the song, and that is what Woody Guthrie did over and over again in his often difficult lifetime. Through his music, he voiced the struggles and the suffering he saw during the Great Depression, the spirit of and courage of workers fighting for unions, the tragic death of sailors during World War II. He combined his knowledge of the songs sung by everyday people with a genius for storytelling, and words and a passion for social justice. But at the same time that Guthrie was creating an unparalleled legacy he was running-from responsibility (often leaving his first wife alone with their three young children for months), and from fear. He couldn't escape, however, when Huntington's Disease, the same illness that made his mother so erratic and unpredictable when he was a child, began to affect his body and his mind. Elizabeth Partridge interviewed folksinger Pete Seeger and Woody's son, folksinger Arlo Guthrie, and drew on taped interviews of others who knew Woody, as part of her extensive research to create this honest and inspiring work. Ages 11 and older."

39. Missing from Haymarket Square

Robinet, Harriette Gillem. **Missing from Haymarket Square.**

New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001. ISBN 0-689-83895-6. 143 p. Ages 10-13. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 2002): "This novel set in 1886 Chicago features a 12-year-old African American girl whose father, a union organizer, has disappeared. Dinah Bell hears from other workers on the street that he's been arrested. With her friends Olive and Ben, Austrian immigrants who share cramped living quarters with Dinah, her parents, and others, she follows that lead to the jail and finds him. Then he disappears again -- the police have turned him over to the Pinkertons, the private detectives who often resort to violence when trying to prevent the unions from taking hold. Dinah's loving father is one of the reasons she is so self-sufficient, but she has also learned how to survive because of the hard lessons in her daily struggle against

poverty, racism, and exploitation. Her mother, who lost an arm in a factory accident and who now sees only the bad side of every situation, further burdens Dinah. Eventually, Dinah sees her mother is doing the best she can. Despite all she is up against, Harriette Gillem Robinet's determined, spirited protagonist is remarkably upbeat. The author built her narrative around actual events, most notably the May 1, 1886, Chicago workers march that saw 80,000 people demanding an eight-hour day, and the Haymarket Riot that was its aftermath. Dinah, who works in a factory, takes part in that historic march despite threats from her employer. An extensive author's note provides background information on the situation of immigrant and American poor in Chicago that led to the historic events behind this novel. Ages 10-13."

40. Big Annie of Calumet: A True Story of the Industrial Revolution

Stanley, Jerry. **Big Annie of Calumet: A True Story of the Industrial Revolution.** 1st ed. New York: Crown, 1996. ISBN 0517700972. 102 p. Ages 10-15. CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices, 1996): "A strike became inevitable in 1913 after Copper Country mine owners refused a hearing to Upper Michigan miners organized to improve their wages and working conditions. Seven days a week for more than five months, 25-year-old Annie Clemenc marched carrying an American flag at the head of a protest parade. As a hospital worker, this woman had seen first-hand the injuries typically suffered by miners in cave-ins. As the wife and daughter of miners, she knew much about the dangers and deaths. In the early 20th century, U.S. workers had few legal rights to organize for safe working conditions and higher wages. Thousands of people ultimately became involved on both sides. The strike and ongoing parades led to bitter economic repercussions for women and men engaged in the protest. Violence and bloodshed became common. While mining families were gathered for Christmas party, a false fire alarm caused 80 children to die in the surge of people fleeing the building. By highlighting the basic rights for which Annie and the protesters struggled, Stanley underscores the relationship between workers' rights and human rights. By focusing the narrative upon a previously unsung labor leader, he captures the strength and importance of women in the labor movement. The abundant archival black-and-white graphics contribute an important dimension to the compelling, fast-moving narrative. Informed adult readers might wish the author had found a way to acknowledge the unsalaried domestic roles of the women protesters, and they might also debate Stanley's generous version of Henry Ford's role. *Big Annie of Calumet* is an important book that brings to life an appalling, heartbreaking segment of U.S. labor history rarely detailed for young readers. Ages 10-15."

N.B. CCBC's "40 Books about Labor" bibliography and annotations used with the kind permission of Merri V. Lindgren; more "40 Books" bibliographies will be found at: www.soemadison.wisc.edu/ccbc/bibs/40books/index.htm.