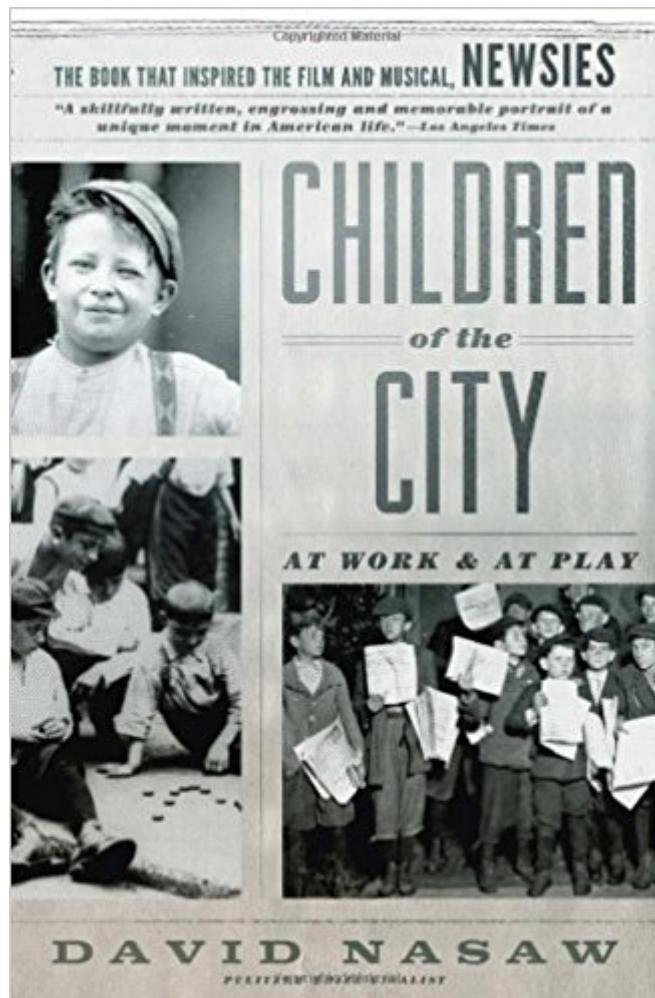


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# Children Of The City: At Work And At Play



## **Synopsis**

This classic title, which was the inspiration for the story behind the new musical *Newsies*, paints a surprising and indelible portrait of the bitter hardships, amazing resourcefulness, and unadulterated joys experienced by immigrant children in American metropolises at the turn of the century. The turn of the century was a time of explosive growth for American cities, a time of nascent hopes and apparently limitless possibilities. In *Children of the City*, David Nasaw re-creates this period in our social history from the vantage point of the children who grew up then. Drawing on hundreds of memoirs, autobiographies, oral histories and unpublished "and until now unexamined" primary source materials from cities across the country, he provides us with a warm and eloquent portrait of these children, their families, their daily lives, their fears, and their dreams. Illustrated with 68 photographs from the period, many never before published, *Children of the City* offers a vibrant portrait of a time when our cities and our grandparents were young.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Controversial, yet remarkable look at how young children, primarily boys, resisted and re-made the conditions of their existence in early 20th century U.S. cities. His chronicle of the newsboys' strike is vital history. The book is more controversial when discussing the actions of the so-called 'child-savers,' one of whom actually included social activist photographer Lewis Hine. He dismisses the action of these advocates as puritanical and fundamentally ignorant of the real conditions of the children's lives. He decides that children are neither powerless nor defenseless, and this decision is, of course, a double-edged sword when dealing with the very real abuses of child labor and child

exploitation that still pervade the U.S. and the globe.

Nasaw's Children of the City is a wonderful glimpse into the lives of children at the turn of the century. If you are doing research on the 1899 newsboys' strike, READ THIS BOOK. It is a huge help in understanding why the newsies did what they did.

There is never a dull moment with this book. The story of the Children of the City should clearly demonstrate to readers why this generation and their children had such wildly different values in regards to working, earning money, and attitudes towards authority.

Well researched and written. The book resonated with me as I'm old enough to remember doing in the 1940's much of what the street urchins did 100 years ago. Loved the list of the rich and famous who shared similar stories and references to their biographies which sound like good reading as well.

This book is one of the few resources for those who want to find out something other than what Teddy Roosevelt did. Honestly I read this at least once a month. Other reviewers say it gave a view that the children did not feel they could change things, but they did. He devotes an entire chapter on the newsies strike, and does an unbelievably good job of showing the fun side of this life that our history teachers and Jacob Riss tell us was horrible. He uses Lewis Hines Photographs in the way they were meant to be, showing the world as it was. Hine did not try and hide the bright smiles and lively pouts of the children, he wanted to show this world as it was. Thorough wonderful anecdotes from famous people like Groucho Marx Nasaw shows that while the work was hard there was more to gain than just the money. He paints a realistic image of the world that is lost to us now.

In the book *Children of the City: At Work and At Play*, David Nasaw brings readers into the lives of children all over America at the turn of the century. Nasaw begins by giving us a description of the area in which the children were raised-mentioning the run-down cities and tenements where the working class resided, while also being sure to briefly mention the other half of the population that lived in great wealth. Since there wasn't much room around their houses, most middle class children simply played in the streets-gambling, playing baseball or kick the can, etc. The book discusses in great depth, and with great historical accurateness, what life was like during this time period-the school, the job and the home life. Nasaw paints a picture for us-vividly letting us experience life right

along with these children as we turn the pages of his book. I know that prior to this book my knowledge concerning this subject was quite minimal. However, after completing it, I feel much more comfortable with the material. I think Nasaw did a great job of conveying a broad array of information through various statistics, facts, pictures and inserted passages. The book was informative, but somehow not boring. Sometimes, it's hard to find historical books that capture our attention. This was a rare exception-it appeals to our emotions as we read the accounts of rough life that such small children had to face each day. The book Children of the City helps us get to know the children of that age a little better. They lived more than a century before us and experienced life in a completely different realm. This may be hard for us to understand because the way we live our lives is so different-easier in a sense, but harder at the same time.

In his book, Children of the City, David Nasaw writes about the struggles, poverty and literal abuse suffered by children, mainly boys, of the early 20th century. Mr. Nasaw also talks about the so-called "child savers" like Lewis Hine who worked through his camera in order to make people aware of what was happening to their children at work. Children of the City was controversial when it was published back in 1986 due to its somewhat graphic or "real" depiction of child exploitation in the turn of the century. After reading this book I found out quite a bit more than I had known previously about child labor and how the laws came about. I had never heard of the "newsies" nor had I heard about the newsboys strike. I also had no idea what those children had to endure for pennies a day, sometimes as little as \$.65 a day. It was amazing how the pictures in the book had an affect, some of them more so, than the book itself. I didn't necessarily like what he talked about but I liked how he depicted it through words and the pictures by Hine. The one thing I didn't like was how he portrayed the kids as powerless to stop the bosses and defenseless against them. I don't think the kids had a lot of self-esteem but do think they had enough in them to say something to someone. This book gave a good picture of how life was back then for kids 9-13 or 14 at the job site. I think this book should be read by anyone wanting to find out more about the child labor laws that are in place today or by anyone wanting to read a book that makes them feel like they're there.

This book was extremely good and gave a GREAT picture on what children's lives were like up to the 1920's, and the pictures and facts were INCREDABLE!!! A MUST READ!!!

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