

Introduction

“A Vision for Children is the story of Lewis Hine (1874-1940) who spent his life fighting against the plight of poor children having to work long and dangerous shifts in the factories and canneries and homes of the turn of the century. Lewis Hines’ photographs inspired lawmakers to change and enforce the laws against the practice of child labor.

For step-by-step instructions on how to perform a radio play with students, refer to the “Radio Theater Cookbook, Recipes for the Imagination,” available from the Raven Radio Theater of the Air! This script is published with the following materials and information to help you prepare your students for their own radio drama presentation.

Master CD - a CD that contains the pre-recorded music and sound effects segments you will need to perform this play.

Master CD Index - lists the music and sound effect segments on the Master CD, their duration, and instructions.

Character List - tells you which characters are in the play, how many lines each one has, and which pages of the script to duplicate for each character.

Sound Effects Suggestions - ideas for finding or building the mechanical sound effects you will need to perform the play.

“Get-Ready” Cards - a master set of cue cards that you can copy onto card stock and use during the performance to cue sound effects crew.

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The Raven Radio Theater/Calling Crane Publishing offers a wide variety of scripts and books on radio theater and storytelling. If you would like more information or see our catalog on-line:

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“A Vision for Children”

Character List

Announcer #1	9 lines	introduces the radio play to the audience
Announcer #2	6 lines	introduces the radio play to the audience
Narrator	68 lines	the storyteller of play
Otis	28 lines	furniture factory worker
Lewis	136 lines	photograher who fought against children labor
Charlie	9 lines	furniture factory worker
Boss	2 lines	foreman at furniture factory
Frank	32 lines	Lewis Hine’s teacher and mentor
Hennings	6 lines	member of National Child Labor Committee
Lovejoy	35 lines	member of National Child Labor Committee
Secretary	2 lines	office secretary
Murphy	9 lines	President of National Child Labor Committee
Mary	42 lines	dedicated social worker with NY Consumers’ League
Hunter	5 lines	member of National Child Labor Committee
Margaret	15 lines	Irish mother of family living in tenement
Bridget	2 lines	Irish daughter of family living in tenement
Sarah	12 lines	Lewis Hine’s wife
Foreman	33 lines	foreman in cotton mill
Sally Ann	15 lines	young girl worker in cotton mill
Guard	1 line	guard at cotton mill
Morris	42 lines	Lewis Hine’s assitant in Mississippi

Casting Notes: There are 21 speaking parts in “A Vision for Children.” Having an adult read the part of the Narrator can be very helpful as it helps establish the timing and expression of the young readers. Remember you are casting by voice alone, not by appearance. Become familiar with the script and try and match the reader to the voice of the character. The idea is to inspire the readers to bring as much life to their characters and the action of the story as possible. You will need 8 to 12 students for the sound effects crew.

CLIPPITY-CLOP! SPLASH! PLOP! CRASH! BANG! WHOOSH!

Sound Effects

Footsteps - (most types) - Walk in place or hold a pair of shoes with the hands and “walk” on a table. It is important to get a realistic rhythm to the footsteps. If walking in place, a “heel to toe” step is best but takes practice to master.

For footsteps in the general store use hard-soled shoes (leather are best) on a piece of plywood. For footsteps on gravel use a tray with medium to small gravel on it. For sloshing footsteps place several crumpled and shredded newspapers in a large wash pan (Brown paper restroom towels are better because they don’t have any ink to stain the hands). Add water until you get a good “squishy” or “sloshy” sound. Simulate walking by using the palm of the hand for footsteps. For footsteps on leaves collect leaves in the fall and let them dry. As leaves break down quickly, you may want to put them in a box and use your hands to mimic the sound of steps. You can use corn flakes if you don’t have any leaves.

Door - There was always a framed, half-size door in all the old radio drama studios. It either sat on a table top or, if larger, had castors so it could be easily moved around. The bigger the door and heavier the frame, such as one made of hardwood, the more realistic the sound it made. The handle was just a shade loose, so that it could be rattled a little as the door was opened. A variety of other door fittings were often installed on the door and frame including a lifting-type latch, a bolt, a knocker, etc. Sometimes the door doubled for window sounds with a sash window set in the back of the boxed frame.

If you build your own sound-door, or have a parent or local business donate one, it can be used over and over again in future radio drama productions.

Another solution is simply to use a real door close enough to be picked up by a microphone.

Newspaper - Use a real newspaper and makes lots of noise when turning the pages.

Exploding Paper Sack - Any kid worth his salt knows how to blow up a paper sack and make it pop! Be careful to have it close enough to the microphone but not so that the wind makes the mic distort. Practice to get just the right distance and effect.

Factory Cart - You can build a small cart and roll it on a rough surface made with a scattering of small gravel. Hold the microphone close to it while it is pushed along to make the bigger sound of a real factory cart being moved. Experiment with this effect until you are satisfied.

Pouring - Take a jar filled with water and pour it into the dish pan filled with water. The more height you have the louder the sound.

Glass Frame - Old cameras used a piece of glass treated with special chemicals held in a wooden frame instead of film. You can use an inexpensive picture frame and just remove the glass from the frame making sure to strike the wood several times as you remove it. Cover the edges of the glass with masking tape so no one gets cut.

Paper - Paper sounds pick up well over a microphone and make a telling effect. Try different types of paper for the best sound.

Paper in the Developer - Lay paper down in a dish pan of 2" water and push paper down to create the sound.

Telephone, Ringing - This effect can be difficult to make with a real telephone because they operate with unusual voltage. One solution is to get an old-fashioned alarm clock, the ones with the bells on top are the best. Do not wind the clock itself but wind the alarm and set the clock and the alarm to the same time. Then, when you pull out the alarm stem in back, the clock "rings." Do this twice for the right length of time and you have a very believable ringing telephone. Another way is to take the bells out of an old telephone and ring them manually by repeatedly striking the bell clapper quickly with the tip of your finger. As the clapper is magnetic and returns each time it is struck, with a little practice and dexterity, you can have a ringing telephone.

Scrape of Chair - Use a real chair with wooden legs or a large piece of wood and scrape it against the wood you use for steps on a wooden floor.

Camera Tripod - Three 2" x 2" about 5' long. Drill a hole in the top of each 2" x 2" and connect them with a piece of rope. Just handling this contraption will sound like a real tripod being set up.

Flashpan Explosion - Probably the easiest, safest and best way to make this effect is using the mouth. Do it close to the microphone for effect but make sure no to blow directly into the mic or it will distort terribly. Experiment until you get it right.

Clothes Hangers - Hold a short section of a wooden closet pole or metal pipe with one hand and roughly move several metal clothes hangers back and forth with the other.

Drawers - Slide two pieces of wood together (put a small cross-piece on one so that the other will hit it at the end of the slide indicating the close) or find a wooden box with a sliding lid or drawer that can be opened close to the mic. Follow with handling of contents such as costume jewelry and clothing if appropriate.

Camera Smashed - Build a small box out of light weight wood such as 1/4" plywood and smash it near the microphone with a foot. Make two so you have one for the rehearsal.

Slap on Face - Slap hands together at the appropriate time.

Rowing a Boat - Dip a piece of wood rhythmically into the water and make a rusty hinge or door squeak in unison.

NEWSPAPER

Wait for Cue!

PAPER SACK

POP OF PAPER SACK

Wait for Cue!

FOOTSTEPS (Concrete)

CART (Rolling)

FOOTSTEPS (Classroom)

BOOKS

Wait for Cue!

DOOR (Closes)

POURING LIQUID

Wait for Cue!

HANDLING FRAME

CURTAIN (Opened)

Wait for Cue!

CURTAIN (Closed)

Wait for Cue!

PAPER IN LIQUID (3 Cues)

PAPER

Wait for Cue!

TELEPHONE LIFT RECEIVER

p. 8

HANG-UP TELEPHONE 5

DOOR (Opens)

FOOTSTEPS

Wait for Cue!

FOOTSTEPS

DOOR (Open & Close)

FOOTSTEPS

p. 9

SCRAPE OF CHAIR 6

Wait for Cue!

DOOR (Opens)

FOOTSTEPS

Wait for Cue!

TRAY w/ CUPS

FOOTSTEPS

DOOR (Open & Close)

POURING TEA (Several cups)

SHIRT SLEEVES (Roll-up)

SHIRT SLEEVES (Roll-down)

FOOTSTEPS (Concrete)



DOOR (Open & Close)

FOOTSTEPS (Wooden Stairs)

Wait for Cue!

WATER

Wait for Cue!

FOOTSTEPS

KNOCK ON DOOR

DOOR (Open & Close)

FOOTSTEPS



FOOTSTEPS

Wait for Cue!

TRIPOD

Wait for Cue!

PAPER

Wait for Cue!

FLASHPAN



HANGERS

Wait for Cue!

FOOTSTEPS (2 Cues)

DRAWER (Open & Close)

PAPER SACK (Opened)

FOOTSTEPS (2 Cues)

COAT (Remove)

FOOTSTEPS (2 Sets Cement)

Wait for Cue!

TRIPOD

Wait for Cue!

FOOTSTEPS

FLASHPAN

FOOTSTEPS (Girls)

FOOTSTEPS (Heavy)

SMASHING CAMERA

Wait for Cue!

SLAP

Wait for Cue!

FOOTSTEPS

ROWING
THUNK (Against Dock)

Wait for Cue!

FOOTSTEPS (Wood)

CUE CARDS
A Vision for Children
Lewis Hine

“Lewis Hine, A Vision for Children”

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FADE-IN OLD-TIME RADIO SEGMENTS

Announcer 1: Welcome ladies and gentlemen to the Raven Radio Theater and our presentation, “Lewis Hine, A Vision for Children.” Today’s play was written by Joe McHugh and is brought to you by (name of teacher’s class) at (name of school).

Announcer #2: Our play takes place nearly a hundred years ago in the early days of the Twentieth Century and tells the true story of a brave and dedicated man who used his artistic talent to fight for children.

Announcer #1: So now, sit back, listen carefully and let your imagination be your guide as we present, “Lewis Hine, A Vision for Children.”

2

FADE-IN THEME MUSIC

Narrator: Lewis Wickes Hine was born in the town of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on September 26, 1874. His parents ran a restaurant and little Lewis lived with them upstairs in an apartment over it. The year 1892 was a significant turning point in Lewis’ life. That was the year he graduated from high school and turned eighteen. It was also the year his father died in a tragic accident. With no one else left to support his mother and an unmarried sister, Lewis was forced to give up his plans to go to college and take a job as a hauler in a local furniture factory. As they used to say, the job of hauler required ‘a strong back and a weak mind.’ Thirteen hours a day, Lewis lugged heavy furniture out of the factory and loaded it onto the company’s trucks for which he was given four dollars a week in wages, his only break during the long day, a few minutes to eat a sandwich and swill a cup of cold coffee.

3

FADE-OUT THEME MUSIC

FADE-IN FURNITURE FACTORY

Otis: How’s your Ma and sister been doing, Lewis?

Lewis: My sister’s fine, Otis, but my ma’s arthritis has been acting up. It’s the cold weather. It keeps her in bed some mornings, it’s so painful.

handling of newspaper

Charlie: Now, lookey here. The newspaper says the Rockingham Foundry just went belly up. Threw thirty-eight men out of work. Boys, I'm telling you this here panic is the worst I've ever seen.

Otis: Let me see that paper, Charlie. I've got a cousin works at Rockingham. He never told me they was on the skids.

handling of newspaper

Lewis: Well, maybe he didn't know. The bosses ain't in the habit of telling us workers what's up.

Otis: I wouldn't be at all surprised if we were next.

turn of newspaper page

Otis: Now, here's something needs saying.

Lewis: What is it?

Otis: Here, read it for yourself, Lewis.

handling of newspaper

Lewis: What do you want me to read?

Otis: The editorial—there, top of the page.

hits newspaper with finger at word "there"

Lewis: "Even in these dull times, with the mills running about halftime and with half a force, there are children working at many machines. The city is so full of idle men that there are a dozen or more applicants for any job that comes up. And yet with an army of idle men in our midst, children, who ought to be in school, are doing factory work. This state of affairs is a disgrace to Oshkosh. The little work there is to be had ought to be done at decent wages and the little ones sent to school. Put the men to work and let the babies go home!"

Otis: Now, that's telling 'em. It's no wonder we've got ourselves a panic. It's the greedy mill owners and the stock speculators that's got us in this fix. Make no mistake about it!

Charlie: I didn't know you went to college, Otis, and learned economics.

Otis: You don't need no college degree, Charlie, to see what's going on in this country. Just open up your eyes. Here, give me that paper sack you had your sandwich in.

Charlie: (surprised) What do you want with my sack?

Otis: I'm going to blow it up for Professor Otis' lecture on the financial principle of supply and demand. Now, pay attention class. It works like this. Mr. Mill Owner don't want to pay a man a decent wage, so he hires little children instead to do the work, and don't pay 'em hardly nothing. Now, where's that get Mr. Millowner in the long run? I'll tell you where. Since nobody's making any money, nobody's got any money. Since nobody's got any money, there's nobody buying Mr. Mill Owner's goods. . . and since he can't sell his goods,

blows up paper sack

Otis: . . . he goes bust!

pops blown-up paper bag with his hand to make a loud bang!

Lewis: And there's more to it than that, Otis. The real tragedy is what winds up happening to the children. A kid starts working at some factory job when he's what? . . . ten or eleven. . . working thirteen, fourteen hours a day with only enough free time to sleep and eat. When does he get a chance to improve himself, to get an education or at least learn a trade? How's he ever going to find a better life?

Charlie: And what about the accidents? There's plenty of 'em. We had a kid lose three fingers in a saw here last week. You saw it happen, didn't you, Otis? It's just not right for these youngins' to be around all this dangerous equipment.

steps on concrete approach and stop

Boss: Time to break it up, boys. Eatin' time's over. Lewis, you and Charlie take a cart and go move those dressers out onto the loading dock.

Lewis: Yes sir, Mr. Webster. Come on, Charlie.

Charlie: See you later, Professor Otis.

cart rolls-away with steps

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**FADE-OUT FURNITURE FACTORY
FADE-IN THEME MUSIC**

Narrator: Well, Otis' prediction came true. Within the month, the furniture factory went bankrupt and Lewis had to look for other work. He cut firewood, delivered packages for a clothing store, and even sold water filters from door to door. Finally, he landed a job as a janitor at a bank. After a few months in his new job, he decided to take a night course in bookkeeping in the hopes of getting a promotion. That's how he met Dr. Frank Manning, a professor at the State Normal School in Oshkosh, a man who was to change Lewis' life in ways the young man had never imagined.

FADE-OUT THEME MUSIC

fade-in steps moving about and books being taken from desktops

Students: (light walla as they leave classroom)

Frank: Mr. Hine, could you stay a few minutes after class?

Lewis: Sure thing, Dr. Manning.

door closes (ends student walla)

Frank: You work at the bank, don't you?

Lewis: I used to be the janitor but they just made me secretary for the head cashier.

Frank: Do you enjoy the work?

Lewis: Well. . . not really. I don't like being cooped up all day with a stack of record books. But it's better than mopping floors and stoking the boiler.

Frank: I've been impressed with your work here in my class. You've got a good head on your shoulders. You should consider quitting your job and enrolling full-time at the Normal School.

Lewis: I couldn't do that. I mean, it's not that I haven't thought about it, but my family relies on my wages.

Frank: Well, it'd sure be a shame to see your talents wasted. Talk it over with you mother and I'll see what can be done here about getting you some financial help so you can enroll for the fall semester. It's a big world out there, Lewis. You really should try and make something of yourself.

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FADE-IN THEME MUSIC

Narrator: Well, that's just what Lewis did. With some scrimping and just plain "doing without," Lewis managed to go to college. He was twenty-five years old and he had decided to become a teacher. As luck would have it, a few years later Frank Manning was appointed principal of the Ethical Culture School in New York City. The school was a model for progressive teaching and Frank offered Lewis a job teaching geography. He also asked Lewis to start a photography club, even though Lewis had never used a camera. It was a chance, Frank told him, to learn right along side of the kids.

FADE-OUT THEME MUSIC

pouring of liquid into pan

Frank: What's that you're pouring in the pan, Lewis? It smells like rotten eggs.

Lewis: It's hypo thiosulfate. It 'fixes' the image when I make the print. Hand me a sheet of the bromide paper from the box next to you, Frank. Handle it by the edges. Good. Now, I'll put it in this frame against the glass negative. When I tell you, I want you to pull that curtain back and let in the daylight. Ready?... Now,...

handling of frame followed by curtain being opened

Lewis: (after several second pause) That's it, now pull it closed again.

curtain pulled closed