

Young boys worked in glass factories where they operated fiery furnaces for 12-hour shifts. Children as young as 11 years old bottled beer. The US Census Bureau reported in 1870 that about 750,000 children under 15 years of age were employed in the United States.

The wages earned by children were badly needed in some families. A child sewing knee pants earned 75 cents for every dozen pair he made. A child making cloth coats brought home as much as \$1.50 per dozen. A girl working in a dry goods establishment contributed \$1.50 per week to the family budget—if she worked at least 60 hours.

Danger in the Workplace

WITH CHILDREN operating big, powerful machines in factories and on farms, serious injuries were a constant threat. But some families were so desperate for the wages their kids brought home they ignored the dangers of the workplace.

Twelve-year-old Charles Neudinger worked in a cotton factory in Pennsylvania in 1885. One day his assistant accidentally started the huge machine that Charles was adjusting. His little body was pierced in multiple places by needles driven into his skin by the machine. Charles had been the main support of his parents, so his death was especially difficult for the family.

Long-haired girls working around automated machinery could be a dangerous combination. In 1885 Julia Begley worked in a factory in South Carolina. One day she was cleaning lint from under her machine when her hair got caught in a moving part. Mary Mahoney, working in a laundry in Chicago in 1886, was lifted from the floor when her hair was caught up

A C T I V I T Y

Take a Break

MANY KIDS spent a great deal of time working so they could contribute to the family's income. But they sometimes found time for play. In the early 1900s Jessie H. Bancroft wrote a book titled *Games for the Playground, Home, School and Gymnasium*. It featured 400 games for children to play at summer camps, gymnasiums, and settlement houses (see p. 97).

Jessie was an expert in physical training, which was unusual for a woman at the time. She founded the American Posture League. Her research was used to apply new principles to the manufacture of school, factory, and office furniture and to seating in subway trains.

Try a couple of the games included in Jessie's book.

ARM'S LENGTH TAG: Two players stand each with an arm extended at full length at shoulder level and try to touch each other without being touched in return. This will require some rapid twisting, dodging, and bending. A touch on the extended hand does not count.

RACE ON ALL FOURS: The performers stand with hands and feet on the floor, the knees stiff, hands clenched and resting on the knuckles. The elbows should be stiff. In this position a race is run, or rather "hitched," over a course that will not easily be too short for the performers.