



Smithsonian Institution

MUSEUM on Main Street

The Way We Worked **Children's Reading List**

The following information will assist you in developing local exhibitions and public humanities programs around the themes of The Way We Worked. Work with your local library and/or bookstore to develop children's reading programs that relate to the themes of the exhibition: set aside a space in the exhibition area that can be a reading room for children and families and/or ask the local librarian to focus story time selections on books that explore work themes.

Note: The publishers provided are current, while the dates are of original publication.

Altman, Linda Jacobs. *Amelia's Road*. Lee & Low Books, 1993. Ages 4 to 10.

Amelia is a migrant worker's child who hates what the road means in her life and longs for a stable home. She ultimately finds peace by planting a treasure box beneath a tree and creating a place somewhere for herself.

Artley, Bob. *Once Upon a Farm*. Pelican Publishing, 2000. Ages 10 and up.

Bringing to life an almost forgotten time, the author describes the sometimes enjoyable, sometimes arduous aspects of growing up on a farm. As the book progresses through the seasons, Artley includes details of everyday life and illustrates them with maps and cutaway drawings.

Avi. *The Barn*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1996. Ages 8 to 12.

In an effort to fulfill their dying father's last request, nine-year-old Ben and his two siblings construct a barn on their land in the Oregon Territory in 1855. The process of raising a structure that will make their father proud reveals Ben's intelligence, determination, and underlying fear of being separated from his family.

Bradby, Marie. *Once Upon a Farm*. Orchard Books, 2002. Ages 4 to 10.

An African-American boy relates the challenges and rewards that come with working the land. At the end, the boy sadly shares that encroaching suburban development means the end of his family farm and way of life.

Browne, Anthony. *Piggybook*. Random House Children's Books, 1990. Ages 4 to 8.

When Mrs. Piggott tires of the endless chores in her workday, she unexpectedly leaves her demanding family home alone. With the cooking and housework untended, they begin to realize just how much she did for them.

Burton, Virginia Lee. *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1939. Ages 4 to 8.

Although steam shovels are being replaced by more modern machines, Mike Mulligan refuses to consign his beloved Mary Anne to the junk heap. The respect and dignity he shows towards his long-time work partner in this classic story is an important lesson for children.



Smithsonian Institution

MUSEUM on Main Street

Keats, Ezra Jack. *John Henry: An American Legend*. Dragonfly Books, 1965. Ages 4 to 8.

Through collage art and rhythmic language, Keats portrays John Henry as a heroic man, born with a hammer in his hand, who feels called to help build railroads.

Merriam, Eve. *Mommies at Work*. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1955. Ages 4 to 8.

This book examines many different jobs performed by working mothers, including conventional jobs (teacher, bank teller) and less conventional ones (assembly line worker, air traffic controller). *Daddies at Work* is the companion title.

Mitchell, Margaree King. *Uncle Jed's Barber Shop*. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1993. Ages 4 to 8.

Sarah Jean's Uncle Jed travels the county to cut his customers' hair, and dreams of opening his own barbershop in the 1920s South. At age 79, after a lifetime of obstacles including segregation and the Great Depression, Jed finally realizes his dream.

Rounds, Glen. *Cowboys*. Holiday House, Inc., 1991. Ages 4 to 8.

The author captures the daily work of ordinary cowboys in Montana country. The story follows a cowboy from sunup to bedtime as he rounds up cattle, kills a rattlesnake, and plays cards in the bunkhouse after dinner.

Stevens, Jan Romero. *Carlos and the Cornfield/Carlos y la milpa de maiz*. Luna Rising, 1995. Ages 4 to 8. Bilingual.

In order to earn money to buy a pocket knife that he admires in Senor Lopez's store, Carlos agrees to help his father plant *el maz* (corn). Carlos comes to understand the rewards of hard work and learns a valuable lesson in listening.

Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Farmer Boy*. HarperCollins Publishers; 1933. Ages 4 to 10.

The second book in the *Little House* series, this story is based on the childhood of Laura's husband, Almanzo Wilder. It describes the endless chores involved in running the Wilder family farm in upstate New York in the 1860s.

Wing, Natasha. *Jalapeno Bagels*. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1996. Ages 4 to 8.

Pablo helps his Mexican American mother and Jewish father during a busy morning work session at their *panaderia*, or bakery. Jalapeno bagels are a delicious blend of the two cultures, which he decides to bring to his school's International Day. The book includes recipes for all the items that Pablo helps his parents make.