



Smithsonian Institution

# MUSEUM on Main Street

## ***The Way We Worked*** **Young Adult 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 reading programs and learning opportunities for young adults (ages 12 to 18), such as hosting book club meetings focusing on books about work in America and/or setting up a work-themed exploration station at the local library to display books on the subject.*

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

### **FICTION**

**Auch, Mary Jane. *Ashes of Roses*.** Random House Children's Books, 2002. 256 pages.

In this sad novel, sixteen-year-old Rose Nolan, newly arrived from Ireland, finds work at New York City's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory shortly before a 1911 fire in which 146 employees died.

**Bauer, Joan. *Hope Was Here*.** Penguin Group, 2005. 192 pages.

This is the uplifting story of a rootless sixteen-year-old named Hope and her aunt Addie. They finally settle in a rural Wisconsin town, where Hope learns about politics, friendship, love, and life while waitressing at a local diner.

**Kipling, Rudyard. *Captains Courageous: A Story of the Grand Banks*.** NuVision Publications, 1897. 144 pages.

This is the classic tale of a pampered fifteen-year-old millionaire's son who is rescued by New England fishermen and put to work on their boat. The boy learns to adjust to his rough new life, and returns to his parents an industrious and considerate young man.

**Lindquist, Susan Hart. *Summer Soldiers*.** Random House Children's Books, 1999. 192 pages.

When the fathers of a small sheep ranching community in California leave to fight in World War I, the teenage sons are left to manage the ranches. Eleven-year-old Joe and his friends must grow up quickly as they contend with their new responsibilities as well as the town bullies.

**Paterson, Katherine. *Lyddie*.** Penguin Group, 1995. 192 pages.

Already considered a classic, this novel tells the story of an impoverished Vermont farm girl in the 1840s who is hired out as a servant to help pay off her family farm's debts. Determined to gain her independence, ten-year-old Lyddie instead becomes a factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts, a job that soon reveals its own set of hardships.

**Paulsen, Gary. *Alida's Song*.** Random House Children's Books, 1999. 96 pages.

A fourteen-year-old boy who has been neglected by irresponsible parents spends a wonderful summer in Minnesota with his grandmother, who arranges a summer job for him on the farm where she cooks.



Smithsonian Institution

# MUSEUM on Main Street

Farm life offers good food, peaceful evenings, and the camaraderie and routine of hard work, giving the boy strength and faith in himself.

**Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Esperanza Rising*.** Scholastic, Inc., 2000. 288 pages.

Thirteen-year-old Esperanza and her newly widowed mother are forced to leave their comfortable existence in Mexico to work in a Mexican-American migrant worker camp in the San Joaquin Valley during the Great Depression. Esperanza is not ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance, but when their new life is threatened, she must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances.

**Simmons, Michael. *Pool Boy*.** Random House Children's Books, 2003. 192 pages.

Fifteen-year-old Brett Gerson is both an engaging and infuriating anti-hero who has it all, until his dad is jailed for insider trading and he is forced to take a summer job assisting the man who used to clean his family's swimming pool. Brett struggles to adjust to his new life in a lower-income bracket in this modern coming-of-age story.

**Soto, Gary. *Jesse*.** Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006. 180 pages.

An artistic and religious seventeen-year-old is forced to work as a field laborer while he attends junior college. In this quiet story of hope and faith, Jesse perseveres amid family dysfunction, ethnic injustice, romantic attractions, and confusion about his priorities and goals.

## NONFICTION

**Atkin, S. Beth. *Voices from the Fields*.** Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2000. 96 pages.

Photographs, poems in both Spanish and English, and interviews with nine children from California's Salinas Valley reveal the hardships and hopes of Mexican American migrant farm workers and their families. They tell of working in the fields, the importance of family, problems of gangs and prejudice, and their efforts to become educated so that the next generation will have better opportunities.

**Colman, Penny. *Where the Action Was: Women War Correspondents in World War II*.** Random House Children's Books, 2002. 128 pages.

Maps, newspaper headlines, and photographs illustrate how, in spite of U.S. military regulations that forbade women to cover combat, these brave female journalists worked the front lines in World War II and laid a path for others to follow.

**Also by Colman: *Rosie the Riveter: Women Working on the Home Front in World War II*.** Random House Children's Books, 1998. 128 pages.

From 1942 to 1945 more than eighteen million women, many of whom had never before held a job, entered the work force to help the U.S. fight World War II. Illustrated through first-hand accounts, propaganda posters, and period photographs, their unprecedented participation changed the course of history for American women and the country as a whole.



Smithsonian Institution

# MUSEUM on Main Street

**Murolo, Priscilla and A.B. Chitty. *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States.*** New Press, 2001. 384 pages.

In this popular history appropriate for high-school age students, Murolo and Chitty cover labor in the U.S. from precolonial times to the late 1960s, exploring the complex relationships between work, gender, ethnicity, race, and immigration. From African indentured servants forced into slavery to Chinese railroad laborers, steel-mill workers, Wobblies, and domestics, the authors put a human face on the places, events, and social conditions that shaped the evolution of organized labor.