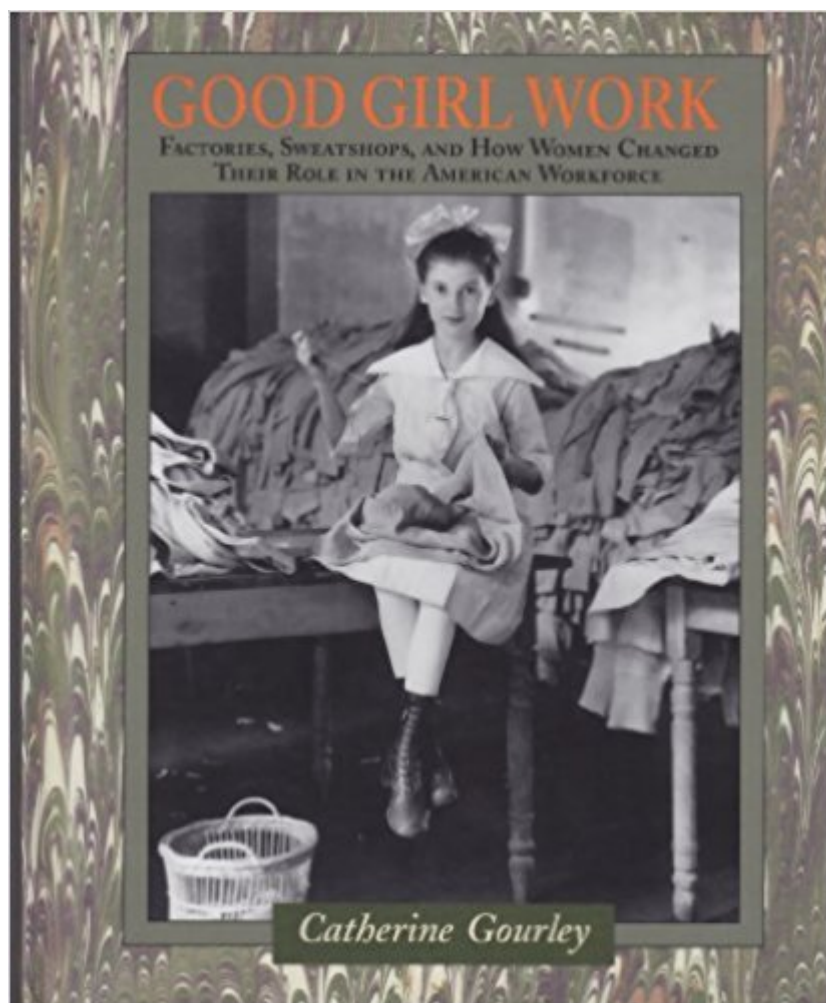




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Good Girl Work: Factories, Sweatshops, And How Women Changed Their Role In The American Workforce



Synopsis

Discusses the girls and women in the industrial workforce of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the reforms and movements that changed their working conditions and the nature of the work itself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 4-8-A carefully researched look at female labor in the early 19th and 20th centuries in this country when the workforce of the textile mills, shoe factories, and sweatshops was comprised of unskilled "girls" of all ages. Grossly overworked and underpaid, they slowly realized the truth of their exploitation, organized, and eventually changed the workplace. Gourley uses letters, diaries, and other primary sources to give personal glimpses into the feelings and thoughts of these heroines. While these excerpts enrich the text, they are not always readily identified in the notes. Black-and-white photographs and reproductions show girls and women at their jobs. This compelling title would be an excellent accompaniment to Katherine Paterson's *Lyddie* (Lodestar, 1991), Emily A. McCully's *The Bobbin Girl* (Dial, 1996), Barry Denenberg's *So Far from Home: The Diary of Mary Driscoll, an Irish Mill Girl* (Scholastic, 1997), and Victoria Sherrow's *The Triangle Factory Fire* (Millbrook, 1995). Eunice Weech, M. L. King Elementary School, Urbana, IL Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

For a history of female children at work in industry around the turn of the century, Gourley draws on

a wealth of primary source material, including letters, diaries, memoirs, and newspaper interviews. Like Russell Freedman in *Kids at Work* (1994), she includes some stirring black-and-white photographs of small girls winding silk at a loom, doing piecework in a tenement room, spinning cotton in a mill. The occasional use of pale green prints as background for type does not make for easy reading, and the general narrative is somewhat unfocused. It is the dramatic in-depth personal testimonies that will hold readers as the social history moves from child labor to women's labor and to "good girls" who grew up to rebel and lead the fight for change. Hazel Rochman

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