



Left:

Lewis Hine caption: [All in photos worked (even smallest girl and boys) and they went to work at (noon) 12:45. Some of the following boys and girls may be 14, many are not. John Gopen, 189 Elm St. Joseph Stonge, 73 King St. Billie Welch, 178 Union St. Tim Carroll, 310 Salem St. Michael Devine, 64 South Broadway. Jacob Black, 15 Bradford Bl. Binnie Greenfield, 281 Park St. Andrew Pomeroy, 76 South Broadway. Louis Gross, 39 Myrtle St. Arthur Davois, 244 Salem St. Joseph Latham[?], 165 Willow St. Salvatore Quatirto, 48 Union St. Sam Gangi, 82 Pleasant Valley St. These two boys were about the youngest of the boys, others nearly as young.] Location: Lawrence, Massachusetts, September 1911.

Joe Manning caption: Michael Devine (standing directly underneath the outstretched hand of boy who is making a clownish face), 14 years old, Lawrence, Massachusetts, September 1911.

Left (insert): Michael Devine (center).

Below: Michael Devine



MICHAEL DEVINE (1896—1974)

“He was a quiet, gentle man who always doffed his hat when passing a Catholic Church. He frequented Fenway Park where he enjoyed the Red Sox. He played a local card game called 45s, and liked 500 Rummy. He enjoyed his friends, reading the daily news, and his great-nieces and nephews. He always had a candy “stash” and some loose change for them. He taught us all how to drive...” ~ Michael’s niece, Monica Sharpe

LEWIS HINE TOOK MANY PHOTOGRAPHS LIKE THIS ONE. Since he used a 5 x 7 view camera with a very slow shutter speed, he had to make his best effort to get the children to stand still; otherwise, those who moved would appear blurry. He wasn't able to get into the Lawrence mills, so he caught the children on their lunch break, or as they reported for work or left to go home.

workers marched and sang together despite their cultural differences.

Though Hine gave us the names (and addresses), he didn't point out who was who, giving me the daunting task of trying to figure that out myself. In the case of Michael Devine, I got lucky. I found a niece, Monica Sharpe, who recognized him immediately.



Above: (L-R) Michael Devine, Winifred Devine Stam (Michael's sister), Monica Sharpe (Michael's niece), Mary Devine Becotte (Michael's sister), and James Devine (Michael's brother), February 20, 1965.

MICHAEL FRANCIS DEVINE WAS BORN IN LAWRENCE ON NOVEMBER 28, 1896, and died on September 23, 1974, at the age of 77. Ms. Sharpe was very fond of him. Instead of doing an interview, she sent me a detailed and affectionate summary of his life.

“My name is Monica Sharpe. I am the niece of Michael Devine. I am also his Goddaughter. Michael’s father Patrick was born in County Mayo, Ireland in 1871, and came to the USA in 1893. He worked as a laborer on the railroad in the late 1800s, and as a fireman in the mills in the 1900s. He died in 1945. Mary Donnelly Devine (Michael’s mother) was born in County Cork, Ireland in October of 1872, and came to the USA in 1891. She died in 1925. They both could read and write English. They had seven children.”

“Michael was the oldest of the seven children. He was born in November (28th) 1896, on Oak Street in Lawrence. His mother’s two brothers, James and Michael, and her cousin Mary Lyons lived with them. Michael attended public school until he had to work in the mills. He later served in WWI and was in the Merchant Marine. When the mills closed, Uncle Mike was 55, so he took a job delivering for a liquor distributor, and later a job as a store clerk in a friend’s package store. He always worked. Until he was 55, Uncle Mike and (his brother) Uncle Jim lived together as bachelors. When I was 10, they moved in with my family at 5 Garfield Street in Lawrence. In December of 1955, my sister Mary died, and a year later we moved to Philips Street where Uncle Mike lived with us until he died of heart failure at the age of 77.”

“He was a quiet, gentle man who always doffed his hat when passing a Catholic Church. He frequented Fenway Park where he enjoyed the Red Sox. He played a local card game called 45s, and liked 500 Rummy. He enjoyed his friends, reading the daily news, and his great-nieces and nephews. He always had a candy “stash” and some loose change for them. He taught us all how to drive. He’d take us in to the 4:00 a.m. Sunday Mass at the Boston Arch Street Shrine after a night of cards with friends. We often went to Charlestown (Mass) or Brooklyn (NY) to visit cousins. Radio City Music Hall, the Christmas windows, Boston Common at Christmas, the Swan Boats, and Montreal, were delights we never would have had as children without Uncle Mike.”

Hine was exposing child labor because he strongly disagreed with it, but he wanted to show that his subjects were real people, not just poster kids to be pitied. He didn't want us to forget that even though they worked very long hours, and working conditions were often brutal and dangerous, they had another life when they went home. Though that life was surely a struggle by today's standards, many of these children nevertheless had stable and loving families, went to church regularly, and played with friends.

In 1911, Lawrence was populated with immigrants from about 100 nationalities, predominantly Irish, Italian, Eastern European, and French Canadian. In this picture, Hine gave us the names of 13 of the children. With a bit of research, I was able to establish the correct spelling of each of those names. Gopen (Gopoian) was Armenian; Stonge (St. Onge) and Davois were French Canadian; Black and Greenfield were Russian Jews; Gangi and Quatirto (Quarterone) were Italian; and Michael Devine was Irish. They worked in the same mills and lived in the same general neighborhood. Four months later, when the Bread & Roses Strike broke out,