

---

The Rise of a Landmark - Ephemera

The Rise of a Landmark: Lewis Hine and the  
Empire State Building

---

Fall 2013

## The Rise of a Landmark: Lewis Hine and the Empire State Building Exhibition Catalog

Jill J. Deupi  
*Fairfield University*

Ed Ross  
*Fairfield University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/hine-ephemera>

---

### Recommended Citation

Deupi, Jill J. and Ross, Ed, "The Rise of a Landmark: Lewis Hine and the Empire State Building Exhibition Catalog" (2013). *The Rise of a Landmark - Ephemera*. 4.  
<https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/hine-ephemera/4>

This item has been accepted for inclusion in DigitalCommons@Fairfield by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Fairfield. It is brought to you by DigitalCommons@Fairfield with permission from the rights-holder(s) and is protected by copyright and/or related rights. **You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses, you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.** For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@fairfield.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@fairfield.edu).

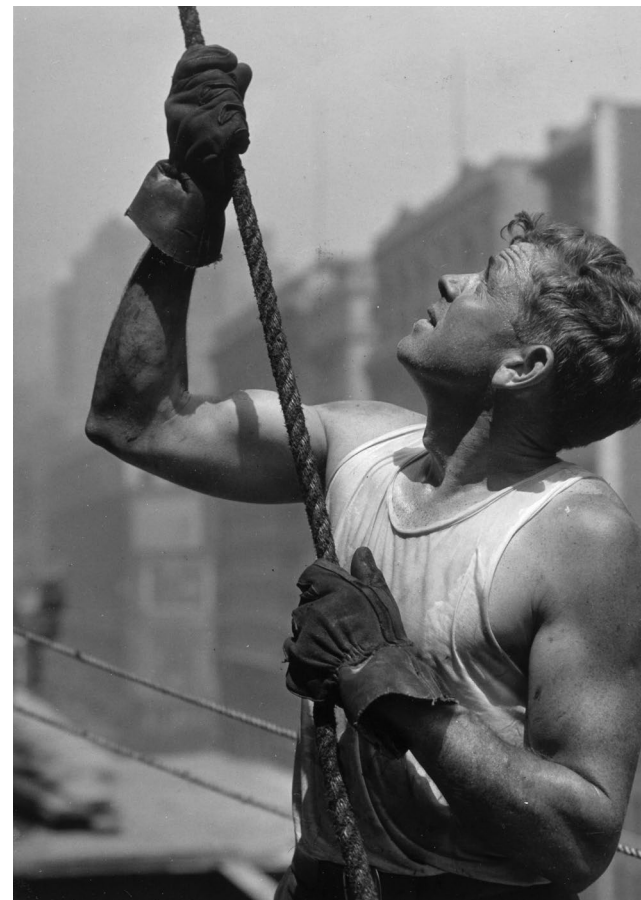


## The Rise of a Landmark: Lewis Hine and the Empire State Building

From a bedrock pit to the colossus of the Manhattan skyline, photographer Lewis Wickes Hine (American, 1874-1940) documented every foot of the construction of the monumental Empire State Building. In 1930 Hine began the treacherous ascent—safety belt in place and camera in hand—with the expectation of creating an ideal portrait of modern architecture. However, his resulting photographs of this yearlong project speak more of the integrity of the workers who toiled to perfect the structure than of the glorification of the building itself.

Before receiving the Empire State Building commission, Hine established himself as a champion of social reform. His extensive portfolios depicted the holding rooms of Ellis Island, child labor-driven industries, and European survivors of the First World War, earning him the title “The Father of Documentary Photography.” Hine’s Empire State photographs build on this theme of the human condition amidst the quickening pace of early 20th-century society. Here he reveals each worker’s individual dignity and inherent link to the fabric of the towering structure. The gestures, the expressions—the presence—of people in the images remind us that buildings, and the cities they shape, are only built under the direction and innovation of humankind.

The Lewis Hine collection at George Eastman House is the most frequently requested body of work in the Museum’s archives. It consists of nearly 10,000 original photographs, negatives, and artifacts. The Photo League of New York donated the work to the Museum in 1955. The photographs in this exhibition are modern gelatin silver prints made from copy negatives and were printed by Barbara Galasso, head of the Museum’s Photographic Services Department.



Lewis Wickes Hine, *Guiding a Beam, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931. Courtesy of George Eastman House.



Lewis Wickes Hine, *Welder at Work in Empire State Building*, ca. 1931. Courtesy of George Eastman House.



Lewis Wickes Hine, *Engineer with Level*, ca. 1931. Courtesy of George Eastman House.

This exhibition, which was on view at Fairfield University’s Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery from September 12 until November 26, 2013 was originally organized by George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film, Rochester, New York.



Fairfield University  
Walsh ART Gallery

Cover Image: Lewis Wickes Hine, *Icarus Atop Empire State Building*, 1931. Courtesy of George Eastman House.

## The Rise of a Landmark: Lewis Hine and the Empire State Building

*Cities do not build themselves, machines cannot make machines, unless back of them all are the brains and toil of men. We call this the Machine Age. But the more machines we use the more do we need real men to make and direct them.*

-Lewis W. Hine, *Men at Work* (1932)

The great American photographer Lewis Wickes Hine was committed to the expository nature of his craft. More than an art form, photography was for Hine a critical instrument, capable of promoting enlightenment and education by exposing prejudice, marginalization, and exploitation. A teacher by nature (he taught botany and nature studies at New York City’s Ethical Culture School from 1901 until 1908), Hine used his lens to highlight the bleak realities of a nation caught in the thrall of progress and mechanization. He championed the oppressed on whose backs industry was built and from whom modernity exacted a very high price, in human terms. Intensely committed to the cause of social welfare, the rather introverted photographer focused his Graflex on child laborers, immigrants, and the working poor (three categories that frequently overlapped), immortalizing their plights and ennobling their lives.

The fact that many of Hine’s photographs were commissioned by investigatory bodies, including the National Child Labor Committee, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the American Red Cross, may encourage a documentary reading of his work. Look a bit closer, however, and you will discover carefully composed shots with individuals whose faces, bodies, and gestures tell the stories of their lives. It is revealing, in this regard, to learn that Hine himself referred to his photographs of the working poor – including those on view in *The Rise of a Landmark: Lewis Hine and the Empire State Building* – as “work portraits” (emphasis added); a nod to his steadfast desire to capture character as well as historical fact.

Indeed the nearly 1,000 exposures he took of the mammoth skyscraper as it rose wondrously from the ground are as much about the men who created it as the impressive structure itself. In this Hine was demonstrating his commitment to memorializing mankind’s capacity for “productive” energy (his term), interwoven with an innuendo of moral judgments and social imperatives. The result, to which this exhibition bears ample witness, is a visceral record of the collision of man, nature, and technology.

The Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery is delighted to present *The Rise of a Landmark*, which was organized by George Eastman House (Rochester, N.Y.). We extend our sincere thanks to the Eastman House staff for their collegial assistance with this project, above all, Olivia Arnone, manager of traveling exhibitions. We are equally grateful to our sponsors, Whole Foods Market and Mofly Media, as well as to our colleagues at the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts, without whose support such projects would not be possible.

Jill Deupi, J.D., Ph.D.

Director and Chief Curator of University Museums



## The Rise of a Landmark: Lewis Hine and the Empire State Building

### CHECKLIST

All works by Lewis Wickes Hine (American, 1874-1940)

- The "Best Brick-Layer in N.Y." High up on The Empire State*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Bricklayers*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Worker, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Portraits*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Worker with Bucket, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Portraits*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Glimpse of Empire State from Subway*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Looking up Façade of Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Empire State Building From Street Level*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Night View of City and Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine

- View of Empire State Building Under Construction*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Empire State Building Under Construction*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Quarry Bar Driller, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Foundation Men*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Derrick Man, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Derrick Men*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Derrick Man Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Derrick Men*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Derricks Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Derrick Men*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man on Derrick, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Derrick Men*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Avenue of Girders, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Derrick Men*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Men on Derricks, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Derrick Men*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Riveting at the Top of Mooring Mast Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Riveters*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Plumbers with Large Pipe Elbow*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Plumbing/Heating*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Plumbers Using Pipe Threader, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Plumbing/Heating*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print
- Man on a Hoisting Ball, Empire State Building*, 1931  
From the series: *Empire State With the Ball*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Two Men in a Derrick Lift*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State With the Ball*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man on Girders, Mooring Mast, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Laying Beams*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- View of New York City from Empire State Building, Looking South*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewi Wickes Hine
- Workmen with Flag, Mooring Mast, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Mooring Mast*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print



Lewis Wickes Hine, *Man on a Hoisting Ball, Empire State Building*, 1931. Courtesy of George Eastman House.



Lewis Wickes Hine, *Eighty-Sixth Floor, Steel Worker, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931. Courtesy of George Eastman House.

- Climbing Up The Beams on the Empire State-100 Stories Up*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Mooring Mast*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- View of New York City from Empire State Building, Looking South*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewi Wickes Hine
- Workmen with Flag, Mooring Mast, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Mooring Mast*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print
- Sheet Metal Worker with Heating Duct*, ca. 1931  
From series: *Empire State Plumbing/Heating*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man on a Hoisting Ball, Empire State Building*, 1931  
From the series: *Empire State With the Ball*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Two Men in a Derrick Lift*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State With the Ball*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man on Girders, Mooring Mast, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Laying Beams*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Group of Workers, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Groups*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Steel Workers Setting Beams, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Eighty-Sixth Floor, Steel Worker, Empire State Building Construction*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Carpenter Laying Down Walking Platform*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Steel Worker Standing on Beam Gives Illusion of Touching Tip of Chrysler Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print
- Icarus Atop Empire State Building*, 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Guiding a Beam, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man with Rope and Pulley*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man on Beam, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Men with Derricks, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Derricks at Work*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man with Cutting Torch on Girders*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Burners*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine



Lewis Wickes Hine, *Derrick Man, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931. Courtesy of George Eastman House.

- Miscellaneous Workmen*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Bob Long, Hoist Engineer, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Hoist Engineers*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Engineer with Level*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Engineers*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man with Cutting Torch on Girders*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Burners*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Portrait of Lewis Hine*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Personal Photos*, 1935  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- From the Chrysler Building, Construction of Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Man with Cutting Torch on Girders*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Burners*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine

- Burners Enlarging Holes on Girder, Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Burners*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- Portrait of Lewis Hine*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Personal Photos*, 1935  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine
- From the Chrysler Building, Construction of Empire State Building*, ca. 1931  
From the series: *Empire State Views of New York*, 1930-1931  
Gelatin silver copy print  
Original photograph gift of the Photo League, New York;  
ex-collection Lewis Wickes Hine