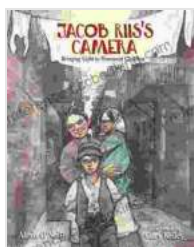


Jacob Riis: The Camera That Changed the World

Jacob Riis was a Danish-American photographer, social reformer, and journalist who used his camera to document the lives of the poor and working class in New York City in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His work helped to raise awareness of the plight of the urban poor and led to a number of reforms.



Jacob Riis's Camera: Bringing Light to Tenement

Children by Alexis O'Neill

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 65377 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 25 pages



Riis was born in Ribe, Denmark, in 1849. He emigrated to the United States in 1870 and settled in New York City. He began his career as a reporter for the New York Tribune, but he soon turned to photography as a way to document the lives of the poor and working class.

Riis's photographs are often credited with helping to bring about a number of reforms, including the establishment of the Tenement House Department in New York City and the passage of child labor laws. His work also helped to raise awareness of the plight of the urban poor and led to a number of charitable organizations being founded.

Riis's legacy is complex. He has been praised for his compassion and his commitment to social justice. However, he has also been criticized for his sensationalism and his tendency to stereotype the poor. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Riis was a pioneer of photojournalism and that his work had a profound impact on American society.

Riis's Early Life

Jacob Riis was born in Ribe, Denmark, on May 3, 1849. His father was a schoolteacher and his mother was a homemaker. Riis had a happy childhood, but his family was poor. When Riis was 12 years old, his father died and his mother was forced to take in sewing to support the family.

Riis attended school in Ribe and then apprenticed to a carpenter. However, he soon decided that he wanted to be a writer. He moved to Copenhagen in 1870 and began writing for a number of newspapers and magazines.

Riis's Emigration to the United States

In 1870, Riis emigrated to the United States. He settled in New York City, where he worked as a reporter for the New York Tribune. Riis was shocked by the poverty and squalor that he saw in the city's slums. He began to write about the lives of the poor and working class, and he soon became known for his vivid and compassionate reporting.

In 1880, Riis published his first book, *How the Other Half Lives*. The book was a bestseller and it helped to raise awareness of the plight of the urban poor. Riis's book also led to a number of reforms, including the establishment of the Tenement House Department in New York City and the passage of child labor laws.

Riis's Career as a Photographer

In the early 1880s, Riis began to use photography to document the lives of the poor and working class. He was one of the first photographers to use flash photography, which allowed him to take pictures in the dark and cramped conditions of the slums.

Riis's photographs are often credited with helping to bring about a number of reforms. His photograph of a young girl sleeping in a crowded tenement room helped to lead to the passage of child labor laws. His photograph of a man sleeping on a park bench helped to lead to the establishment of the Bowery Mission.

Riis's photographs are also important because they provide a glimpse into the lives of the poor and working class in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His photographs show the poverty, squalor, and hardship that many people faced during this time. However, his photographs also show the resilience and spirit of the human spirit.

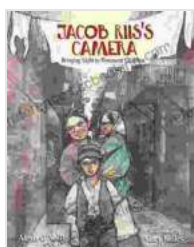
Riis's Legacy

Jacob Riis died in 1914. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York City. His legacy is complex. He has been praised for his compassion and his commitment to social justice. However, he has also been criticized for his sensationalism and his tendency to stereotype the poor. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Riis was a pioneer of photojournalism and that his work had a profound impact on American society.

Riis's work continues to be studied and admired today. His photographs are on display in museums and galleries around the world. His writings have

been translated into many languages and they continue to inspire activists and social reformers.

Jacob Riis was a remarkable man who used his camera to change the world. His work helped to raise awareness of the plight of the urban poor and led to a number of reforms. Riis's legacy is complex, but there is no doubt that he was a pioneer of photojournalism and that his work had a profound impact on American society.



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