

# **UNITED STATES HISTORY**

## **Unit 3**

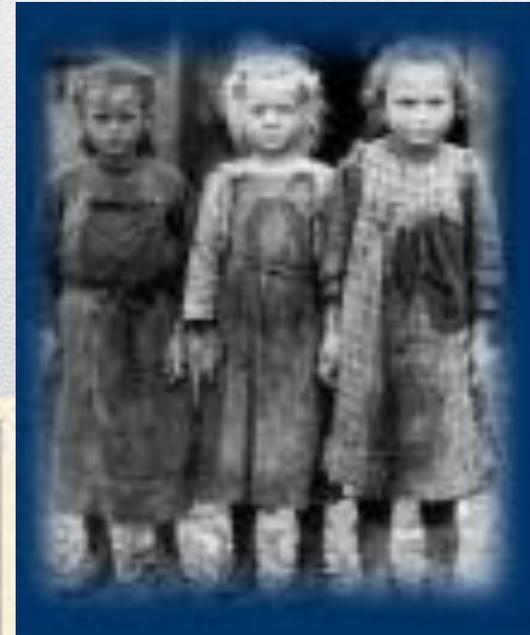
### **THE PROGRESSIVE ERA**

**Aka “Power to the People”**

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# ***THE ORIGINS OF PROGRESSIVISM***

- **Progressivism**- reform movement in the early 1900s U.S. aimed at returning control of the government to the people, restoring economic opportunities, and correcting injustices in society
- There were many progressive groups wanting many reforms, but most generally agreed with the following goals:
  - **Foster efficiency**
  - **Promote moral improvement**
  - **Protect social welfare**
  - **Create economic reform**



# Who Were the Progressives?

- Businessmen
- Southerners
- Northerners
- Professional Groups
- Rural dwellers
- Non-Europeans
- Farmers
- Easterners
- Westerners
- Middle Classes
- Urban Dwellers
- Europeans

- Immigration
- Prohibition
- Women's Suffrage
- Municipal Reform
- Conditions of labor
- Pure Food and Drugs
- **Protect consumers**
- Trusts & Corporations
- Power of the Railroads
- Natural Resources (Conservation)
- Political Power
- Tariffs and Taxes
- Minority Rights

## **Some Progressive Era Issues**

# • **Fostering efficiency**

- **Efficiency- acting or producing effectively with a minimum of waste, expense, or unnecessary effort**
- One such thing was the assembly line which was first used extensively in the automotive factories (Henry Ford). Overall, it led to mass production in the factories, which lowered costs.

## • Other Progressive reforms/reformers:

- Reform governors
  - Most well known was Wisconsin's **Robert La Follette** who attacked the railroads and their business practices.
- Political Reforms
  - (Direct) Primaries (Primary elections) were introduced in which members of a political party selected a candidate for public office through a special election (the winner will be the party's candidate for the general election)
    - This is going to take power away from political machines!

- Introduction of initiative, referendum, and recall
    - **Initiative**- a bill (proposed law) originated by the people
    - **Referendum**- voters accept/reject the initiative by vote
    - **Recall**- voters remove elected public officials by forcing them to face another election if enough voters ask for it
  - **16<sup>th</sup> Amendment**- (ratified in 1913) a graduated income tax that taxed individual earnings and corporate profits
  - **17<sup>th</sup> Amendment**- (ratified in 1913) U.S. senators were to be elected directly by the people instead of being chosen by state legislatures (make them more responsive to citizens)
  - Prohibition will become law with the passing of the **18<sup>th</sup> Amendment** (ratified in 1919)
  - Push for women's **suffrage** - **right to vote**
  - Will eventually lead to the passage of the **19<sup>th</sup> Amendment** (ratified in 1920) which granted women the right to vote
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- Two major supporters of this were **Lucy Stone** and **Susan B. Anthony**



Lucy Stone



Susan B. Anthony

- **Promoting moral improvement**

- Many reformers thought morality (right & wrong) was the main problem issue in society
- One area they attacked was alcohol consumption by supporting the idea of **prohibition**- **banning all alcoholic beverages**
- This will fester in years to come (a.k.a. Temperance Movement)

\*\*\*The main task of the Progressives was to correct the wrongs caused in govt., society, and the economy by industrialization.

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- **Protecting social welfare**

- Child Labor/Educational Reform

- By 1920, most states had banned child labor altogether.
- Compulsory school attendance will also be put into place requiring kids of certain ages to attend school.

- Organizations like the YMCA and Salvation Army became very active in society

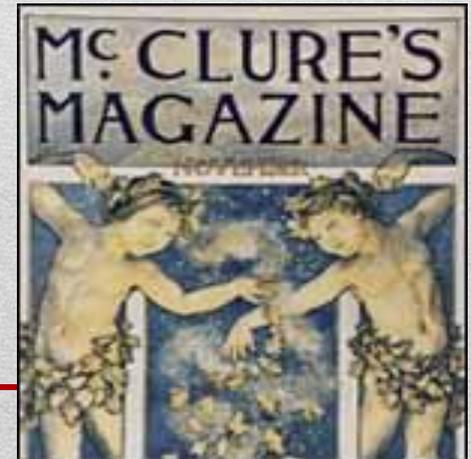
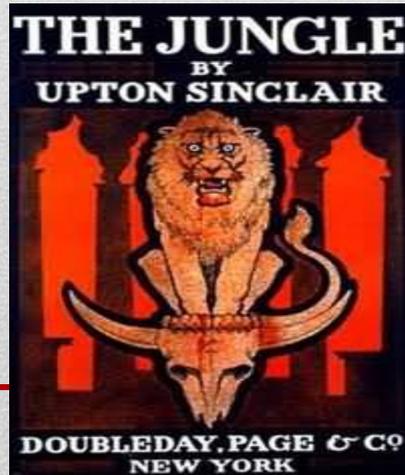
- Provided shelter, food, tutoring, clothing, and recreational activities

- **Florence Kelley** became an outspoken advocate for improving the lives of women and children and helped win passage of the **Illinois Factory Act (1893)**:

- Prohibited child labor
  - Limited women's working hours
  - Served as a model for future child/women labor laws in other states
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## • Creating economic reform

- Rise of **muckrakers**- journalists that wrote about the corrupt side of business, government, and public life in mass circulation magazines in the early 1900s
- Influential muckrakers were **Upton Sinclair** who wrote the novel *The Jungle* (exposed the many wrongs in the meat-packing industry) and **Ida Tarbell** (wrote a monthly column in *McClure's Magazine* about the evils of Standard Oil Co.)



# ***ROOSEVELT'S SQUARE DEAL***

- **Theodore Roosevelt** became president following McKinley's assassination. He was the youngest president (42 yrs. old) up to that point in time.
- Roosevelt was also the first progressive President and he wanted to ensure common people received fair treatment in all areas. His plan to accomplish this was called the **Square Deal**- **term used to describe the various progressive reforms sponsored by the Roosevelt administration.**
- Reforms/events during Roosevelt's administration:
  - Earned the title of "trustbuster" as he attacked and broke up many trusts. He did this b/c he felt it eliminated competition in business and hurt public interest in general.

- Roosevelt stepped in and negotiated an end to the 1902 coal strike that threatened public welfare (coal supplies were running short). A new principle in the federal govt. was born as a result --- **when a strike threatened the public's well-being, the govt. was expected to intervene or step in to solve it.**
  - He regulated railroads by halting rebates to shippers and receivers, as well as ending free railroad passes (common form of bribery at that time).
  - Looking to protect the citizens, Roosevelt pushed for and won passage of the following:
    - **Meat Inspection Act (1906)**- placed strict cleanliness requirements for meatpacking and created a federal meat inspection program
    - **Pure Food and Drug Act (1906)**- halted the sale of contaminated food/medicine and called for truthful labeling
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# • Conservation issues

- **Conservation**- trying to prevent the loss of wildlife, forests, and natural resources
- Roosevelt set aside millions of acres of land for national parks, water-power sources, and mineral/water exploration.
- He also had several dams constructed and put large scale irrigation projects in place.



## **OTHER PROGRESSIVE ERA EVENTS/INFO**

- Roosevelt chose not to run again in 1908 after winning reelection in 1904. He handpicked his secretary of war, **William Howard Taft**, as the Republican nominee. Taft won easily. However, he quickly angered many people with the raising of tariffs.
- Taft was not well-liked and was not reelected in 1912. Even Roosevelt ran against him as a candidate of the Bull Moose Party (essentially the Progressive Party). Taft's lack of popularity, coupled with Roosevelt and Taft splitting the Republican vote, allowed Democrat **Woodrow Wilson** to win the 1912 election.



William Howard Taft



Woodrow Wilson

## • Woodrow Wilson

- His plan for America was called “New Freedom” and was aimed at attacking what he called the “triple wall of privilege”: trusts, tariffs, and high finance.
- Several important pieces of legislation were put into place during Wilson’s presidency:
  - **Federal Reserve System (Federal Reserve Act of 1913)**- created to strengthen banks and to quickly adjust money in circulation; divided the nation into 12 districts with a main regional bank to serve all others in each district
  - **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**- established a “watchdog” agency to investigate corporate violations of the law, as well as unfair business practices
  - **Clayton Antitrust Act**- aimed at strengthening the Sherman Antitrust Act by prohibiting corporations from acquiring stock of another if it created a monopoly

- The goals of the Progressives were very similar in many regards to those of the Populist Party (no longer in existence by this time). One of these goals that the Progressives had great success was the regulation of big business and industry.
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