CHAPTER 9 THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

AMERICA SEEKS REFORMS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY
ORIGINS OF PROGRESSIVISM

- As America entered into the 20th century, middle class reformers addressed many social problems
- Work conditions, rights for women and children, economic reform, environmental issues and social welfare were a few of these issues
FIVE GOALS OF REFORMERS

• 1) Protect Social Welfare
• 2) Promote Moral Improvement
• 3) Create Economic Reform
• 4) Foster Efficiency
• 5) Reform Government
1. PROTECT SOCIAL WELFARE

- Industrialization in the late 19th century was largely unregulated
- Employers felt little responsibility toward their workers
- As a result Settlement homes and churches served the community
- Also the YMCA and Salvation Army took on service roles
2. PROMOTE MORAL DEVELOPMENT

• Some reformers felt that the answer to societies problems was personal behavior
• They proposed such reforms as prohibition
• Groups wishing to ban alcohol included the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)
3. CREATE ECONOMIC REFORM

• The Panic of 1893 prompted some Americans to question the capitalist economic system
• As a result some workers embraced socialism
• **Eugene Debs** organized the American Socialist Party in 1901

*Debs encouraged workers to reject American Capitalism*
MUCKRAKERS CRITICIZE BIG BUSINESS

• Though most progressives did not embrace socialism, many writers saw the truth in Debs’ criticism

• Journalists known as “Muckrakers” exposed corruption in business

• Ida Tarbell exposed Standard Oil Company’s cut-throat methods of eliminating competition

Some view Michael Moore as a modern muckraker

Ida Tarbell
4. FOSTERING EFFICIENCY

• Many Progressive leaders put their faith in scientific principles to make society better
• In Industry, Frederick Taylor began using time & motion studies to improve factory efficiency
• Taylorism became an Industry fad as factories sought to complete each task quickly
5. REFORMING GOVERNMENT

- Efforts at reforming local government stemmed from the desire to make government more efficient and responsive to citizens.
- Some believe it also was meant to limit immigrants' influence in local governments.
REGULATING BIG BUSINESS

• Under the progressive Republican leadership of Robert La Follette, Wisconsin led the way in regulating big business.
PROTECTING WORKING CHILDREN

• As the number of child workers rose, reformers worked to end child labor
• Children were more prone to accidents caused by fatigue
• Nearly every state limited or banned child labor by 1918
EFFORTS TO LIMIT HOURS

• The Supreme Court and the states enacted or strengthened laws reducing women’s hours of work
• Progressives also succeeded in winning worker’s compensation to aid families of injured workers
ELECTION REFORM

- Citizens fought for, and won, such measures as secret ballots, referendum votes, and the recall
- Citizens could petition and get initiatives on the ballot
- In 1899, Minnesota passed the first statewide primary system

Upon realizing that the taxpayer money was having no effect, Davis concluded that this problem was unlike anything he’d previously encountered.
DIRECT ELECTION OF SENATORS

- Before 1913, each state’s legislature had chosen its own U.S. senators
- To force senators to be more responsive to the public, progressives pushed for the popular election of senators
- As a result, Congress passed the 17th Amendment (1913)
SECTION 2: WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

• Before the Civil War, American women were expected to devote their time to home and family.

• By the late 19th and early 20th century, women were visible in the workforce.
DOMESTIC WORKERS

• Before the turn-of-the-century women without formal education contributed to the economic welfare of their families by doing domestic work

• Altogether, 70% of women employed in 1870 were servants
WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE

- Opportunities for women increased especially in the cities
- By 1900, one out of five women worked
- The **garment trade** was popular as was office work, department stores and classrooms
WOMEN LEAD REFORM

• Many of the leading progressive reformers were women.
• Middle and upper class women also entered the public sphere as reformers.
• Many of these women had graduated from new women’s colleges.

Colleges like Vassar and Smith allowed women to excel.
Women and Reform

- Women reformers strove to improve conditions at work and home
- In 1896, black women formed the National Association of Colored Women (NACW)
- Suffrage was another important issue for women
THREE-PART STRATEGY FOR WINNING SUFFRAGE

- Suffragists tried three approaches to winning the vote
  1) Convince state legislatures to adopt vote (Succeeded in Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Colorado)
  2) Pursue court cases to test 14th Amendment
  3) Push for national constitutional Amendment
Official Program
WOMAN SUFFRAGE
Procession
Washington D.C.
March 3, 1913
Woman Suffrage Before 1920
ROOSEVELT AND THE ROUGH RIDERS

- Roosevelt grabbed national attention by advocating war with Spain in 1898
- His volunteer cavalry brigade, the Rough Riders, won public acclaim for its role in the battle at San Juan Hill in Cuba
- Roosevelt returned a hero and was soon elected governor of NY and later McKinley’s vice-president
Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders
SECTION 3: TEDDY ROOSEVELT’S SQUARE DEAL

- When President William McKinley was assassinated 6 months into his second term, Theodore Roosevelt became the nation’s 26th president.
When Roosevelt was thrust into the presidency in 1901, he became the youngest president ever at age 42.

He quickly established himself as a modern president who could influence the media and shape legislation.
By 1900, Trusts – legal bodies created to hold stock in many companies – controlled 80% of U.S. industries.

Roosevelt filed 44 antitrust suits under the Sherman Antitrust Act.
In 1902 140,000 coal miners in Pennsylvania went on strike for increased wages, a 9-hour work day, and the right to unionize. Mine owners refused to bargain. Roosevelt called in both sides and settled the dispute. Thereafter, when a strike threatened public welfare, the federal government was expected to step in and help.
“THE JUNGLE” LEADS TO FOOD REGULATION

• After reading *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, Roosevelt pushed for passage of the Meat Inspection Act of 1906

• The Act mandated cleaner conditions for meatpacking plants
In response to unregulated claims and unhealthy products, Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906. The Act halted the sale of contaminated foods and medicines and called for truth in labeling. The Pure Food and Drug Act took medicines with cocaine and other harmful ingredients off the market.
ROOSEVELT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

• Before Roosevelt’s presidency, the federal government paid very little attention to the nation’s natural resources

• Roosevelt made conservation a primary concern of his administration

Roosevelt, left, was an avid outdoorsman – here he is with author John Muir at Yosemite Park
ROOSEVELT’S ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Roosevelt set aside 148 million acres of forest reserves
- He also set aside 1.5 million acres of water-power sites and he established 50 wildlife sanctuaries and several national parks

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming
ROOSEVELT AND CIVIL RIGHTS

- Roosevelt failed to support Civil Rights for African Americans
- He did, however, support a few individuals such as Booker T. Washington
SECTION 4: PROGRESSIVISM UNDER PRESIDENT TAFT

• Republican William Howard Taft easily defeated Democrat William Jennings Bryan to win the 1908 presidential election.

• Among his accomplishments, Taft “busted” 90 trusts during his 4 years in office.

Taft, right, was Roosevelt’s War Secretary.
TAFT LOSES POWER

- Taft was not popular with the American public nor reform minded Republicans
- By 1910, Democrats had regained control of the House of Representatives

*Taft called the Presidency, “The lonesomest job in the world”*
1912 ELECTION

- Republicans split in 1912 between Taft and Teddy Roosevelt (who returned after a long trip to Africa)
- Convention delegates nominated Taft
- Some Republicans formed a third party – The Bull Moose Party and nominated Roosevelt
- The Democrats put forward a reform-minded New Jersey Governor, Woodrow Wilson
Election of 1912

Electoral Vote by State

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Total Electoral Vote: 531
Total Popular Vote: 15,037,535
As America’s newly elected president, Wilson moved to enact his program, the “New Freedom.”

He planned his attack on what he called the triple wall of privilege: trusts, tariffs, and high finance.
CLAYTON ANTITRUST ACT

• In 1914 Congress enacted the Clayton Antitrust Act which strengthened the Sherman Act
• The Clayton Act prevented companies from acquiring stock from another company (Anti-monopoly)
• The Act also supported workers unions
The FTC was formed in 1914 to serve as a “watchdog” agency to end unfair business practices. Today the FTC has been working on protecting consumers from ID theft.
FEDERAL INCOME TAX ARRIVES

• Wilson worked hard to lower tariffs, however that lost revenue had to be made up

• Ratified in 1916, the 16th Amendment legalized a graduated federal income tax
WOMEN WIN SUFFRAGE

- Native-born, educated, middle-class women grew more and more impatient.
- Through local, state and national organization, vigorous protests and World War I, women finally realized their dream in 1920.

The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920.
LIMITS OF PROGRESSIVISM

• While the Progressive era was responsible for many important reforms, it failed to make gains for African Americans

• Like Roosevelt and Taft, Wilson retreated on Civil Rights once in office

The KKK reached a membership of 4.5 million in the 1920s