THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

• WHY: Industrialization, urbanization, and immigration created significant changes and challenges for the United States.

• WHAT: Effort to use government power to regulate and improve society
  – Rejection of laissez faire ideology
  – Not a radical movement- reject ideas such as socialism
    • Saving and improving capitalism

• WHO: Many of the Progressive Era reformers were middle class men and women
  – But very diverse group of reformers
    • Protestant church leaders demanding temperance
    • Politicians regulating monopolies / trusts
    • Union leaders addressing workers rights
    • Women demanding right to vote
    • African Americans demanded greater equality

• Compare to other reform periods: Age of Jackson, Populist, New Deal

PROMOTING REFORM: MUCKRACKERS

• Muckrakers: Attempted to expose problems in American society
  – Named by Theodore Roosevelt
  – Important examples

• Ida Tarbell “History of Standard Oil Company” published in McClure’s Magazine (1902)
• Jacob Riis “How the Other Half Lives” exposed the horrors of life in the slums of NY (1890)
• Lincoln Steffens “The Shame of the Cities” (1904) exposed corruption in city politics (political machines)
• Upton Sinclair “The Jungle”
Role of Women in the Progressive Movement

- Women played an important role in the Progressive Movement
  - Broke down the idea of the “separate spheres”
- National Child Labor Committee fought for laws banning child labor
- National Consumers’ League headed by Florence Kelley advocated for the rights of women in the work place, laws against child Labor, etc.
  - Muller v. Oregon (1908) court ruled that laws protecting women workers and restricting women to 10 hour days were constitutional
- Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (1911) led to the death of 146 workers
- Women role in Temperance Movement

Urban Reform

- Large number of problems in the cities: 1) urban poverty & slums 2) political corruption 3) alcoholism
- Jane Addams & Florence Kelley (settlement house)
- Demands to take away power from political bosses by taking public utilities out of private companies hands
  - Examples: Place gas lines, water systems, transportation systems, etc. under public control
  - Municipal govt reform such as voters electing heads of city departments (fire, police, sanitation)

State Reform

- Many Progressive governors fought against corporate control of state politics
- Governor Robert La Follette pioneered many reforms in the state of Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Idea
  - Regulated public utilities
  - Took on the powerful railroad industry
  - Adopted tax reforms
  - Political reform
Political Reform

- Political reformers wanted to increase democracy and reduce the control of trusts
  - Australian or Secret Ballot: allowed voters to mark their choice for office secretly
  - Direct Primary: nomination of candidates placed into the hands of the voters
  - Recall: elected politicians could be removed from office by the voters before their term expired
  - Initiative: voters could introduce laws
  - Referendum: voters could directly vote on a law
- 17th Amendment: rather than the state legislatures, voters would directly vote for U.S. Senators
  - Populist Party advocated for this

Temperance Movement

- Division over the temperance movement
  - “Wet”: against prohibition
  - “Dry”: supporters of prohibition
- Conflict between
  - Protestant Native born vs. Catholic immigrants
  - Rural vs. Urban
- Woman’s Christian Temperance Union: large organization of women advocating for temperance
- Anti-Saloon League (1895) was leading organization advocating for legal prohibition
- 18th Amendment (1919)

Theodore Roosevelt

- Roosevelt believed in an enlarged role for the President
- Example in change of labor relations:
  - McKinley: Great Railroad Strike of 1877
  - Cleveland: Pullman Strike 1894
  - TR: Coal Miners strike 1902
    - Attempts to mediate the labor dispute
    - Owners won’t compromise so TR threatens to take over the mines with federal troops
- Roosevelt proposes a series of Progressive reforms known as the Square Deal (3 c’s)
  1. Corporations: Control of corporations
  2. Consumers: Consumer protection
  3. Conservation: Conservation of the environment & its natural resources
Corporations: Trust Busting

- Sherman Anti-Trust was relatively ineffective at reducing the power of corporations / trusts
- Broke up the Northern Securities Company (railroad monopoly)
  - Upheld by Supreme Court in 1904
- Roosevelt will be known for "trust busting"
- TR distinguished between "good" (efficient & lower prices) and "bad" trusts (hurt consumers & stifled competition)
- TR also sought to increase the power of the Interstate Commerce Commission
- Elkins Act (1903) increased penalties for rate rebates
- Hepburn Act (1906) gave the ICC the power to set maximum rates for railroads

Consumer Protections

- Relatively few protections for consumers
- Upon Sinclair's "The Jungle" was intended to increase support for socialism and workers rights
  - Public focuses on the unsanitary nature of the meat industry
  - Public pressure for TR to act
- Meat Inspection Act (1906) the federal government would regulate and inspect the meat industry
- Pure Food & Drug Act (1906)
  - Created FDA & protected the public against the manufacture, sale, and transportation of mislabeled foods and drugs

Conservation

- The issue of conservation did not register as a national issue
- Sierra Club had been advocating for the environment
- TR used the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 to protect 150 million acres of federal land
- Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902- money from sale of public lands could be used for irrigation projects in the west
- Conservation was Roosevelt's most long lasting domestic achievement
  - Contrast with preservation
• Teddy says he will honor the precedent of Washington & not seek a 3rd term in 1908
• William Howard Taft picked
• Continued some of the Progressive policies of TR
  – Broke up more trusts than Roosevelt
  – continued conservationist policies
• Taft’s Foreign policy:
  – Taft “Dollar Diplomacy” — encourage biz to invest $ in areas of strategic concerns to the U.S.
• Election of 1912: TR is back