Chapter 21: The Progressive Era 1900-1917

Progressives and their ideas

* Local groups across the nation grappled with problems of the new urban industrial order

The Many faces of Progressivism

* Along with immigration, a rapidly growing middle class transformed U.S. cities
* Men and women from this class came many leaders and foot soldiers of the progressive movement
* 1900-1920, white-collar work force jumped from 5.1 million to 10.5 million
* As industry grew, the number of secretaries, civil engineers, and people in advertising increased
  + Included desk workers, owners of business, lawyers, physicians and teachers
* Age of organization had begun, bringing new professional allegiances, a new emphasis on certification and licensing, and a more standardized routine society
* City offered opportunities and frustrations for middle class women
  + Young unmarried women often became schoolteachers, secretaries, typists, and telephone operators
    - Ranks of college educated women more than tripled from 1900-1920
  + Middle class married women cared for children and often city life meant isolation
    - Divorce rates increased from 1/12 in 1900 to 1/9 in 1916
* Progressive reform impulse drew on the energies of men and women of the middle class
  + Reform impetus came from women’s clubs, settlement houses, and private groups
* Native-born middle class wasn’t only force behind progressivism
  + Some corporate leaders helped shape regulatory measures in ways to serve their interests
* Progressivism was a series of political and cultural responses to industrialization and by its products
  + Immigration
  + Urban growth
  + Rise of corporate power
  + Widening class divisions
  + Progressivism strength lay in cities and enlisted more journalists, academics, social theorists, and urban dwellers
  + Most progressives were reformers
* Progressive impulse spawned an array of activities that often overlapped and diverged
  + Reformers wanted stricter regulation of business
  + Others focused on protecting workers and urban poor
  + Others tried reforming the structure of govt.
  + Others fought for immigration restriction or various social-control strategies
* Progressives had a high regard for science and expert knowledge
  + Also believed that such expertise would also solve the social problems spawned by industrialism
* Historians have portrayed progressivism as an organizational stage that all modernizing societies pass through

Intellectuals Offer New Social Views

* One of the sharpest critics of new business order was economist Thorstein Veblen
  + In *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Veblen mercilessly satirized the lifestyle of the newly rich captains of industry
  + While Veblen scorned the “wastemanship” of the business class, he shared the era’s admiration for efficiency, science, and technical expertise
* Philosopher William James, in an influential 1907 essay “Pragmatism”, he argued that truth emerges from the experience of coping with life’s realities
* Herbert Croly captured this faith in the power of new ideas to transform society
  + He argued to build up support for his enlarged view of govt., intellectuals must play a key role
* Jane Addams rejected the idea that unrestrained competition offered the best path to social progress
* Philosopher John Dewey said the key social institution that could bring about a more humane and cooperative social order was the public school
  + He saw schools as potent engines of social change
  + The ideal school, he said in *Democracy and Education* (1916), would be and “embryonic community” where children would learn to live as members of a social group
* For other thinkers, the key to social change lay in transforming the nation’s courts
  + *The Common Law* (1881), law professor Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., had insisted that law must evolve as society changes
  + Appointed to the Supreme Court in 1902, he wrote a series of eloquent opinions dissenting from the conservative Court majority

Novelists, Journalists, and Artists Spotlight Social Problems

* Novelists and journalists roused the reform spirit by chronicling corporate wrongdoing, municipal corruption, slum conditions, and industrial abuse
* *The Octopus* (1901), writer Frank Norris portrayed the struggle between California railroad owners and the state’s wheat growers
* Theodore Dreiser modeled his story on the career of an actual tycoon, Charles Yerkes, a railway financer with a reputation for underhanded practices
* Influential on forging the progressive spirit were articles exposing urban political corruption and corporate wrongdoings published in mass magazines like *McClure’s* and *Collier’s*
* President Theodore Roosevelt criticized the authors as “muckrakers” obsessed with the seamier side of American life
* Journalist Lincoln Steffens began the exposé vogue in October 1902 with a *McClure’s* article documenting municipal corruption in St. Louis and the efforts of a crusading district attorney to fight it
* The muckrakers emphasized facts rather than abstractions
* Muckrakers awakened middle-class readers to conditions in America
  + Some magazine exposés later appeared in book form, including Lincoln Steffens’s *The Shame of the Cities* (1904), Ida Tarbell’s *History of the Standard Oil Company* (1904), and David Graham Phillips’s *Treason of the Senate* (1906)
* A group of New York painters dubbed the Ashcan school portrayed the harshness of life in the city’s crowded slums
* Photographer Lewis Hine captured images of immigrants and factory laborers

State and Local Progressivism

* Middle class citizens also observed the problems besetting urban-industrial America firsthand in their own communities

Reforming the Political Process

* In 1890’s, native-born elites and middle-class reformers battled corrupt city governments
* In Detroit the mayor Hazen Pingree brought honesty to city hall, lowered transit fares, adopted a fairer tax structure, and provided public baths and other services to the poor
* In San Francisco a newspaper editor led a 1907 crusade against the city’s corrupt bosses
  + Boss and his cronies were jailed
* Samuel M. (Golden Rule) Jones led the reform crusade
  + Jones introduced profit sharing in his factory and as mayor he established playgrounds, free kindergartens, and lodging houses for homeless transients
* Reformers passed law regulating the rates these utilities could charge, raising their taxes, and curbing their political influence
* Some municipal substituting professional managers and administrators
* Municipal reform attracted different groups depending on the issue
* Native-born middle class provided the initial impetus and core support
* Reforms that addressed the immediate needs if ordinary city dwellers, such as improved city service, won support from immigrant and form political bosses who realized that explosive urban growth was stamping the old, informal system of meeting constituents’ needs
* The electoral movement soon expanded to the state level
  + By 1910 all states had replaced the old system of voting with the secret ballot, which made it harder to rig elections
* To restore govt. to the people, some western states inaugurated electoral known as the *initiative reforms , referendum, and recall*
* In a referendum, they can actually enact a law or (in a nonbinding referendum) express their views on a proposed measure
  + Party leaders and interest groups soon learned to manipulate the new electoral machinery
  + Voter-participation rates dropped steeply in these years, while political activity by organized interest groups increased

Regulating Business, Protecting Workers

* The late 19th century corporate consolidation that produced giants like Carnegie Steel and Standard Oil continued after 1900
  + The U.S. Steel Company created by J.P. Morgan in 1901 controlled 80% of all U.S. steel production
* Workers benefited from this corporate growth
  + Industrial workers’ average annual salary grew
  + But cost of living was still too high for this salary to support a family and provided little cushion for emergencies
* To survive, entire families went to work
  + 2/3 of young women entered the labor force in the early 1900’s working as factory help or domestics, or working in small establishments like laundry or bakeries
* 1910 the nonfarm labor force probably included at least 1.6 million children aged 10-15
  + Worked in factories, mills, tenement sweatshops, and street trades like shoe shining and newspaper vending
* Most laborers faced long hours and great hazards
  + 1900 the average worker still worked over 9 ½ hours a day
  + Vacations and retirement plans were practically unheard of
* In *Principals of Scientific Management* (1911), Frederick W. Taylor explained how to increase output by standardizing job routines and rewarding the fastest workers
  + The expansion of corporate power and the hazards of the workplace stirred urgent concern
  + Since corporations had benefited from the government’s economic policies
  + They should also be subject to government supervision
* State that passed many laws against this was Wisconsin under Governor Robert (fighting bob) La Follette
  + He feuded with the states conservative party leadership, and in 1900 he won the governorship as an independent
  + Adopted the direct-primary system, set up a railroad regulatory commission, increased corporate taxes, and limited campaign spending
  + La Follette’s reforms gained the national attention as the “Wisconsin plan”
* The impulse to improve conditions in factories and mills represented its heart
  + Campaigns to improve industrial safety and other wise better conditions for the laboring masses won support from political bosses in cities with large immigrant populations
  + After the Triangle fire in 1911, New York legislators passed 56 worker-protection laws, including required fire-safety inspections of factories
* Florence Kelley was a leader in the drive to remedy industrial abuses
  + 1893 she helped secure passage of an Illinois law prohibiting child labor and limiting working hours for women
* The crusade for workplace safety relied on expert research
  + Alice Hamilton also working with Jane Addams, fusing her scientific training and her reformist impulses, she conducted a major study of lead poisoning among industrial workers
  + Workers, who understood the hazards of their jobs better than anyone, provided further pressure for reform

Making Cities More Livable

* Early 20th century, America became an urban nation
* NYC grew by 2.2 million from 1900-1920, Chicago grew by 1 million
* Political corruption was one of many problems plaguing these burgeoning urban centers
* Overwhelmed by this rapid growth, many cities became dreary, sprawling human warehouses
  + Lacked adequate parks, municipal services, and public-health resources
* Reform-minded men and women campaigned for parks, boulevards, and street lights and proposed laws against billboards and unsightly overhead electrical wires
  + Influential voice for city planning and beautification was Daniel Burnham
    - He led a successful 1906 effort to revive a plan for Washington D.C., first proposed in 1791
    - He recommended lakefront parks and museums, wide boulevards to improve traffic flow, and a redesign of Chicago’s congested major thoroughfare, Michigan Avenue
  + Municipal reform impulse also included such practical goals as decent housing and better garbage collection and street cleaning
* Public health was an important topic
  + Progressive reformers called for improved water and sewer systems, regulation of milk suppliers and food handlers, school medical examinations and vaccination programs, and informational campaigns to spread public-health information to the urban masses
  + Infant mortality rates dropped from 165/1000 population to around 75
  + Tuberculosis death rate fell by nearly half
* Battle against air pollution illustrates the promise and the frustrations of municipal environmentalism
  + Antismoke campaign combined expertise with activism
  + Many cities passed smoke-abatement laws
* Railroads and corporations fought back in the courts and often won
  + Coal still providing 70% of the nation’s energy as late as 1920, cities remained smoky

Progressivism and Social Control

* Progressives’ belief that they could improve society through research, legislation, and aroused public opinion
  + While municipal corruption, unsafe factories, and corporate abuses captured their attention, so too, did issues of personal behavior, particularly the behavior of immigrants

Moral Control in the Cities

* Early 20th century urban life was more than crowded slums and exhausting labor, cities also offered fun and diversion
  + Department stores, vaudeville, music halls, and amusement parks
  + For families, amusement parks provided escape from tenements
* News of Orville and Wilbur Wright’s successful airplane flight in 1903, and the introduction of Henry Ford’s Model T in 1908 heightened the sense of exciting changes for the future
* Jaunty popular songs added to the vibrancy of city life
  + Blues reached a broader public with such songs as W.C. Handy’s classic “St. Louis Blues” (1914)
* A new medium of mass entertainment came about – movies
  + Movies soon migrated from 5-cent halls called “nickelodeons” in immigrant neighborhoods
  + Movies began to tell stories with first one, *The Great Train Robbery* (1914)
  + “Kiss me, my Fool!” made Theda Bara the first female movie star
  + British music-hall performer Charlie Chaplin emigrated to America on 1913 and appeared in about 60 short 2-reel comedies between 1914 and 1917
* Diversions that made city life more bearable for the poor struck some middle class reformers as moral traps no less dangerous than the physical hazards of the factory or the slum tenement
  + Reformers campaigned to regulate amusement parks, dance halls, and the movies
    - Warning of “nickel madness” reformers demanded film censorship
    - Several states and cities set up by censorship boards, and the Supreme Court upheld such measures in 1915
* Reformers also targeted prostitution, another looming problem
  + Paltry wages paid women for factory work or domestic service attracted many to this more-lucrative occupation
  + American Social Hygiene Association (1914), sponsored medical research on sexually transmitted diseases, paid for “vice investigations” in various cities, and drafted model municipal statutes against prostitution
* The Mann act (1910) made it illegal to transport a women across a state line for “immoral purposes”
  + Racism, anti-immigrant prejudice, fear of the city, and anxieties about changing sexual mores all fueled the anti-prostitution crusade
  + Scam artists entrapped men into Mann Act violations and blackmailed them

Battling Alcohol and Drugs

* Temperance had long been part of the American reform agenda
  + Most earlier campaigns had urged individuals to give up drink
  + The Anti-Saloon League (ASL) shifted the emphasis to legislating a ban in the sale of alcoholic beverages
  + Protestant ministers staffed a network of state committees
  + The ASL’s alcohol’s role in many social problems and touting prohibition as the answer
  + Many localities banned the sale of alcoholic beverages
* This was a heavy-drinking era, and alcoholic abuse did indeed contribute to domestic abuse, health problems, and work injuries
  + The ASL, while it raised legitimate issues, also embodied Protestant America’s impulse to control the immigrant city
  + Physicians, patent-medicine peddlers, and legitimate drug companies freely prescribed or sold opium and its derivatives morphine and heroin
    - Coca-Cola contained cocaine until about 1900
* The Narcotics Act of 1914, also known as the Harrison act, banned the distribution of heroin, morphine, cocaine, and other addictive drugs except by licensed physicians or pharmacists
  + Progressives anticipated this issue would remain important into the 21st century
  + Although still had racist undertones
    - Described Chinese “opium dens” and warned that “drug crazed Negros” imperiled white womanhood

Immigration Restriction and Eugenics

* The main source of urban growth continued to be immigration
  + Influx came mainly from southern and eastern Europe, but more than 200,00 Japanese and 40,000 Chinese arrived between 1900 and 1920, as well as 1,000’s of Mexicans seeking railroad help
* Dismay that middle class Americans felt about appalling conditions in the urban slums stimulated support not only for protective legislation, but also for immigration restriction
  + Some concluded, then immigrants should be excluded
* Progressives who supported this reform characteristically documented their case with claims of scientific expertise
* Congress passed literacy-test bills in 1896, 1913, and 1915, only to see them vetoed
  + These measures would have excluded would-be immigrants over 16 years old who were unable to read, either in English or is some other language, thus discriminating against those lacking formal education
  + Immigrants also faced physical examinations and tests in which legitimate public-health concerns became mixed up with stereotypes of entire ethnic groups as mental or physical defectives
* Anti-immigrant fears helped fuel the eugenics movement
  + Eugenics is the control of reproduction to alter a plant or animal species, and some U.S. eugenics believed that human society could be improved by this means
* *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), Madison Grant used bogus data to denounce immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, especially Jews
  + Also viewed African Americans as inferior
  + Called for racial segregation, immigration restriction, and the forced sterilization of the “unfit”, including “worthless race types”
  + In the 1927 case *Buck vs. Bull*, the Supreme Court upheld such laws

Racism and Progressivism

* Progressivism arose at a time of significant changes in African American life, and also the intense racism in white America
  + Most of Americas 10 million blacks lived in the South as sharecroppers and tenant farmers in 1900
    - Many blacks left the land as a result
  + By 1920 over 20% of the black population lived in cities, mostly in the South
  + Black men in cities took jobs in factories, mines, docks, and railroads
  + Black woman became domestic servants, seamstresses, or workers in laundries and tobacco factories
    - By 1910, 54% of America’s black woman held jobs
* “Jim Crow” laws segregated streetcars, schools, parks, and even cemeteries
  + Facilities for blacks were invariably inferior
  + Southern cities imposed residential segregation by law until the Supreme Court restricted it in 1917
* Fleeing poverty and racism, 200,000 blacks migrated North between 1890 and 1910
  + By 1920, 1.4 million African Americans lived in the North
  + Northern cities also had racism worsen after 1890 as hard times and immigration heightened social tensions
* Segregation was enforced by custom and sometimes by violence
  + Their ballots – usually for the party of Lincoln – brought little political influence
  + Movies brought preached racism
    - D.W. Griffith’s a *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) disparaged blacks and glorified the Klu Klux Klan
  + Smoldering racism sometimes exploded in violence
    - From 1900 to 1920 an average of about 75 lynching’s occurred yearly
    - Some lynching’s involved incredible sadism: large crowds on hand, the victim’s body was mutilated, and the graphic postcards were sold later
* Blacks developed strong social institutions and a vigorous culture
  + Working African American women relied on relatives and neighbors to provide child care
* Urban black community included several black-owned insurance companies and banks, a small elite of entrepreneurs, teachers, ministers, and sports figures like Jack Johnson
* Progressives compiled a mixed record on racial issues
* Most progressives kept silent as blacks were lynched, disenfranchised, and discriminated against
  + Many saw African Americans, like immigrants, as part of the problem, not an ally

Blacks, Women, and Workers Organize

* Organizational impulse so impulse so important to progressivism generally proved a useful strategy for groups that found themselves discriminated against or exploited

African-American Leaders Organize Against Racism

* With racism on the rise, Booker T. Washington’s accommodationist message seemed increasingly unrealistic
  + Another opponent was black journalist Ida Wells-Barnett
    - She mounted a national antilynching campaign
  + Washington’s self-help theme would appeal to later generations of African Americans
* Washington’s most potent challenger was W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963)
  + Openly criticizing Washington in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), he rejected Washington’s call for patience and his exclusive emphasis on manual skills
  + Du Bois demanded full racial equality, including the same educational opportunities open to whites
* Du Bois’s militancy signaled a new era of African American activism
  + Blacks who favored vigorous, sustained resistance to racism held at Niagara Falls
    - Called the “Niagara Movement”
  + A group of white reformers had also become dissatisfied with Washington’s cautiousness
    - Leader was newspaper publisher Oswald Garrison Villard
    - 1909 Villard and his allies, Du Bois, and other blacks form the Niagara Movement formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
      * New organization called for vigorous activism
      * By 1914 the NAACP had over 6,000 members

Revival of the Women-Suffrage Movement

* As late as 1910, women could vote in only 4 states: Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho
  + The progressive reform movement, women played a leading role, gave the cause a fresh vitality
  + Middle class women found disfranchisement especially galling when recently arrived immigrant men could vote
  + California campaign, illustrates both the strategies and the limitations of the revived movement
  + 1880’s California’s women’s clubs focused mainly on cultural and domestic themes
  + 1900’s they had evolved into a potent statewide organization actively pursuing municipal reforms and public-school issues
  + Convinced many members that full citizenship meant the right to vote
* The California campaign was led by elite and middle class women, mainly based in Los-Angeles and San Francisco
  + Working class women played little role in this campaign
* When Susan B. Anthony retired from the presidency of the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1900, Carrie Chapman Catt succeeded her
  + NAWSA adopted the so-called Winning Plan: grass-roots organization with tight central coordination
    - Not only Lobbied legislators, but also organized parades in open cars, ran newspaper ads, held fundraisers, and arranger photo opportunities
      * State after state fell into the suffrage column
    - NAWSA’s membership remained largely white, native, and middle class
* Not all suffragists accepted Catt’s strategy
  + Alice Paul grew impatient with NAWSA’s state-by-state approach
    - 1913 Paul founded the Congressional Union, to pressure Congress to enact a woman-suffrage amendment
  + Paul and her followers picketed the white House round the clock in the war of 1917 and posted large signs accusing President Wilson of hypocrisy in championing democracy abroad while opposing women suffrage at home

Enlarging “Women’s Sphere”

* Suffrage cause didn’t exhaust women’s energies in the Progressive era
  + Reform efforts included the campaigns to bring playgrounds and day nurseries to the slums, abolish child labor, help women workers, and ban unsafe foods and quack remedies
  + Cultural assumptions about “women’s sphere” weakened as women became active on many fronts
* In *Women and Economics* (1898) and other works, feminist intellectual Charlotte Gilman explored the historical and cultural roots of female subordination and gender stereotyping; and liked women’s inferior status to their economic dependence on men
  + Demanded equality in the workplace; the collectivization of cooking, cleaning, and other domestic tasks; state-run daycare centers
  + No progressive era reform raised the issue of women’s rights more directly than the campaign challenging federal and state laws banning the distribution of contraceptives and birth-control information
* 1914 Margaret Sanger, a nurse and socialist, began her crusade for birth control, a term she coined
  + She opened the nation’s first birth-control clinic in Brooklyn
  + Founded the American Birth Control League, later became Planned Parenthood
* Mary Dennett, a feminist and activist, had also emerged as an advocate of birth control
  + Dennett founded the National Birth Control League
  + Dennett urged lobbying efforts to amend the obscenity laws

Workers Organize; Socialism Advances

* Union activities could be risky
* Judicial hostility also plagued the movement
  + 1908 *Danbury vs. Hatters* case, Supreme Court forbade unions from organizing boycotts in support of strikes
  + Was violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act
* Few unions did try to reach laborers
  + International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU) conducted a successful strike in 1909 and another in 1911 after the Triangle fire
  + Through strikes, workers could gain better wages and improved working conditions
* Another union was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)
  + Nicknamed the Wobblies
  + Leader was William “Big Bull” Haywood
  + IWW led mass strikes of Nevada gold miners; Minnesota iron miners; and timber workers in Louisiana, Texas, and the Northeast
  + IWW faced govt. harassment, especially during WWI, and by 1920 strength was broken
* All socialists advocated an end to capitalism and backed public ownership of factories, utilities, railroads, and communications systems, but they differed on how to achieve these goals
* 1900 democratic socialists formed the Socialist Party of America (SPA)
  + Some members were Eugene V. Debs, Morris Hillquit, and Victor Berger
  + Debs was the SPA’s presidential candidate 5 times
  + Many cultural radicals embraced socialism as well and supported the radical magazine *The Masses*, founded in 1911

National Progressivism Phase 1: Roosevelt and Taft, 1901-1913

* By around 1905 local and state reform activities were coalescing into a national movement

Roosevelt’s Path to the White House

* On September 6, 1901, anarchist Leon Czolgosz shot President McKinley
  + Died on September 14, so Roosevelt took over as President
* Roosevelt did display many traits associated with the West
  + He served as a state assemblyman, New York city police commissioner, and a U.S. civil-service commissioner
  + 1898 he was elected New York’s governor
  + 1900 the state’s political boss, arranged for his nomination as vice president
* TR found the presidency energizing
  + He enjoyed public life and loved the limelight
  + With his amazing energy, he dominated the political landscape
  + When he refused to shoot a baby bear on a hunting trip, a toy maker marketed a cuddly new product, the Teddy Bear

Labor Disputes, Trustbusting, Railroad Regulation

* 1902 the United Mine Workers Union (UMW) called a strike to gain higher wages, shorter hours, and recognition as a union
  + TR won their reluctant acceptance to settle the dispute
  + Commission granted the miners 10% wage increase and reduced their working day from 10 to 9 hours
* TR’s approach to solving labor disputes was different from his predecessors, who typically sided with management
  + Sometimes used troops as strikebreakers
  + TR defended workers’ right to organize
  + TR didn’t fear or like business tycoons
  + He held corporations, like individuals, to a high standard
  + TR, also a political realist, also understood that many Washington politicians abhorred his views
* Another test of his political skill came in 1901 when J. P. Morgan formed the United States Steel Company, the nation’s first billion-dollar corporation
  + TR’s 1902 State of the Union message gave high priority to the breaking up of monopolies, or “Trustbusting”
  + Roosevelt’s attorney general soon filed suit against the Northern Securities Company, giant holding company that had recently been formed to control railroading in the Northwest, for violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890
  + TR called for a “square deal” for all Americans and denounced special treatment for capitalists
    - In 1904, Supreme Court ordered the Northern Securities Company dissolved
* Roosevelt administration filed 43 other anti-trust lawsuits
  + As 1904 election neared, Roosevelt made peace within his party’s business wing
* Democrats embraced the gold standard and nominated a conservative New York judge, Alton B. Parker
* Winning easily, Roosevelt turned to one of his major goals: railroad regulation
  + Now saw corporate regulation as a more promising long-term strategy than antitrust lawsuits
  + Passed the Hepburn act of 1906
    - Empowered the Interstate Commerce Commission to set maximum railroad rates and to examine railroads financial records
    - Also curtailed the railroads’ practice of disputing free passes to ministers and other influential shapers of public opinion
* Hepburn Act displays TR’s knack for political bargaining
  + In one key compromise, TR agreed to delay tariff reform in return for railroad regulations
  + Significantly increased the government’s powers

Consumer Protection and Racial Issues

* No progressive reform proved more popular than the campaign against unsafe and falsely labeled food, drugs, and medicine
  + Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906) graphically described the foul conditions in some meatpacking plants
* Roosevelt supported the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act, both passed in 1906
  + the Pure Food and Drug Act outlawed the sale of adulterated foods or drugs and required accurate ingredient labels
  + the Meat Inspection Act imposed strict sanitary rules on meatpacking and set up a federal meat-inspection system
* Roosevelt’s record was marginally better than that of other politicians in this time period

Environmentalism Progressive Style

* With TR in the White House, environmental concerns ranked high on the national agenda
  + Organizations like the Sierra Club battled to preserve the unspoiled beauty of wilderness areas
  + Under an act passed in 1891, Presidents Harrison and Cleveland had set aside about 35 million acres of public lands as national forests
* Summer camps, which began in the 1890’s, as well as the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, gave city children a taste of wilderness living
* Govt. professionals saw the public domain as a resource to be managed wisely
  + Pinchot stressed not preservation but conservation – the planned, regulated, use of forest lands for public and commercial use
  + Wilderness advocates welcomed Pinchot’s opposition to open-mindless exploitation but worried that the multiple use approach would despoil wilderness areas
* Theodore Roosevelt was a preservationist
  + 1903 he spent several days camping with John Muir at Yosemite Park
  + He supported the National Reclamation Act of 1902 that designated the money from public-land sales for water management in arid western regions, and set up the Reclamation Service to plan and construct dams and irrigation projects
  + Reclamation Service undertook projects that sped settlement and productivity between the Rockies and the Pacific
  + Roosevelt Dam in Arizona spurred the growth in Phoenix
  + Law requires farmers who benefited from these projects to repay the construction costs, creating a revolving federal fund for future projects
* President Roosevelt set aside 200 million acres as national forests, mineral reserves, and water power sites
  + Congress revoked the president’s authority to create national forests
  + Roosevelt got 16 million acres in 6 states as national park land
  + Pinchot organized a White House conservation conference for the nation’s governors in 1908
* While expanding the national forests, TR also created 53 wildlife reserves, 16 national monuments, and 5 new national parks
  + As the parks drew more visitors, Congress created the National Park Service in 1918 to manage them

Taft in the White House, 1909-1913

* Roosevelt had sworn he would not run for a 3rd term
  + The Republican party nominated TR’s choice, William Taft, for president
  + The party platform was deeply conservative
* Democrats nominated William Jennings Bryan
  + Platform called for a lower tariff, denounced the rusts, and embraced the cause of labor
* Taft coasted to victory, but democrats made gains
  + Outcome suggested a lull in the reform, not its end
* Republican conservatives were delighted when Roosevelt departed to hunt game in Africa
* Taft supported the Mann-Elkins Act (1910), which beefed up the Interstate Commerce Commission’s rate-setting powers and extended its regulatory authority to telephone and telegraph companies
* The reform spotlight turned to congress form the white house
  + Small group of reform-minded Republicans nicknamed the Insurgents had challenged their conservative congressional leadership
  + 1909 the Insurgents turned against Taft after a bruising battle over the tariff
  + 1909, when high tariff advocates in Congress pushed through the Payne-Aldrich tariff, raising duties on hundreds of items, Taft not only signed it but praised it extravagantly
* A major Insurgent target was Speaker of the house Joseph G. Cannon
  + March 1910 the Insurgents joined with the Democrats to remove Cannon from the pivotal Rules Committee
  + So called Ballinger-Pinchot affair widened the rift between Taft and the progressive republicans
  + Taft’s interior secretary Richard Ballinger disliked federal controls and favored the private development of natural resources
  + Ballinger approved the sale of several million acres of public lands in Alaska containing coal deposits to a group of Seattle businessmen
    - When a Department of the Interior official protested, that man was fired
    - When Pinchot of the forestry service publicly criticized Ballinger, he too was fired
* In the 1910 midterm election, Roosevelt campaigned for Insurgent candidates
  + He attacked judges who struck down progressive laws and endorsed the radical idea of reversing judicial rulings by popular vote
  + TR proposed a “New Nationalism” that would powerfully engage the federal govt. in reform
  + Democrats captured the House in 1910

The 4 Way Election of 1912

* 1912 Roosevelt announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination, openly opposing Taft
  + Taft wanted a second term
* Roosevelt generally walloped Taft, but Taft had control of political machines
* Roosevelt then created the Bull Moose party
* The convention platform basically covered every reform of the day
  + New party attracted a highly diverse following, united in admiration for the charismatic Roosevelt
* The reform spirit also infused the Democratic party at the local and state levels
  + Voters had elected a political novice, Woodrow Wilson, as governor
  + Later he won the nomination for president
  + Taft more or less gave up
* The socialist party candidate Eugene Debs proposed an end to capitalism and a socialized economic order
  + Wilson and Roosevelt offered less radical prescriptions
    - TR preached his New Nationalism
    - The welfare of workers and consumers should be safeguarded, and the environment protected
* Wilson called his political vision the “New Freedom”
  + He nostalgically evoked an era of small govt., small business, and free competition
* Roosevelt garnered 630,000 more votes than Taft, but the divided Republicans proved no match for the united Democrats
  + Wilson won the presidency
* 1912 election linked the Democrats firmly with reform
  + Breakaway progressive party demonstrated the strength of the reform impulse among grass-roots Republicans while leaving the national party itself in the grip of conservatives

National Progressivism Phase 2: Woodrow Wilson, 1913-1917

* Wilson at his best, excelled at political deal making
  + He could also retreat into a fortress of absolute certitude that tolerated no opposition
* In his first term, Wilson played a key leadership role as congress enacted an array of reform measures
* Under Wilson, the national progressive movement gained a powerful new momentum

Tariff and Banking Reform

* Tariff reform-a long goal of southern and agrarian Democrats-headed Wilson’s agenda
  + Wilson appeared before Congress in person to read his tariff message
  + A low tariff bill quickly passed the House but lagged in the Senate
* The Underwood Simmons Tariff reduced rates an average of 15%
* In June 1913 Wilson addressed Congress again, this time to call for banking and currency reform
  + The nation’s banking system clearly needed overhauling
* No consensus existed on specifics
  + Reformers wanted a publicly controlled central banking system
  + But nations bankers favored a privately controlled central bank similar to the bank England
  + Large banks of New York City advocated a strong central bank so they could better compete with London banks in international finance
  + Others, opposed any central banking authority, public or private
* Wilson listened to all sides and he did insist that the monetary system ultimately be publically controlled
  + The result was the Federal Reserve Act of 1913
    - This created 12 regional federal Reserve Banks under mixed public and private control
    - Each bank could issue U.S. dollars, called federal reserve notes, to the banks in its district to make loans to corporations and individual borrowers
    - Control of the system was assigned to the heads of the 12 regional banks and a Washington based Federal Reserve Bond (FRB), whose members were appointed by the president for 14 year terms
* Federal Reserve Act stands as Wilson’s greatest legislative achievement

Regulating Business: Aiding Workers and Farmers

* 1914 Wilson and Congress turned to the key progressive issue: business regulation
* 2 key laws were the result
  + The Federal Trade Commission Act
  + Clayton Antitrust Act
    - Embodied significantly different approaches
* The Federal Trade Commission Act took an administrative approach
  + Law required a new “watchdog” agency, The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), with the power to investigate suspended violations of federal regulations, require regular reports from corporations, and issue cease-and-desist orders (subject to judicial review) when it found unfair methods of competition
* Clayton Antitrust Act took a legal approach
  + Listed specific corporate activities that could lead to federal lawsuits
  + Clayton Antitrust Act spelled out a series of illegal practices, such as selling at a loss to undercut competitors

Progressivism and the Constitution

* *Muller vs. Oregon* (1908), the Supreme Court upheld an Oregon 10 hour law for women laundry workers
  + The high court held that such worker-protection laws didn’t violate employers’ rights under the due process clause of the 14th amendment
  + Muller vs. Oregon marked a breakthrough in making the legal system more responsive to the new social realities
* 16th amendment granted Congress the authority to tax income thus ending a long legal battle
* *Pollock vs. Farmers’ Loan and Trust* (1895) the supreme court had not only ruled this measure unconstitutional, but also blasted it as “communistic”
* 1913 congress imposed a graduated federal income tax with a maximum rate of 7% on incomes’ in excess of $500,000
  + Helped the govt. pay for the expanded regulatory activities assigned to it by various progressive reform measures
* 17th amendment mandated the direct election of U.S. senators by the voters
* 18th and 19th amendments culminated reform campaigns
  + 18th established nationwide prohibition of the manufacture, sake, or importation of alcohol
  + 19th granted women the right to vote

1916: Wilson Edges Out Hughes

* Wilson easily won renomination in 1916
  + Roosevelt urged the progressives to endorse Hughes and effectively committed political suicide
* With republicans more or less united, the election was close
  + Wilson won popular vote, but electoral college was disputed for several weeks
* Progressive movement lost momentum as the nation’s attention turned from reform to war