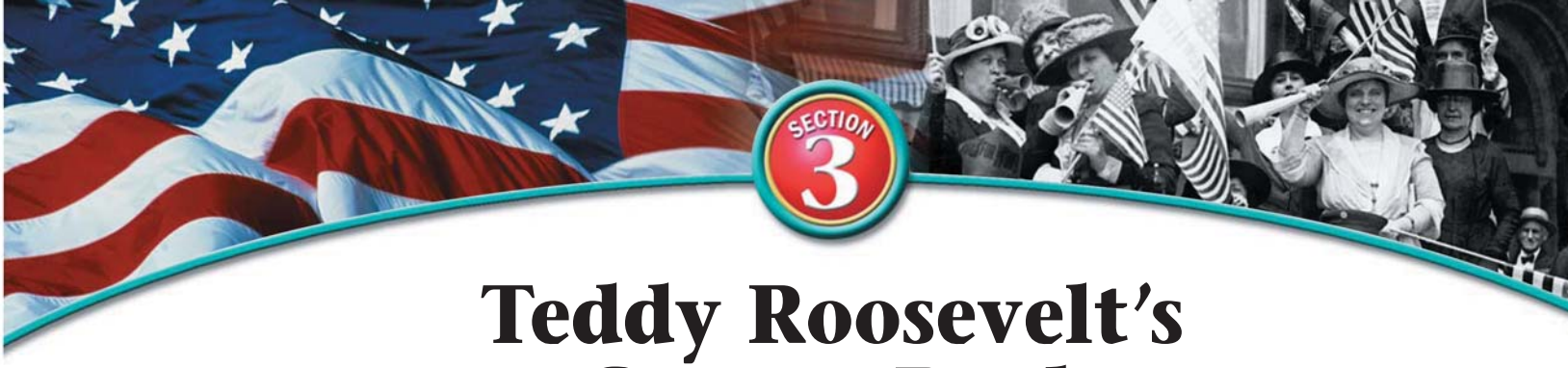


SECTION 3

# Teddy Roosevelt's Square Deal

**MAIN IDEA**

**As president, Theodore Roosevelt worked to give citizens a Square Deal through progressive reforms.**

**WHY IT MATTERS NOW**

**As part of his Square Deal, Roosevelt's conservation efforts made a permanent impact on environmental resources.**

**Terms & Names**

- Upton Sinclair
- *The Jungle*
- Theodore Roosevelt
- Square Deal
- Meat Inspection Act
- Pure Food and Drug Act
- conservation
- NAACP

## One American's Story

When muckraking journalist **Upton Sinclair** began research for a novel in 1904, his focus was the human condition in the stockyards of Chicago. Sinclair intended his novel to reveal "the breaking of human hearts by a system [that] exploits the labor of men and women for profits." What most shocked readers in Sinclair's book ***The Jungle*** (1906), however, was the sickening conditions of the meatpacking industry.

**A Personal Voice** UPTON SINCLAIR

**"There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption [tuberculosis] germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; . . . and thousands of rats would race about on it. . . . A man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together."**

*—The Jungle*



▲ Upton Sinclair poses with his son at the time of the writing of *The Jungle*.

President **Theodore Roosevelt,** like many other readers, was nauseated by Sinclair's account. The president invited the author to visit him at the White House, where Roosevelt promised that "the specific evils you point out shall, if their existence be proved, and if I have the power, be eradicated."

## A Rough-Riding President

Theodore Roosevelt was not supposed to be president. In 1900, the young governor from New York was urged to run as McKinley's vice-president by the state's political bosses, who found Roosevelt impossible to control. The plot to nominate Roosevelt worked, taking him out of state office. However, as vice-president,



When the president spared a bear cub on a hunting expedition, a toymaker marketed a popular new product, the teddy bear.

Roosevelt stood a heartbeat away from becoming president. Indeed, President McKinley had served barely six months of his second term before he was assassinated, making Roosevelt the most powerful person in the government.

**ROOSEVELT'S RISE** Theodore Roosevelt was born into a wealthy New York family in 1858. An asthma sufferer during his childhood, young Teddy drove himself to accomplish demanding physical feats. As a teenager, he mastered marksmanship and horseback riding. At Harvard College, Roosevelt boxed and wrestled.

At an early age, the ambitious Roosevelt became a leader in New York politics. After serving three terms in the New York State Assembly, he became New York City's police commissioner and then assistant secretary of the U.S. Navy. The aspiring politician grabbed national attention, advocating war against 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 New York and then later won the vice-presidency.

**THE MODERN PRESIDENCY** When Roosevelt was thrust into the presidency in 1901, he became the youngest president ever at 42 years old. Unlike previous presidents, Roosevelt soon dominated the news with his many exploits. While in office, Roosevelt enjoyed boxing, although one of his opponents blinded him in the left eye. On another day, he galloped 100 miles on horseback, merely to prove the feat possible.

In politics, as in sports, Roosevelt acted boldly, using his personality and popularity to advance his programs. His leadership and publicity campaigns helped create the modern presidency, making him a model by which all future presidents would be measured. Citing federal responsibility for the national welfare, Roosevelt thought the government should assume control whenever states proved incapable of dealing with problems. He explained, "It is the duty of the president to act upon the theory that he is the steward of the people, and . . . to assume that he has the legal right to do whatever the needs of the people demand, unless the Constitution or the laws explicitly forbid him to do it."

Teddy Roosevelt enjoyed an active lifestyle, as this 1902 photo reveals. ▶



MAIN IDEA

**Synthesizing**
A What actions and characteristics of Teddy Roosevelt contributed to his reputation as the first modern president?

Roosevelt saw the presidency as a "bully pulpit," from which he could influence the news media and shape legislation. If big business victimized workers, then President Roosevelt would see to it that the common people received what he called a **Square Deal.** This term was used to describe the various progressive reforms sponsored by the Roosevelt administration. A

## Using Federal Power

Roosevelt's study of history—he published the first of his 44 books at the age of 24—convinced him that modern America required a powerful federal government. "A simple and poor society can exist as a democracy on the basis of sheer individualism," Roosevelt declared, "but a rich and complex industrial society cannot so exist . . . ." The young president soon met several challenges to his assertion of federal power.

**Background**
See *trust* on page R47 in the Economics Handbook.

**TRUSTBUSTING** By 1900, trusts—legal bodies created to hold stock in many companies—controlled about four-fifths of the industries in the United States. Some trusts, like Standard Oil, had earned poor reputations with the public by the use of unfair business practices. Many trusts lowered their prices to drive competitors out of the market and then took advantage of the lack of competition to jack prices up even higher. Although Congress had passed the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890, the act's vague language made enforcement difficult. As a result, nearly all the suits filed against the trusts under the Sherman Act were ineffective.

President Roosevelt did not believe that all trusts were harmful, but he sought to curb the actions of those that hurt the public interest. The president concentrated his efforts on filing suits under the Sherman Antitrust Act. In 1902, Roosevelt made newspaper headlines as a trustbuster when he ordered the Justice Department to sue the Northern Securities Company, which had established a monopoly over northwestern railroads. In 1904, the Supreme Court dissolved the company. Although the Roosevelt administration filed 44 antitrust suits, winning a number of them and breaking up some of the trusts, it was unable to slow the merger movement in business.

### Analyzing *Political Cartoons*

**"THE LION-TAMER"**

As part of his Square Deal, President Roosevelt aggressively used the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 to attack big businesses engaging in unfair practices. His victory over his first target, the Northern Securities Company, earned him a reputation as a hard-hitting trustbuster committed to protecting the public interest. This cartoon shows Roosevelt trying to tame the wild lions that symbolize the great and powerful companies of 1904.

**SKILLBUILDER** Analyzing Political Cartoons

1. What do the lions stand for?
2. Why are all the lions coming out of a door labeled "Wall St."?
3. What do you think the cartoonist thinks about trustbusting? Cite details from the cartoon that support your interpretation.

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R24.



**1902 COAL STRIKE** When 140,000 coal miners in Pennsylvania went on strike and demanded a 20 percent raise, a nine-hour workday, and the right to organize a union, the mine operators refused to bargain. Five months into the strike, coal reserves ran low. Roosevelt, seeing the need to intervene, called both sides to the White House to talk, and eventually settled the strike. Irked by the "extraordinary stupidity and bad temper" of the mine operators, he later confessed that only the dignity of the presidency had kept him from taking one owner "by the seat of the breeches" and tossing him out of the window.

Faced with Roosevelt's threat to take over the mines, the opposing sides finally agreed to submit their differences to an arbitration commission—a third party that would work with both sides to mediate the dispute. In 1903, the commission issued its compromise settlement. The miners won a 10 percent pay hike and a shorter, nine-hour workday. With this, however, they had to give up their demand for a closed shop—in which all workers must belong to the union—and their right to strike during the next three years.

*"In life, as in a football game, the principle . . . is: Hit the line hard."*
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt's actions had demonstrated a new principle. From then on, when a strike threatened the public welfare, the federal government was expected to intervene. In addition, Roosevelt's actions reflected the progressive belief that disputes could be settled in an orderly way with the help of experts, such as those on the arbitration commission. B

MAIN IDEA

**Analyzing Effects**

B What was significant about the way the 1902 coal strike was settled?

**RAILROAD REGULATION** Roosevelt's real goal was federal regulation. In 1887, Congress had passed the Interstate Commerce Act, which prohibited wealthy railroad owners from colluding to fix high prices by dividing the business in a given area. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) was set up to enforce the new law but had little power. With Roosevelt's urging, Congress passed the Elkins Act in 1903, which made it illegal for railroad officials to give, and shippers to receive, rebates for using particular railroads. The act also specified that railroads could not change set rates without notifying the public.

**Vocabulary**

**collude:** to act together secretly to achieve an illegal or deceitful purpose

The Hepburn Act of 1906 strictly limited the distribution of free railroad passes, a common form of bribery. It also gave the ICC power to set maximum railroad rates. Although Roosevelt had to compromise with conservative senators who opposed the act, its passage boosted the government's power to regulate the railroads.

NOW & THEN

**MEAT INSPECTION**

During the Progressive Era, people worried about the kinds of things that might fall—or walk—into a batch of meat being processed. Today, Americans worry more about contamination by unseen dangers, such as E. coli bacteria, mad cow disease, and antibiotics or other chemicals that may pose long-range health risks to people.

In July 1996, Congress passed the most extensive changes in standards for meat inspection since the Meat Inspection Act of 1906. The costs of the new, more scientific inspections amount to about a tenth of a penny per pound of meat. The FDA has also adopted restrictions on importation of feed and livestock from other countries to prevent the spread of disease.

## Health and the Environment

President Roosevelt's enthusiasm and his considerable skill at compromise led to laws and policies that benefited both public health and the environment. He wrote, "We recognize and are bound to war against the evils of today. The remedies are partly economic and partly spiritual, partly to be obtained by laws, and in greater part to be obtained by individual and associated effort."

**REGULATING FOODS AND DRUGS** After reading *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, Roosevelt responded to the public's clamor for action. He appointed a commission of experts to investigate the meatpacking industry. The commission issued a scathing report backing up Sinclair's account of the disgusting conditions in the industry. True to his word, in 1906 Roosevelt pushed for passage of the **Meat Inspection Act,**

# Coal Mining in the Early 1900s

INTERACTIVE

Coal played a key role in America's industrial boom around the turn of the century, providing the United States with about 90 percent of its energy. Miners often had to dig for coal hundreds of feet below the earth's surface. The work in these mines was among the hardest and most dangerous in the world. Progressive Era reforms helped improve conditions for miners, as many won wage increases and shorter work hours.

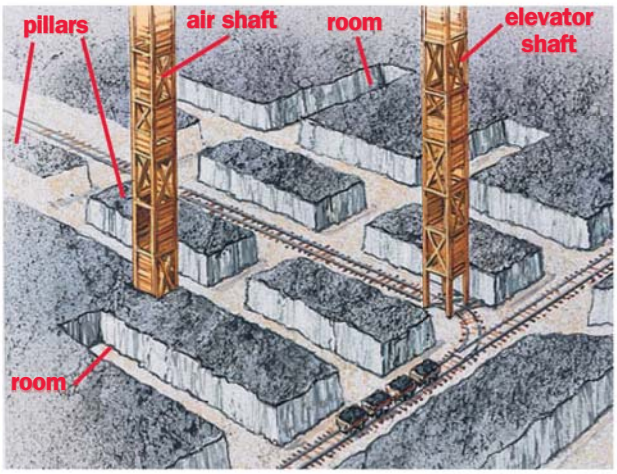


The coal mines employed thousands of children, like this boy pictured in 1909. In 1916, progressives helped secure passage of a child labor law that forbade interstate commerce of goods produced by children under the age of 14. ▶

Most underground mines had two shafts—an elevator shaft (shown here) for transporting workers and coal, and an air shaft for ventilation.



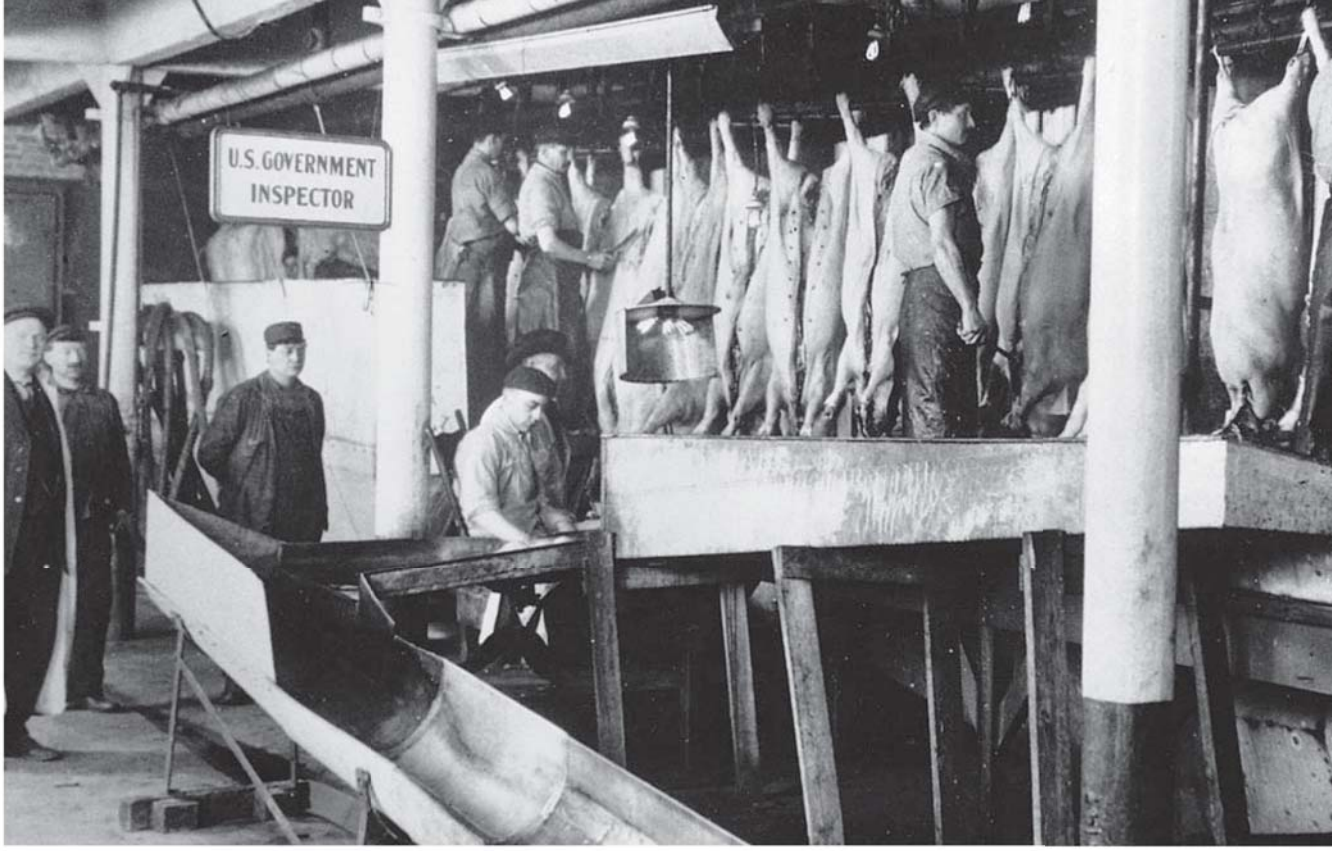
◀ Like these men working in 1908, miners typically spent their days in dark, cramped spaces underground.




Most mines used a room-and-pillar method for extracting coal. This entailed digging out "rooms" of coal off a series of tunnels, leaving enough coal behind to form a pillar that prevented the room from collapsing.

The miners' main tool was the pick. Many also used drilling machines.

Donkeys or mules pulled the coal cars to the elevators, which transported the coal to the surface.



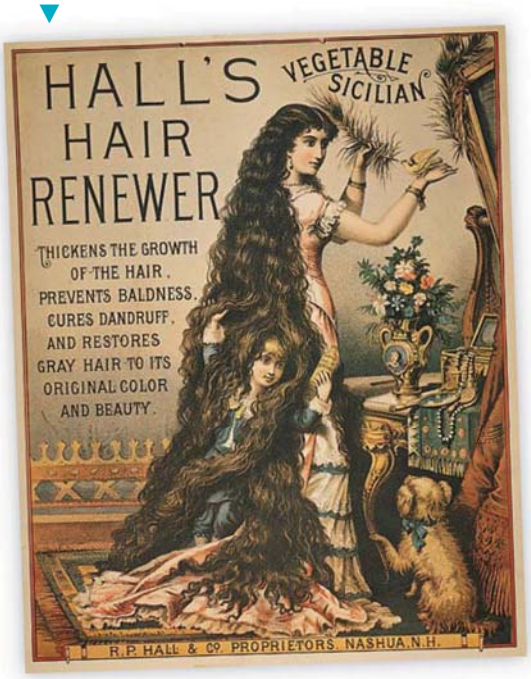

Government workers inspect meat as it moves through the packinghouse. ▶

which dictated strict cleanliness requirements for meatpackers and created the program of federal meat inspection that was in use until it was replaced by more sophisticated techniques in the 1990s.

The compromise that won the act's passage, however, left the government paying for the inspections and did not require companies to label their canned goods with date-of-processing information. The compromise also granted meatpackers the right to appeal negative decisions in court.

**PURE FOOD AND DRUG ACT** Before any federal regulations were established for advertising food and drugs, manufacturers had claimed that their products accomplished everything from curing cancer to growing hair. In addition, popular children's medicines often contained opium, cocaine, or alcohol. In a series of lectures across the country, Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, chief chemist at the Department of Agriculture, criticized manufacturers for adding harmful preservatives to food and brought needed attention to this issue.

A typical late-19th-century product advertisement. ▼




In 1906, Congress passed the **Pure Food and Drug Act,** which halted the sale of contaminated foods and medicines and called for truth in labeling. Although this act did not ban harmful products outright, its requirement of truthful labels reflected the progressive belief that given accurate information, people would act wisely. C

**CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES** Before Roosevelt's presidency, the federal government had paid very little attention to the nation's natural resources. Despite the establishment of the U.S. Forest Bureau in 1887 and the subsequent withdrawal from public sale of 45 million acres of timberlands for a national forest reserve, the government stood by while private interests gobbled up the shrinking wilderness.

MAIN IDEA

**Comparing**

C What similarities did the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act share?

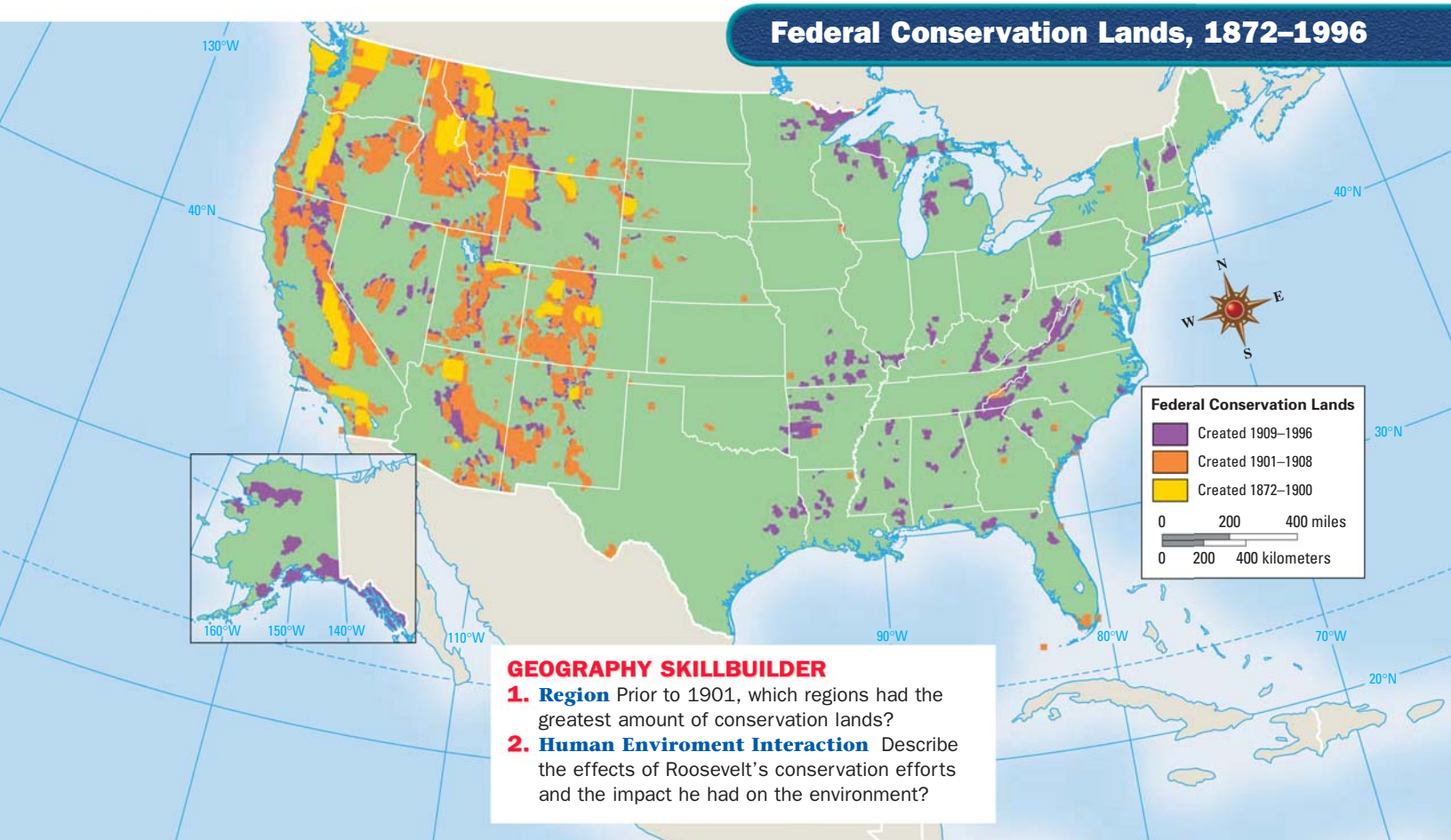
In the late 19th century Americans had shortsightedly exploited their natural environment. Pioneer farmers leveled the forests and plowed up the prairies. Ranchers allowed their cattle to overgraze the Great Plains. Coal companies cluttered the land with refuse from mines. Lumber companies ignored the effect of their logging operations on flood control and neglected to plant trees to replace those they had cut down. Cities dumped untreated sewage and industrial wastes into rivers, poisoning the streams and creating health hazards.

**CONSERVATION MEASURES** Roosevelt condemned the view that America's resources were endless and made conservation a primary concern. John Muir, a naturalist and writer with whom Roosevelt camped in California's Yosemite National Park in 1903, persuaded the president to set aside 148 million acres of forest reserves. Roosevelt also set aside 1.5 million acres of water-power sites and another 80 million acres of land that experts from the U.S. Geological Survey would explore for mineral and water resources. Roosevelt also established more than 50 wildlife sanctuaries and several national parks.

True to the Progressive belief in using experts, in 1905 the president named Gifford Pinchot as head of the U.S. Forest Service. A professional conservationist, Pinchot had administrative skill as well as the latest scientific and technical information. He advised Roosevelt to conserve forest and grazing lands by keeping large tracts of federal land exempt from private sale.

Conservationists like Roosevelt and Pinchot, however, did not share the views of Muir, who advocated complete preservation of the wilderness. Instead, **conservation** to them meant that some wilderness areas would be preserved while others would be developed for the common good. Indeed, Roosevelt's federal water projects transformed some dry wilderness areas to make agriculture possible. Under the National Reclamation Act of 1902, known as the Newlands

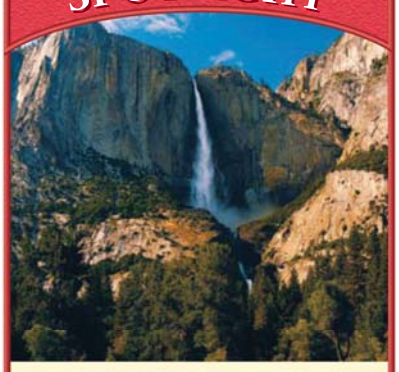
## Federal Conservation Lands, 1872–1996




**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER**

1. **Region** Prior to 1901, which regions had the greatest amount of conservation lands?
2. **Human Enviroment Interaction** Describe the effects of Roosevelt's conservation efforts and the impact he had on the environment?

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT



**YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK**

The naturalist John Muir visited the Yosemite region of central California in 1868 and made it his home base for a period of six years while he traveled throughout the West.

Muir was the first to suggest that Yosemite's spectacular land formations had been shaped by glaciers. Today the park's impressive cliffs, waterfalls, lakes, and meadows draw sports enthusiasts and tourists in all seasons.

Act, money from the sale of public lands in the West funded large-scale irrigation projects, such as the Roosevelt Dam in Arizona and the Shoshone Dam in Wyoming. The Newlands Act established the precedent that the federal government would manage the precious water resources of the West. D

MAIN IDEA

**Summarizing**

D Summarize Roosevelt's approach to environmental problems.

## Roosevelt and Civil Rights

Roosevelt's concern for the land and its inhabitants was not matched in the area of civil rights. Though Roosevelt's father had supported the North, his mother, Martha, may well have been the model for the Southern belle Scarlet O'Hara in Margaret Mitchell's famous novel, *Gone with the Wind*. In almost two terms as president, Roosevelt—like most other progressives—failed to support civil rights for African Americans. He did, however, support a few individual African Americans.

Despite opposition from whites, Roosevelt appointed an African American as head of the Charleston, South Carolina, customhouse. In another instance, when some whites in Mississippi refused to accept the black postmistress he had appointed, he chose to close the station rather than give in. In 1906, however, Roosevelt angered many African Americans when he dismissed without question an entire regiment of African-American soldiers accused of conspiracy in protecting others charged with murder in Brownsville, Texas.

As a symbolic gesture, Roosevelt invited Booker T. Washington to dinner at the White House. Washington—head of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, an all-black training school—was then the African-American leader most respected by powerful whites. Washington faced opposition, however, from other African



Civil rights leaders gather at the 1905 Niagara Falls conference. ▶

**Vocabulary**
**accommodation:** adapting or making adjustments in order to satisfy someone else

Americans, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, for his accommodation of segregationists and for blaming black poverty on blacks and urging them to accept discrimination.

Persistent in his criticism of Washington's ideas, Du Bois renewed his demands for immediate social and economic equality for African Americans. In his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois wrote of his opposition to Washington's position.

### A Personal Voice W. E. B. DU BOIS

**"So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him. . . . But so far as Mr. Washington apologizes for injustice, North or South, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes the higher training and ambition of our brighter minds,—so far as he, the South, or the Nation, does this,—we must unceasingly and firmly oppose them."**

*—The Souls of Black Folk*

**Background**
The Niagara Movement was comprised of 29 black intellectuals. They met secretly in 1905 to compose a civil rights manifesto.

Du Bois and other advocates of equality for African Americans were deeply upset by the apparent progressive indifference to racial injustice. In 1905 they held a civil rights conference in Niagara Falls, and in 1909 a number of African Americans joined with prominent white reformers in New York to found the **NAACP**—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP, which had over 6,000 members by 1914, aimed for nothing less than full equality among the races. That goal, however, found little support in the Progressive Movement, which focused on the needs of middle-class whites. The two presidents who followed Roosevelt also did little to advance the goal of racial equality.

### KEY PLAYER



**W. E. B. DU BOIS**
**1868–1963**

In 1909, W. E. B. Du Bois helped to establish the NAACP and entered into the forefront of the early U.S. civil rights movement. However, in the 1920s, he faced a power struggle with the NAACP's executive secretary, Walter White.

Ironically, Du Bois had retreated to a position others saw as dangerously close to that of Booker T. Washington. Arguing for a separate economy for African Americans, Du Bois made a distinction, which White rejected, between enforced and voluntary segregation. By mid-century, Du Bois was outside the mainstream of the civil rights movement. His work remained largely ignored until after his death in 1963.

## SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- **Upton Sinclair**
- ***The Jungle***
- **Theodore Roosevelt**
- **Square Deal**
- **Meat Inspection Act**
- **Pure Food and Drug Act**
- **conservation**
- **NAACP**

### MAIN IDEA

**2. TAKING NOTES**
Create five problem-solution diagrams like the one below to show how the following problems were addressed during Roosevelt's presidency: (a) 1902 coal strike, (b) Northern Securities Company monopoly, (c) unsafe meat processing, (d) exploitation of the environment, and (e) racial injustice.

**Problems** → **Solutions**

Write headlines announcing the solutions.

### CRITICAL THINKING

**3. FORMING GENERALIZATIONS**
In what ways do you think the progressive belief in using experts played a role in shaping Roosevelt's reforms? Refer to details from the text. **Think About:**

- Roosevelt's use of experts to help him tackle political, economic, and environmental problems
- how experts' findings affected legislative actions

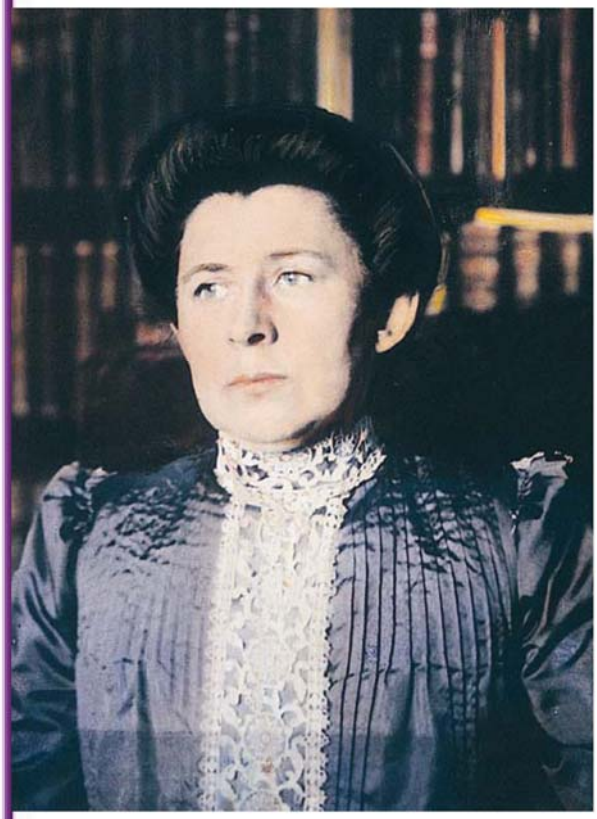
**4. EVALUATING**
Research the coal strike of 1902. Do you think Roosevelt's intervention was in favor of the strikers or of the mine operators? Why?

**5. ANALYZING ISSUES**
Why did W. E. B. Du Bois oppose Booker T. Washington's views on racial discrimination?

AMERICAN LITERATURE

# The Muckrakers

**1902–1917** The tradition of the investigative reporter uncovering corruption was established early in the 20th century by the writers known as muckrakers. Coined by President Theodore Roosevelt, the term *muckraker* alludes to the English author John Bunyan's famous 17th-century religious allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which features a character too busy raking up the muck to see a heavenly crown held over him. The originally negative term soon was applied to many writers whose reform efforts Roosevelt himself supported. The muckraking movement spilled over from journalism as writers such as Upton Sinclair made use of the greater dramatic effects of fiction.



## ◀ IDA M. TARBELL

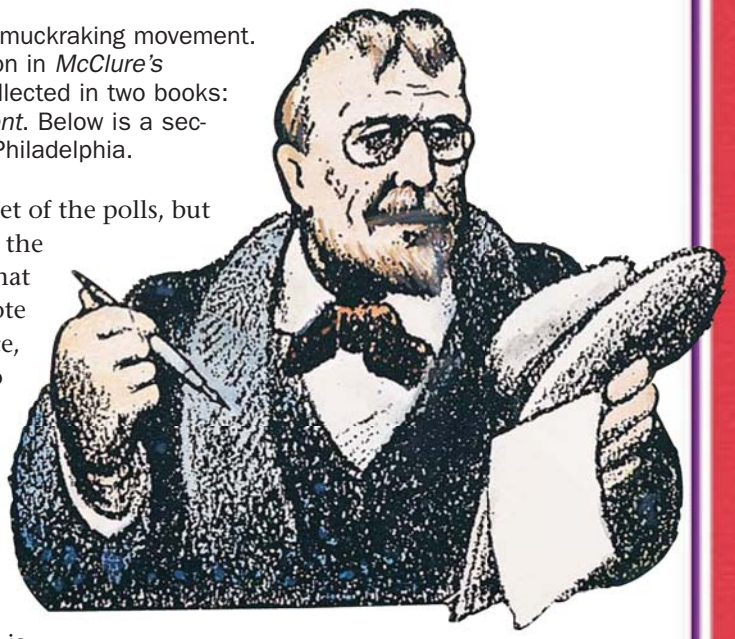
Ida M. Tarbell's "The History of the Standard Oil Company" exposed the ruthlessness with which John D. Rockefeller had turned his oil business into an all-powerful monopoly. Her writing added force to the trustbusting reforms of the early 20th century. Here Tarbell describes how Standard Oil used lower transportation rates to drive out smaller refineries, such as Hanna, Baslington and Company.

> Mr. Hanna had been refining since July, 1869. . . . Some time in February, 1872, the Standard Oil Company asked [for] an interview with him and his associates. They wanted to buy his works, they said. "But we don't want to sell," objected Mr. Hanna. "You can never make any more money, in my judgment," said Mr. Rockefeller. "You can't compete with the Standard. We have all the large refineries now. If you refuse to sell, it will end in your being crushed." Hanna and Baslington were not satisfied. They went to see . . . General Devereux, manager of the Lake Shore road. They were told that the Standard had special rates; that it was useless to try to compete with them. General Devereux explained to the gentlemen that the privileges granted the Standard were the legitimate and necessary advantage of the larger shipper over the smaller. . . . General Devereux says they "recognised the propriety" of his excuse. They certainly recognised its authority. They say that they were satisfied they could no longer get rates to and from Cleveland which would enable them to live, and "reluctantly" sold out. It must have been reluctantly, for they had paid $75,000 for their works, and had made thirty per cent. a year on an average on their investment, and the Standard appraiser allowed them $45,000.

—Ida M. Tarbell, "The History of the Standard Oil Company" (1904)

## LINCOLN STEFFENS ▶

Lincoln Steffens is usually named as a leading figure of the muckraking movement. He published exposés of business and government corruption in *McClure's Magazine* and other magazines. These articles were then collected in two books: *The Shame of the Cities* and *The Struggle for Self-Government*. Below is a section from an article Steffens wrote to expose voter fraud in Philadelphia.

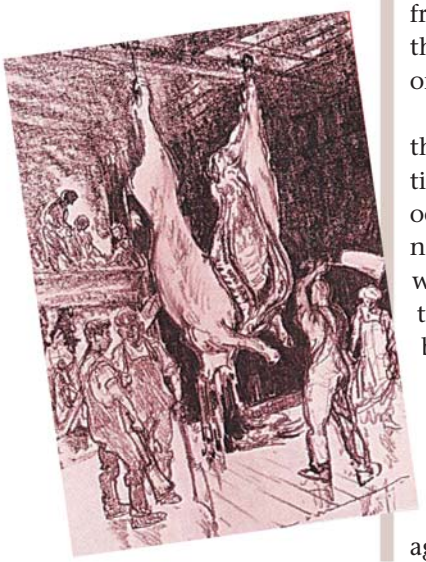


> The police are forbidden by law to stand within thirty feet of the polls, but they are at the box and they are there to see that the [Republican political] machine's orders are obeyed and that repeaters whom they help to furnish are permitted to vote without "intimidation" on the names they, the police, have supplied. The editor of an anti-machine paper who was looking about for himself once told me that a ward leader who knew him well asked him into a polling place. "I'll show you how it's done," he said, and he had the repeaters go round and round voting again and again on the names handed them on slips. . . . The business proceeds with very few hitches; there is more jesting than fighting. Violence in the past has had its effect; and is not often necessary nowadays, but if it is needed the police are there to apply it.

—Lincoln Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities* (1904)

## UPTON SINCLAIR

Upton Sinclair's chief aim in writing *The Jungle* was to expose the shocking conditions that immigrant workers endured. The public, however, reacted even more strongly to the novel's revelations of unsanitary conditions in the meatpacking industry. Serialized in 1905 and published in book form one year later, *The Jungle* prompted a federal investigation that resulted in passage of the Meat Inspection Act in 1906.



> Jonas had told them how the meat that was taken out of pickle would often be found sour, and how they would rub it up with [baking] soda to take away the smell, and sell it to be eaten on free-lunch counters; also of all the miracles of chemistry which they performed, giving to any sort of meat, fresh or salted, whole or chopped, any color and any flavor and any odor they chose. . . .
>
> It was only when the whole ham was spoiled that it came into the department of Elzbieta. Cut up by the two-thousand-revolutions-a-minute flyers, and mixed with half a ton of other meat, no odor that ever was in a ham could make any difference. There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage; there would come all the way back from Europe old sausage that had been rejected, and that was moldy and white—it would be dosed with borax and glycerine, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption.

—Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906)

### THINKING CRITICALLY

1. **Comparing and Contrasting** State the main idea of each of these selections. What role do details play in making the passages convincing?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R8.

2. **INTERNET ACTIVITY** CLASSZONE.COM

Visit the links for American Literature: The Muckrakers to learn more about the muckrakers. What topics did they investigate? How did they affect public opinion? What legal changes did they help to bring about? Write a summary of the muckrakers' impact on society.