

# The Progressive Era

## Section 7.3 Teddy Roosevelt



### Pre-View 7.3

- **Trust busting** – the act of breaking up bad trusts by suing them in court
- **Muckrakers** – writers that exposed corruption in big business, government, and society
- **Conservation** – careful use of natural resources
- **Gifford Pinchot** – conservationist friend of Roosevelt; appointed the first leader of the Forestry Service
- **John Muir** – preservationist friend of Roosevelt; campaigned for national parks and wilderness areas to be preserved in their natural state
- **Preservation** – the maintaining of wilderness areas in a natural state
- **Sierra Club** – organization founded by John Muir to encourage recreational use and preservation of the Sierras; became a national organization that was the forerunner of the environmental movement

### Roosevelt as President

After the Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt became a national hero. So in the presidential election of 1900, the Republican Party was eager to use “Teddy’s” name without giving him too much political power. The Republicans decided to nominate Roosevelt as Vice President on the ticket with William McKinley.

McKinley was easily re-elected President in 1900. But four and a half months after being sworn in as President, McKinley was assassinated. Teddy Roosevelt (often referred to as “TR”) was now President. His young age of not quite 43 made Teddy the youngest President to ever take office.

**Question:** Hold on — wasn’t John F. Kennedy the youngest man ever elected President?

Kennedy was the youngest man ever *elected* President, but Roosevelt was the youngest to *take office*. Before you get confused, keep in mind that Teddy Roosevelt was not elected to the office of President. He was elected as Vice President, and he took office when McKinley was assassinated.

TR was the first of three Progressive Presidents. Let’s take a look at his actions as President that supported progressive reforms.

### Trust Busting

Remember that during the Gilded Age, trusts were formed when a group controlled multiple companies and created monopolies. Trusts and monopolies limited competition and drove up prices. Aware that the corruption in trusts was a really important issue, Roosevelt decided early in his presidency to do something about unfair business practices. He did not believe that every business trust was bad, so he focused on attacking the bad ones. Rather than asking Congress to change the laws, Roosevelt used the courts to break up bad trusts. His actions were called **trust busting** because the courts ordered bad trusts to break apart into smaller companies.

His first target was a railroad trust controlled by the Northern Securities Company. TR sued the company in federal court, and in 1904 the Supreme Court (*Northern Securities Company v. U.S.*) agreed that the trust should be broken up. In all, Roosevelt was responsible for 44 court cases against such trusts as the Standard Oil Company, the tobacco trust, and the beef trust. These attacks on big business won Teddy the name of *trust buster* and the respect of progressive reformers.

## Section 7.3, continued

### Teddy Roosevelt

#### Coal Strike, 1902

In 1902 there was a coal strike in the Pennsylvania coal fields. Neither the management (the owners) nor the union (the workers) could agree on a solution. With winter coming, the public good was at stake. People needed coal to cook and to stay warm.

As President, TR decided to do something about the strike. He invited owners and union representatives to the White House for a meeting. When the owners still would not budge, Roosevelt hinted that he would send federal troops to take over the mines and operate them for the public good. The owners gave in, and the strike was settled.

#### Muckrakers

During the Progressive Era, writers began to expose the corruption in society. They investigated the corruption in government and in businesses, exposed the filthy conditions in the meat packing industry, and attacked the evils of child labor. These writers were called **muckrakers**, and here's a summary of a few of them and their work.

#### Muckrakers

AUTHOR	YEAR	WORK	DESCRIPTION
Lincoln Steffens	1904	<i>The Shame of the Cities</i>	Showed the corruption in state and local governments
Ida M. Tarbell	1904	<i>The History of the Standard Oil Company</i>	Exposed the corrupt practices of the Standard Oil Company (owned by Rockefeller)
Upton Sinclair	1906	<i>The Jungle</i>	Exposed the filthy conditions in the meat packing industry
John Spargo	1906	<i>The Bitter Cry of the Children</i>	Exposed the evils of child labor

*There is filth on the floor, and it must be scraped up with the muck rake . . . But the man who never does anything else, who never thinks or speaks or writes, save of his feats with the muck rake, speedily becomes, not a help but one of the most potent forces for evil . . . The effort to make financial or political profit out of the destruction of character can only result in calamity.*

**Theodore Roosevelt**  
"The Man with the Muck Rake" Speech, 1906

#### Practice 1

Write in the blank the answer to each question about muckrakers of the early 20th century.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Which book was about the filth in the meat packing industry?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Who wrote *The History of the Standard Oil Company*?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Who exposed the political corruption in city governments?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Who was the President of the United States when *The Jungle* was published?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Who was the author of *The Jungle*?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Which book exposed the evils of child labor?

## Section 7.3, continued

### Teddy Roosevelt

#### Progressive Legislation

Because of the public awareness caused by the muckrakers and the reform spirit of the age, Roosevelt began to address the issues relating to consumers (the people who buy things). He worked with Congress to pass a series of bills aimed at protecting consumers. These new laws forced the railroads to charge fair prices, addressed the filthy condition in the meat packing industry, and corrected the dangers of altered foods and the false labeling of drugs. Study the chart below to learn more about these laws.

**Roosevelt's Progressive Legislation**

ACT	RESULT
<b>Elkins Act, 1903</b>	This law stopped the railroads from giving rebates to their best customers. Shipping rates had to be publicly posted for all to see.
<b>Hepburn Act, 1906</b>	This law gave the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) power to set maximum railroad rates. It gave the ICC control over other industries that shipped products on the railroads. It stopped the railroads from giving free passes to government employees.
<b>Meat Inspection Act, 1906</b>	Under this law, the government was to inspect animals before they were slaughtered and after the meat was processed. It also set sanitary standards for meatpacking facilities and ordered government inspections to ensure the plants were clean.
<b>Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906</b>	This law outlawed the sale of altered or mislabeled food and drug products.

#### Practice 2

Write in the blank the answer to each question about Roosevelt's progressive legislation.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In what year were most of Roosevelt's progressive laws passed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which industry did the Elkins Act regulate?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which law allowed the ICC to control industries that shipped products on the railroads?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which law set sanitation standards for the meat packing industry?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which law made it illegal to mislabel food products?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Which law stopped the railroads from giving discounts to certain customers?

#### Conservation

Roosevelt loved the outdoors. He agreed with those who said that America's natural resources were not unlimited and that something should be done to protect them. Responsibly managing natural resources is called **conservation**, and the people who encourage it are *conservationists*. A look at TR's record on conservation definitely proves he was a conservationist. Under his leadership, conservation went from a desire to protect natural resources in the West to a national movement that sought to protect other parts of the United States as well.

## Section 7.3, continued

### Teddy Roosevelt

#### *U.S. v. Gettysburg Electric Railway Company*

Even before TR took office, efforts were being made to preserve historical sites. Near the turn of the century, Congress passed a law to expand the Gettysburg Battlefield and to place markers to commemorate the troop placements. The Gettysburg Train Company ran an electric trolley at Gettysburg and objected to part of their property being taken through eminent domain. (*Eminent domain* is the power given to the government to take private property for public use by paying the owner for it.) In *U.S. v. Gettysburg Electric Railway Company*, the court ruled that preserving national historical sites was a proper use for eminent domain. The ruling set a precedent that eminent domain could be used to protect our national historical heritage.

#### Roosevelt's Conservation Record

- He used money from public land sales to fund the construction of dams and other irrigation projects in the West.
- He set aside millions of acres as national forests, nature preserves, and animal sanctuaries.
- He created five national parks and 18 national monuments.
- He established the U.S. Forest Service and appointed Gifford Pinchot, a professional conservationist, as its head.

**Gifford Pinchot** had been trained in forestry management in Europe. In the United States, he was eager to try out what he had learned. He worked at several forestry jobs before being picked to head the U.S. Forest Service by TR. He believed in managing the forests in a way that would allow for some logging while making sure the trees were replanted and the forests renewed. His friend John Muir had quite a different view.



### Preservation

**John Muir** was a Scottish immigrant who settled with his family in Wisconsin. He had studied botany and geology in college but abandoned an industrial career after an accident. Muir then set out on a walk to Florida and sketched nature along the way. He then sailed to San Francisco, California, and walked to the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the eastern edge of California. In the Sierra Nevadas, Muir fell in love with nature in general and the Yosemite Valley in particular. He became a strong advocate for **preservation** of nature; he wanted to maintain wilderness areas in their natural state.

In 1892 Muir and others founded the **Sierra Club** as an organization to promote recreation, education, and conservation in the Sierra Nevada region. Through Muir's efforts and with support of the Sierra Club, Yosemite became a national park in 1906. Building on that early success, the Sierra Club has grown into a national organization committed to protecting and preserving the environment. The environmental movement of today can trace its roots to the early efforts of John Muir and the Sierra Club.

Muir and Pinchot were both concerned about the environment, but they had different views. Pinchot favored conservation, responsible management, and Muir favored preservation, maintaining a natural state. Once friends, Muir and Pinchot split over the proposal to build a dam in part of the Yosemite Valley (then a state park) to supply San Francisco with electrical power and water. Muir opposed the dam. Pinchot thought the needs of the people of San Francisco outweighed the desire to preserve nature, so he supported the dam project. In the end, the dam was built, but their friendship did not survive the project. Both, however, remained friends of Teddy Roosevelt.