Progressive Reformers
Muckrakers

- Muckrakers were a group of writers during the Progressive Era who tried to expose the problems that existed in American society as a result of the rise of big business, the growth of cities, and immigration. Most of the muckrakers were journalists.

- Progressives used muckrakers' writings to inspire and push for reform in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
What issues did the muckrakers care about?
Temperance Movement

A movement that criticized excessive alcohol use.

• Wanted to abolish or severely limit people’s access to alcohol.
• They pressured the govt to pass anti-alcohol legislation

Believed that drinking led to personal tragedies and weakened people who were already morally corrupt leading them to engage in other evils (gambling, prostitution, crime, etc.)
Richmond Pearson Hobson,  
*Anti-Saloon League Tract*

Every time a man drinks he takes that much away from his manhood; will power declines…

Today there are 5,000,000 American citizens, heavy drinkers and drunkards, who have shackles on their wrists, a ball and chain upon their ankles. A few thousand brewers and distillers to-day own 5,000,000 slaves.

Starting at 20, a young man as a total abstainer will live to be 65; as a moderate drinker he will die at 51. The heavy drinker at 20 dies at 35; 30 years are cut out of his short life.
Step 1: A glass with a friend.
Step 2: A glass to keep the cold out.
Step 3: A glass too much.
Step 4: Drunk and riotous.
Step 5: The summit attained. Jolly companions, a confirmed drunkard.
Step 6: Poverty and Disease.
Step 7: Forsaken by Friends.
Step 8: Desperation & crime.
Step 9: Death by suicide.
1. When men take a little liquor, ... the brain and nerves are stimulated. If they take enough to get slightly intoxicated, they become talkative and boastful, or cross and silly. If they drink more, they lose their judgment. Their passions become violent. They are ready to be excited by small things, and to quarrel. Many of the murders and other crimes, of which we read every day in the papers, are done under the influence of alcohol. Men who when sober are quiet and kind, are changed by it into wild beasts.

2. The man who indulges freely in drink is likely to pay for it the next day. His head aches. He is low-spirited and weak. His stomach is foul. His appetite is gone. He then thinks that he never will take it again. But, when the nerves are accustomed to the excitement of drinking, they will not give it up easily.

3. *Insanity* is another result of drinking-habits. Many of the patients in insane-asylums are brought there by drink.

4. Discord in families, quarrels, murders, sickness, pauperism, insanity, and misery are some of the results of the actions of alcohol on the nervous system.

*What is the price drinkers pay for their decision to drink? Costs? (LIST)*
Anti-Vice

- **Purity Crusaders**: opposed vice (drugs, gambling, prostitution, crime) and wanted to rid cities of immoral activities
Political Corruption

The Trust Giant's Point of View.

"What a funny little government!"
Political machines (corrupt city governments)

- Corrupt – accepted bribes, rigged elections (padded the voting registers with names of dead dogs, children and made-up people), paid off the police to ignore their involvement in gambling and prostitution rings, etc.

- Used the Spoils System (where elected politicians hired friends & family members for powerful government jobs, rather than hiring the most qualified people) to reward people who were loyal to them.

- Put money into improving their own neighborhoods and made sure that city funds were spent on causes people close to them cared about.
Poverty and Housing Conditions

• **Charity Organization Societies:** wanted to reform charity by ensuring that paid agents investigated the “worthiness” of the poor before distributing aid.
  
  – Believed un unregulated and unsupervised relief caused rather than cured poverty – MEANING WHAT?

  – Sent a volunteer “friendly visitor” to homes to offer advice and oversee the family’s progress. These volunteers kept files on families and during their visits, advised families on how to live, how to raise their kids, and what to eat.

  – Interfered with immigrants’ lives & imposed their middle-class standards/values on the poor
Settlement Houses

• Jane Addams declared the settlement's primary mission to be to "help the foreign-born conserve whatever of value their past life contained and to bring them into contact with a better class of Americans."
Birth Control
Margaret Sanger

- Educated as and worked as a nurse, which made her aware of the effects of unplanned & unwelcome pregnancies. Her own mother's health had suffered due to having eleven children.
- Believed women needed access to birth control.
  - In 1912, Sanger gave up nursing to dedicate herself to the distribution of birth control information.
  - In 1914, she founded the National Birth Control League.
  - In 1916, Sanger set up the first birth control clinic in the United States, and the following year, she was sent to the workhouse for "creating a public nuisance."
- Her many arrests and prosecutions, and the resulting outcries, helped lead to changes in laws giving doctors the right to give birth control advice (and later, birth control devices) to patients.
As we read the following excerpt from Sanger’s *The Case for Birth Control* and the reading after it from Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* please take note of the following:

- the author’s goals/objectives in writing the book.
- the strategies used to convince readers of their position. How do they sway their readers? What tactics does they use that make their writing more interesting than a traditional news story?
- how people might have reacted to reading these books.
How often have I stood at the bedside of a woman in childbirth and seen the tears flowing in gladness and heard the sigh of "Thank God" when told that her child was born dead! What can man know of the fear and dread of unwanted pregnancy? What can man know of the agony of carrying beneath one's heart a little life which tells the mother every instant that it cannot survive? Even were it born alive the chances are that it would perish within a year.

Do you know that three hundred thousand babies under one year of age die in the United States every year from poverty and neglect, while six hundred thousand parents remain in ignorance of how to prevent three hundred thousand more babies from coming into the world the next year to die of poverty and neglect?

I found from records concerning women of the underworld that eighty-five per cent of them come from parents averaging nine living children. And that fifty percent of these are mentally defective.

We know, too, that among mentally defective parents the birth rate is four times as great as that of the normal parent. Is this not cause for alarm?

Is woman's health not to be considered? Is she to remain a producing machine? Is she to have time to think, to study, to care for herself?

You will agree with me that a woman should be free. Yet no adult woman who is ignorant of the means to prevent conception can call herself free…
I never felt this more strongly than I did three years ago, after the death of the patient in my last nursing case.

This patient was the wife of a struggling working man--the mother of three children--who was suffering from the results of a self-attempted abortion. I found her in a very serious condition, and for three weeks both the attending physician and myself labored night and day to bring her out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. We finally succeeded in restoring her to her family…

Three months later, I was aroused from my sleep one midnight. A telephone call from the husband of the same woman requested me to come immediately as she was dangerously ill. I arrived to find her beyond relief. Another conception had forced her into the hands of a cheap abortionist, and she died at four o'clock the same morning, leaving behind her three small children and a frantic husband…

I threw my nursing bag into the corner and announced to my family that I would never take another case until I had made it possible for working women in America to have knowledge of birth control.

I found, to my utter surprise, that there was very little scientific information on the question available in America. Although nearly every country in Europe had this knowledge, we were the only civilized people in the world whose postal laws forbade it…

The free clinic is the solution for our problem. It will enable women to help themselves…

Woman must be protected from incessant childbearing before she can actively participate in the social life. She must triumph over Nature's and Man's laws which have kept her in bondage… woman triumph over the laws which have made her a childbearing machine.
Working Conditions & Labor

- Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1904)
  - Wanted to expose the exploitation of the poor and oppressed working in the Chicago stockyards
  - Told the story of a family who came to Chicago from Lithuania with the hope of achieving the American Dream (failed)
  - Description of contaminated meat caught the public’s attention (sold 25 thousand copies in the first 6 weeks)

- President Teddy Roosevelt was supposedly unable to eat his breakfast sausage after reading it
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 mouldy and white—it would be dosed with borax and glycerine, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption. 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 germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but 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. This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shovelled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit.
There was no place for the men to wash their hands before they ate their dinner, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be ladled into the sausage. There were the butt-ends of smoked meat, and the scraps of corned beef, and all the odds and ends of the waste of the plants, that would be dumped into old barrels in the cellar and left there. Under the system of rigid economy which the packers enforced, there were some jobs that it only paid to do once in a long time, and among these was the cleaning out of the waste barrels. Every spring they did it; and in the barrels would be dirt and rust and old nails and stale water—and cart load after cart load of it would be taken up and dumped into the hoppers with fresh meat, and sent out to the public's breakfast. Some of it they would make into "smoked" sausage—but as the smoking took time, and was therefore expensive, they would call upon their chemistry department, and preserve it with borax and color it with gelatine to make it brown. All of their sausage came out of the same bowl, but when they came to wrap it they would stamp some of it "special," and for this they would charge two cents more a pound. . . .
Roosevelt ordered a study of the meatpacking industry after reading *The Jungle* and used the report to pressure Congress and meatpackers to accept a bill to regulate the meatpacking industry.

**Meat Inspection Act of 1906**
- Enforced some federal inspection and mandated sanitary conditions in all companies that sold meat across state lines.
- Meatpackers argued against having to date code the meat and they won – no date coding until years later.
- Helped to restore people’s confidence in the meat industry.

**Significance:** proved that muckrakers and Progressives could bring about a public outcry that could eventually lead to reform/legislation.
Reformers, writers, govt officials used the public outcry around *The Jungle* to push for legislation to regulate the sale of food & drugs

- Americans used a large amount of strong and addictive medicines bought through the mail, traveling salesmen and local stores
- Many packaged/canned foods contained dangerous chemicals and impurities
  - Hostetter’s Stomach Bitters = 44% alcohol
  - Coca-Cola = contained a small amount of cocaine
  - # of medicines were laced with opium
- Many people, including women and children, became alcoholics or drug addicts in the hopes of getting better
- Congress passed the **Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906** to correct some of the worst abuses