The Progressive Movement

- **Progressivism** - a movement to improve American life by expanding democracy and achieving economic & social justice.
- Progressives believed in the benefits of industrialism but sought to correct the evils associated with it.
- Progressives hoped to achieve political, social, & economic reforms
  - **Political reforms**
    - Wanted to wipe out corruption, machine politics, business domination of government
    - Wanted to set up procedures for closer control of govt.
  - **Social & Economic reforms**
    - Wanted to eliminate practices that harmed farmers, workers, tenement dwellers, and consumers
    - Wanted to expand govt. regulation over economy
- **Sources of Progressive support**
  - Farmers - wanted railroad regulation and easier credit
  - Urban Middle Class - wanted regulation of industry and political machines
  - Workers - laws regulating work by women & children, safety requirements, workmen’s compensation benefits
  - Writers - known as muckrakers - including Frank Norris & Upton Sinclair
  - Politicians - including Robert La Follette (gov. of Wis.), Hiram Johnson (gov. of CA.), T. Roosevelt (Prez), and Woodrow Wilson (Prez)
- **Accomplishments of the Progressive Era**
  - Political - city & state
    - Direct primaries - people, not parties nominate candidates
    - Limits on political contributions and campaign spending
“Australian” secret ballot
Initiatives and referendums by citizens
Recall of elected officials
City govts. run by commissions rather than just mayor
Civil service exams reduce # of political appointments
Individual states allowed women to vote

Political – federal
17th Amendment (1913) - direct election of senators
19th Amendment (1920) - Women’s suffrage

Social/Economic – State & local
Regulation of industries
Consumer protection laws
Fair tax laws
Child & women labor laws
Welfare & workmen’s comp. laws
Improved work site safety

Social/Economic – Federal
Regulation of industries & banks
Conservation laws to preserve natural resources
Consumer protection laws
16th Amendment (1913) - income tax
Protection of unions
Federal aid for farmers

Weaknesses of Progressive Movement
Uneven patterns of reform
Some states more progressive than others
Court roadblocks
Many progressive initiatives held up in court
Survival of political machines
Despite political reforms, party bosses were able to evade laws aimed at controlling their activities

The Progressive Era of reform ended by the 1920’s