

## *The Progressive Era Photography Project*

The **Progressive Era** was filled with pockets of grass-roots coalitions that mounted reform movements on the local, state and national fronts by lobbying for policies that would correct political, economic and social inequities. By allowing individuals to initiate and petition for these reforms, it expanded the democratic process for many, but it also increased the people's dependence on the federal government to solve problems. This expansion of the government's responsibilities along with their ability to make long-term systemic changes enabled them to extend their power during another national crisis- The Great Depression.

Photography emerged as a form of technology, communication and art during the mid-1800s. By the start of the 1900's there were thousands of photographers that captured different events, which depicted various lifestyles in the United States. Photography brings history to life; therefore it is an important part of the study of the American experience during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thousands of photographs, which are available from the Progressive Era, characterize the time by featuring reactions to the great changes that occurred in America during the late 19th century. Many of these changes occurred because of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. In the last few years, many photographs have been digitized, which allows people to access them online. This assignment will allow you to examine photographs that exist on the Internet and analyze them for their historical significance.

Explore the following online photography resources (websites are listed below), to see what types of photographs are available. You will then describe what you have seen on the next page.

Websites:

The Triangle Factory Fire:

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine:

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma01/davis/photography/slideshows/slideshows.html>

Touring America: Photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/touring/index.html>

Lewis W. Hine Child Labor Photographs:

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/index.html>

<http://education.eastmanhouse.org/discover/kits/kit.php?id=8>

Votes for Women: Suffrage Pictures:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vfwhtml/vfwhome.html>

Photographs from the Chicago Daily News:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/ichihtml/cdnhome.html>

Jacob Riis:

[http://www.masters-of-photography.com/R/riis/riis\\_articles1.html](http://www.masters-of-photography.com/R/riis/riis_articles1.html)

Lower East Side Tenement Museum:

<http://www.tenement.org/research.html>

Photographs of the Progressive Era:

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/progress/autos/>

American Photographs: The First Century

<http://nmaa-ryder.si.edu/helios/amerphotos.html>

Photography and Social Reform:

[http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA01/davis/photography/reform/progressive\\_era.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA01/davis/photography/reform/progressive_era.html)

American Memory Project:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

Museum of Fine Arts:

<http://educators.mfa.org/galleries/slideshow/2268>

### **Assignment: 1**

Make a detailed list of the websites you visit (must visit a minimum of 4 websites) and describe the types of images that you discovered. To complete the list; include the title of each site, the theme of each site and provide a detailed summary of the photographs that were investigated. You may look for other websites about “Progressive Era Photographs”. However, please check with me to have your site approved.

1. Website #1  
Theme of the collection:  
Describe the images:
2. Website #2  
Theme of the collection:  
Describe the images:
3. Website #3  
Theme of the collection:  
Describe the images:
4. Website #4  
Theme of the collection:  
Describe the images:
5. Website #5  
Theme of the collection:  
Describe the images:

## **TASK:**

After reviewing all of the websites listed, choose 10 of your favorite photographs from the Progressive Era and analyze those photographs. The photographs you select must represent at least 5 of the themes of the Progressive Era listed below:

### **Progressive Era Themes:**

- A. Corporations and Labor: Child labor, unions, worker and consumer protection, Triangle Fire, The Jungle, etc.**
- B. Urbanization and Immigration: Growth of cities, nativism, and settlement houses, etc.**
- C. Women's Rights: Suffragettes, changing role of women in society.**
- D. Progressive Reformers: Politicians, Muckrakers.**
- E. Political changes: Votes for women, government reforms, progressive political interventions.**
- F. Temperance/Prohibition: Moderation or banning of alcohol.**
- G. You may also select a theme of your own choosing— consider: Conservation, Social Welfare, Tariffs, Anti trust Action, Youth Reform.**

While you look for 10 photographs, keep in mind that the objective is to locate photographs that tell a story. Look for photographs that raise questions in your mind with regards to the premise of the picture, the people in the picture, and what the image represents.

### **ASSIGNMENT:**

After you have analyzed your images, create a PowerPoint slide show of your images. Your slide show must have the following features:

Slide 1: Title Page with your name.

Slide 2: A summary in your own words that define the Progressive Era.

Slides 3-12: The selected images and a detailed analysis of the image you found. The analysis describe which theme of the Progressive Era the image represents.

**Critical Thinking:**

- 1) Define the Progressive Era.
- 2) Explain the most important success of the Progressive Era.
- 3) Explain the most significant failure or flaw of the Progressive Era.
- 4) Describe a political, social, or cultural movement today that would be defined as “progressive”.