Steffens, Lincoln (1866-1936), journalist, was born Joseph Lincoln Steffens in San Francisco, California, the son of Joseph Steffens, a banker, and Elizabeth Louisa Symes. In 1870 the Steffens family moved to Sacramento, where Steffens and his three sisters grew to adulthood in an upwardly mobile middle-class family.

After an undistinguished educational experience at the University of California at Berkeley, from which he graduated in 1889, Steffens traveled to Germany to continue his education. During 1889 and 1890 he studied ethics, philosophy, and art history at the Universities of Berlin and Heidelberg. The following year he explored psychology and fell in love with fellow American student Josephine Bontecou at Leipzig University. They moved to Paris in 1891 and studied at the Sorbonne. They secretly married in London in 1891 and returned to the United States in 1892.

Steffens launched a search for employment in New York City. Aided by an introduction provided by his father to Robert Underwood Johnson, associate editor of Century Magazine, he secured a position as a reporter with the New York Evening Post, where he worked on a number of different beats and learned firsthand how to investigate and craft newsworthy articles on local politics, economic conditions, and culture.

Steffens soon became the newspaper's first police reporter. Assigned to cover Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst's crusade against vice and the state legislature's Lexow Committee on police corruption, Steffens regularly prowled lower Manhattan's Mulberry Street, the nerve center of the police and detective forces. There, with the New York Evening Sun's veteran police reporter Jacob Riis as his mentor, Steffens sharpened his skills as an investigative reporter and as a student of corruption, reform, and urban politics.

The investigations into police corruption resulted in the defeat of the Tammany political machine's mayor by a reform candidate, William L. Strong, in 1894. When he assumed the mayor's office in 1895, Strong appointed a board of police commissioners headed by Theodore Roosevelt. As part of his own education, Roosevelt gathered information from a variety of individuals, including Riis and Steffens. While covering Roosevelt's assault on corruption in the police department, Steffens used his column to champion police reform.

Roosevelt's departure in the spring of 1897 for Washington, D.C., and the return of the Tammany forces to city hall in the fall dampened the fires of reform and led Steffens to seek a new position where he could more fully utilize his European education, investigative skills, and reform politics.

Steffens concentrated first on urban government. He traveled from city to city talking with politicians, reformers, crooks, and editors. Based on his investigations, he crafted articles that combined the human-interest approach to writing with the enthusiasm of the crusader and the purposefulness of the reformer. The compelling nature of his articles captured the reading public's interest. His articles on the battle between corruption and reform explored Chicago, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. Published separately in McClure's in 1902 and 1903, they appeared together as The Shame of the Cities in 1904. In many cases he was summarizing information already available to the public, yet Steffens revealed in a striking fashion the abundant nature of government corruption and the equally widespread apathy on the part of the public.

By 1905 the reform impulse had begun to move from the municipal to the state level, and Steffens shifted his attention to the battle for good government in the nation's state capitals. A new series of his articles took shape and in 1906 became The Struggle for Self-Government. Steffens detailed the challenge posed by the ascendency of business interests over the public interest. Just whom did state legislators represent? Were "the people" going to take back their governments?
Now, the typical American citizen is the business man. The typical business man is a bad citizen; he is busy. If he is a “big business man” and very busy, he does not neglect, he is busy with politics, oh, very busy and very businesslike. I found him in St. Louis, defending grafters in Minneapolis, originating corruption in Pittsburgh, sharing with bosses in Philadelphia, deploiring reform in Chicago, and beating good government with corruption funds in New York. He is a self-righteous fraud, this big business man. He is the chief source of corruption, and it were a boon if he would neglect politics. But he is not the business man that neglects politics; that worthy is the good citizen, the typical business man. He too is busy, he is the one that has no use and therefore no time for politics. When his neglect has permitted bad government to go so far that he can be stirred to action, he is unhappy, and he looks around for a cure that shall be quick, so that he may hurry back to the shop.

The commercial spirit is the spirit of profit, not patriotism; of credit, not honor; of individual gain, not national prosperity; of trade not principle. “My business is sacred,” says the business man in his heart. “Whatever prospers my business, is good; it must be. Whatever hinders it, is wrong; it must be. A bribe is bad, that is, it is a bad thing to take; but it is not so bad to give one, not if it is necessary to my business.” “Business is business” is not a political sentiment, but our politician has caught it. He takes essentially the same view of the bribe, only he saves his self-respect by piling all his contempt upon the bribe-giver and he has the great advantage of candor. “It is wrong, maybe,” he says, “but if a rich merchant can afford to do business with me for the sake of a convenience or to increase his already great wealth, I can afford, for the sake of living, to meet him half way. I make no pretensions to virtue, not even on Sunday.”

And as for giving bad government or good, how about the merchant who gives bad goods or good goods, according to the demand? If our political leaders are to be always a lot of political merchants, they will supply any demand we may create. All we have to do is to establish a steady demand for good government. The boss has us split up into parties. To him parties are nothing but means to his corrupt ends. He “bolts” his party, but we must not; the bribe-giver changes his party, from one election to another, from one county to another, from one city to another, but the honest voter must not.

Why? Because if the honest voter cared no more for his party than the politician and the grafter, then the honest vote would govern, and that would be bad—for graft. It is idiotic, this devotion to a machine that is used to take our sovereignty from us. If we would leave parties to the politicians, and would vote not for the party, not even for men, but for the city, and the State, and the nation, we should rule parties, and cities, and States, and nation. If we would vote in mass on the more promising ticket, or, if the two are equally bad, would throw out the party that is in, and wait till the next election and then throw out the other party that is in—then, I say, the commercial politician would feel a demand for good government and he would supply it. That process would take a generation or more to complete, for the politicians now really do not know what good government is. But it has taken as long to develop bad government, and the politicians know what that is. If it would not “go,” they would offer something else, and, if the demand were steady, they, being so commercial, would “deliver the goods.”
Cartoon was created by Thomas Nast. Cartoon shows William Tweed, Peter Sweeney, Richard Connolly and Oakley Hall (all New York city politicians); appeared in *Harper's Weekly.*
Lincoln Steffens *The Shame of Cities*

*The Shame of the Cities* is a book written by American author Lincoln Steffens. Published in 1904, it is a collection of articles which Steffens had written for *McClure’s Magazine*. It reports on the workings of corrupt political machines in several major U.S. cities, along with a few efforts to combat them. It is considered one of several early major pieces of muckraking journalism, though Steffens later claimed that this work made him "the first muckraker."

Though Steffens’ subject was municipal corruption, he did not present his work as an exposé of corruption; rather, he wanted to draw attention to the public's complicity in allowing corruption to continue. Steffens tried to advance a theory of city corruption: corruption, he claimed, was the result of "big business men" who corrupted city government for their own ends, and "the typical business man"—average Americans—who ignored politics and allowed such corruption to continue. He framed his work as an attempt "to sound for the civic pride of an apparently shameless citizenship," by making the public face their responsibility in the persistence of municipal corruption.

Steffens' account of a Missouri politician helped him rise to political prominence in Missouri. The two St. Louis articles, along with another follow-up piece Steffens wrote in April 1904, helped rally support for the politician and helped him be elected governor of Missouri later that year.

In the introduction to *The Shame of the Cities*, Steffens himself draws attention to reform in St. Louis. "The Shamelessness of St. Louis", he claims, finally drove the city’s people to action against the reigning machine, as they worked to prove wrong his claim that the public was apathetic: "From that moment the city has been determined and active, and boodle seems to be doomed."

Steffens' and the other muckrakers' work also helped change the national political climate. Palermo credits the muckrakers and their calls for reform for helping progressive reformers rise to political power in the states, and, to a lesser extent, in Congress, by 1906. Newly elected governors and members of Congress, he notes, followed the muckrakers' example, and "thundered forth their condemnation of the 'interests,' 'the system,' and 'privilege.' Within four years, the progressive movement would be the most potent force in American politics."
Jacob Riis

from Biography.com

Jacob Riis was born in Denmark in May 1849 and emigrated to the United States in 1870. After a series of odd jobs, he became a police reporter, a job he enhanced with his natural photographic skills. Led by his interest in New York City's tenement life and the harsh conditions people living there endured, he used his camera as a tool to bring about change. With his 1890 book *How the Other Half Lives*, Riis put those living conditions on display in a package that wasn't to be ignored, and his career as a social reformer was launched.

**Early Years**

Jacob Riis was born on May 3, 1849, in Ribe, Denmark, and emigrated to the United States in 1870 on a steamship. All he carried with him was $40 and a locket containing a hair from a girl he loved. Upon his arrival in New York City, Riis struggled his way through various jobs—ironworker, farmer, bricklayer, salesman—all jobs that gave him an up-close look at the less prosperous side of the American urban environment.

In 1873, Riis became a police reporter, and he quickly found that his deep dive into New York’s underbelly was just beginning. His beat was the Lower East Side, a neighborhood riddled with crime and poverty. With a little digging, Riis discovered the depth of the area’s despair well represented in the fact that in certain tenement buildings the infant death rate was 10 percent.

**The Photographer**

Riis was moved by what he saw in the neighborhood, and he taught himself basic photography and started taking a camera with him when he hit the streets at night. In a stroke of good timing, flash photography had only recently been invented, and Riis became a pioneer in its use, employing the new technique to capture stark indoor and outdoor night scenes. The images he brought to the public’s eye were full of crowded tenements, dangerous slums and poignant street scene—images of a downtrodden underclass that most readers had only previously read about, at best.

**How the Other Half Lives**

Riis’ unflinching photos appeared in books, newspapers and magazines, and before long they were used as tools for social reform. In 1890, Riis’ book of social criticism, *How the Other Half Lives*, was published, and perusing its pages proved to be an eye-opening experience for the reader.

The book presented statistics about New York’s poverty and contained drawings of the photos from Riis’ unending tour of the city’s worst slums. Riis said that his motivation for presenting such a dark tableau was “that every man’s experience ought to be worth something to the community from which he drew it, no matter what that experience may be.”

The book was an instant success and had an immediate impact. Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt, intent on improving life in New York, famously said to Riis, “I have read your book, and I have come to help.” Together Riis and Roosevelt walked around New York, with Riis showing the future president the deplorable conditions in which so many people lived. Roosevelt was moved to close the worst of the city’s police lodging houses, which he described as “simply tramp lodging-houses,” and demanded that city officials pass the first significant legislation to improve the state of affairs in immigrant neighborhoods.

**Legacy**

Now a legend for his work toward social reform, and for his use of photography to bring previously hidden worlds to light, Riis went on to write many other books, among them (1900), *The Battle With the Slum* (1902), *Children of the Tenements* (1903), and autobiography, *The Making of an American* (1901).

Riis died on his Massachusetts farm on May 26, 1914.
Excerpt from How the Other Half Lives, by Jacob Riis

Be a little careful, please! The hall is dark and you might stumble over the children pitching pennies back there. Not that it would hurt them; kicks and cuffs are their daily diet. They have little else. Here where the hall turns and dives into utter darkness is a step, and another, another. A flight of stairs. You can feel your way, if you cannot see it. Close? Yes! What would you have? All the fresh air that ever enters these stairs comes from the hall-door that is forever slamming, and from the windows of dark bedrooms that in turn receive from the stairs their sole supply of the elements God meant to be free, but man deals out with such a stingy hand. That was a woman filling her pail by the hydrant you just bumped against. The sinks are in the hallway, that all the tenants may have access—and all be poisoned alike by their summer stenches. Hear the pump squeak! It is the lullaby of tenement-house babes. In summer, when a thousand thirsty throats pant for a cooling drink in this block, it is worked in vain. But the saloon, whose open door you passed in the hall, is always there. The smell of it has followed you up.

... What if the words ring in your ears as we grope our way up the stairs and down from floor to floor, listening to the sounds behind the closed doors—some of quarrelling, some of coarse songs, more of profanity. They are true. When the summer heats come with their suffering they have meaning more terrible than words can tell. Come over here. Step carefully over this baby—it is a baby, spite of its rags and dirt—under these iron bridges called fire-escapes, but loaded down, despite the incessant watchfulness of the firemen, with broken household goods, with wash-tubs and barrels, over which no man could climb from a fire. This gap between dingy brick-walls is the yard. That strip of smoke-colored sky up there is the heaven of these people. Do you wonder the name does not attract them to the churches? That baby's parents live in the rear tenement here. She is at least as clean as the steps we are now climbing. The tenement is much like the one in front we just left, only fouler, closer, darker—we will not say more cheerless.

... The twenty-five cent lodging-house keeps up the pretense of a bedroom, though the head-high partition enclosing a space just large enough to hold a cot and a chair and allow the man room to pull off his clothes is the shallowest of all pretenses. The fifteen-cent bed stands boldly forth without screen in a room full of bunks with sheets as yellow and blankets as foul. At the ten-cent level the locker for the sleeper's clothes disappears. There is no longer need of it. Usually the ten- and seven-cent lodgings are different grades of the same abomination. Some sort of an apology for a bed, with mattress and blanket, represents the aristocratic purchase of a homeless person, by a lucky stroke of beggary, has exchanged the chance of an empty box or ash-barrel for shelter on the quality floor of one of these "hotels."

... A strip of canvas, strung between rough timbers, without covering of any kind, does for the couch of the seven-cent lodger who prefers the questionable comfort of a red-hot stove close to his elbow to the revelry of the stale-beer dive. It is not the most secure perch in the world. Uneasy sleepers roll off at intervals, but they have not far to fall to the next tier of bunks; and the commotion that ensues is speedily quieted by the boss and his club. On cold winter nights, when every bunk had its tenant, I have stood in such a lodging-room more than once, and listening to the snoring of the sleepers like the regular strokes of an engine, and the slow creaking of the beams under their restless weight, imagined myself on shipboard and experienced the very real nausea of sea-sickness. The one thing that did not favor the deception was the air; its character could not be mistaken.
Illustration shows the spirits of alcoholism, opium dens, prostitution, gambling, and street crime, as well as the figure of Death, issuing from a tenement house. Cartoon was created by Udo Keppler.
Jacob Riis, a Danish immigrant, worked as a police reporter during the 1880’s, eventually to become a flash photographer who exposed the wealthy citizens to the filth and overpopulation of the urban slums in New York in articles of the New York Sun. In his published photographs and book, How the Other Half Lives, Riis made a massive impact among the middle-class and wealthy citizens by showing the harsh reality of the slums through flash photography. By giving the slum-dwelling people a face in these pictures, the people could no longer overlook them as animals when seeing how they lived in overpopulated and unsanitary structures or even the streets, as seen in this photo. Three young children are sleeping together on the streets over a drain, fending for themselves. Once these photos were uncovered to the public, it inspired people to take action. These photos also sparked muckraking in journalism and the Progressive Era reform movements. Roosevelt [governor of New York at the time] closed the worst of the lodging houses and spurred city officials to reform and enforce the city’s housing policies. To once quote the future President of the United States: “The countless evils which lurk in the dark corners of our civic institutions, which stalk abroad in the slums, and have their permanent abode in the crowded tenement houses, have met in Mr. Riis the most formidable opponent every encountered by them in New York City.”
Florence Kelley was a social reformer who contributed to the development of state and federal labor and social welfare legislation in the United States.

Kelley graduated from Cornell University in 1882. After a year spent conducting evening classes for working women in Philadelphia, she traveled to Europe, where she attended the University of Zürich. There she came under the influence of European socialism; her translation of Friedrich Engels’s *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* was published in New York in 1887. She returned to the United States in 1886 with her husband, Lazare Wischnewetzky, whom she had married in 1884. In 1889 she published a pamphlet, *Our Toiling Children*.

In 1891, she and her husband separated; they were subsequently divorced, and she moved to Chicago and resumed her maiden name. Kelley became a resident at Jane Addams’s Hull House settlement and quickly took her place among the most active and effective workers there. In 1892, she conducted parallel investigations into slum conditions in Chicago and into sweatshops in the tenements. Her reports, together with her contributions to *Hull-House Maps and Papers* (1895), presented a vivid picture of miserable working and living conditions. The Illinois law of 1893 that limited working hours for women, regulated tenement sweatshops, and prohibited child labor was in large part the result of her findings, and in consequence she was appointed to the post of chief factory inspector for Illinois. To further the prosecution of violators, Kelley enrolled in the law school of Northwestern University; she graduated in 1894 and was subsequently admitted to the bar.

In 1899 Kelley moved to New York City to become general secretary of the new National Consumers League, which had grown out of Josephine Shaw Lowell’s Consumers’ League of New York. She retained the post until her death. She took up residence at Lillian Wald’s Henry Street Settlement and set about the work of promoting federal legislation on hours-and-wages and child labor, as well as other reforms. She organized some 60 local and state Consumers’ Leagues and traveled and spoke indefatigably for the cause. Among her publications are *Some Ethical Gains Through Legislation* (1905) and *Modern Industry* (1913); she edited Edmond Kelly’s *Twentieth Century Socialism* (1910). With Wald she led in organizing the New York Child Labor Committee in 1902, and in 1904 she was a founder of the National Child Labor Committee. Her efforts contributed greatly to the creation of the U.S. Children’s Bureau in 1912.
Excerpt from Florence Kelley speech on women, labor, and the power of the ballot

No one needs all the powers of the fullest citizenship more urgently than the wage-earning woman, and from two different points of view—that of actual money wages and that of her wider needs as a human being and a member of the community.

The wages paid any body of working people are determined by many influences, chief among which is the position of the particular body of workers in question. Thus the printers, by their intelligence, their powerful organization, their solidarity and united action, keep up their wages in spite of the invasion of their domain by new and improved machinery. On the other hand, the garment-workers, the sweaters' victims, poor, unorganized, unintelligent, despised, remain forever on the verge of pauperism, irrespective of their endless toil. If, now, by some untoward fate the printers should suddenly find themselves disfranchised, placed in a position in which their members were politically inferior to the members of other trades, no effort of their own short of complete enfranchisement could restore to them that prestige, that good standing in the esteem of their fellow-craftsmen and the public at large which they now enjoy, and which contributes materially in support of their demand for high wages.

In the garment trades, on the other hand, the presence of a body of the disfranchised, of the weak and young, undoubtedly contributes to the economic weakness of these trades. Custom, habit, tradition, the regard of the public, both employing and employed, for the people who do certain kinds of labor, contribute to determine the price of that labor, and no disfranchised class of workers can permanently hold its own in competition with enfranchised rivals. But this works both ways. It is fatal for any body of workers to have forever hanging from the fringes of its skirts other bodies on a level just below its own; for that means continual pressure downward, additional difficulty to be overcome in the struggle to maintain reasonable rates of wages. Hence, within the space of two generations there has been a complete revolution in the attitude of the trades-unions toward the women working in their trades. Whereas forty years ago women might have knocked in vain at the doors of the most enlightened trade-union, to-day the Federation of Labor keeps in the field paid organizers whose duty it is to enlist in the unions as many women as possible. The workingmen have perceived that women are in the field of industry to stay; and they see, too, that there can not be two standards of work and wages for any trade without constant menace to the higher standard. Hence their effort to place the women upon the same industrial level with themselves in order that all may pull together in the effort to maintain reasonable conditions of life.

But this same menace holds with regard to the vote. The lack of the ballot places the wage-earning woman upon a level of irresponsibility compared with her enfranchised fellow workingman. By impairing her standing in the community the general rating of her value as a human being, and consequently as a worker, is lowered. In order to be rated as good as a good man in the field of her earnings, she must show herself better than he. She must be more steady, or more trustworthy, or more skilled, or more cheap in order to have the same chance of employment. Thus, while women are accused of lowering wages, might they not justly reply that it is only by conceding something from the pay which they would gladly claim, that they can hold their own in the market, so long as they labor under the disadvantage of disfranchisement? . . .
Cartoon was created by Life Magazine. Although children had been servants and apprentices throughout most of human history, child labor reached new extremes during the Industrial Revolution. Children often worked long hours in dangerous factory conditions for very little money. Children were useful as laborers because their size allowed them to move in small spaces in factories or mines where adults couldn’t fit, children were easier to manage and control and perhaps most importantly, children could be paid less than adults. Child laborers often worked to help support their families, but were forced to forgo an education. Nineteenth century reformers and labor organizers sought to restrict child labor and improve working conditions.

Introduction: Florence Kelley was a social reformer and political activist who defended the rights of working women and children. She served as the first general secretary of the National Consumers League and helped form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

Kelley was born on September 12, 1859 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the daughter of U.S. congressman William Darrah Kelley (1814-1890). Her father was an abolitionist of strict principles. He taught his daughter about child workers, and several times took her to see young children working in steel and glass factories under dangerous conditions. These visits would influence Kelley in her decision to turn toward advocacy for child labor reform.

Social Welfare Career: In 1891 Kelley joined Jane Addams, Julia Lathrop, Ellen Gates Starr, and other women at Hull House. Kelley’s first job after coming to the Hull House settlement was to visit the area around the settlement, surveying the working conditions in local factories. She found children as young as three or four working in tenement sweatshops. The report of this survey, along with other following studies, was presented to the state, resulting in the Illinois State Legislature bringing about the first factory law prohibiting employment of children under age 14. Based on that success, Kelley was appointed to serve as Illinois’s first chief factory inspector. Kelley was subsequently appointed the first woman factory inspector, with the task of monitoring the application of this law. To advance her credibility as an inspector, Kelley enrolled to study law at Northwestern University, graduating in 1894, and was successfully admitted to the bar.

In 1899 Kelley moved to Lillian Wald’s Henry Street Settlement in New York City and became general secretary of the National Consumers League (NCL). The league was started by Jane Addams and Josephine Shaw Lowell as the Consumers’ League of New York and had the objective of encouraging consumers to buy products only from companies that met the NCL’s standards of minimum wage and working conditions. Kelley traveled around the country giving lectures and raising awareness of working conditions in the United States. One important initiative of the NCL was the introduction of the White Label. Employers who met the standard of the NCL by utilizing the labor law and keeping the safety standards had the right to display the White Label. The NCL members urged customers to boycott those products that did not have a white label.

Kelley led campaigns that reshaped the conditions under which goods were produced in the United States. Among her accomplishments were the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 and laws regulating hours and establishing minimum wages. In 1905 Kelley, together with Upton Sinclair and Jack London, started the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. She gave a series of public lectures in numerous American universities on improving the conditions of labor. During one of these lectures she met Frances Perkins, who became Kelley’s friend and an important asset in the fight for her cause. Perkins became America’s first woman cabinet minister, and contributed toward passing the law in 1938 that effectively banned child labor for good. She also helped organize the New York Child Labor Committee in 1902 and was a founder of the National Child Labor Committee in 1904.

Kelley lobbied Congress to pass the Keating-Owen Child Labor Act of 1916, which banned the sale of products created from factories that employed children aged thirteen and under.
Ida B. Wells-Barnett, née Ida Bell Wells (born July 16, 1862, Holly Springs, Mississippi, U.S.—died March 25, 1931, Chicago, Illinois), African American journalist who led an anti-lynching crusade in the United States in the 1890s. She later was active in promoting justice for African Americans.

Ida Wells was born into slavery. She was educated at Rust University, a freedmen’s school in her native Holly Springs, Mississippi, and at age 14 began teaching in a country school. She continued to teach after moving to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1884 and attended Fisk University in Nashville during several summer sessions. In 1887 the Tennessee Supreme Court, reversing a Circuit Court decision, ruled against Wells in a suit she had brought against the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad for having been forcibly removed from her seat after she had refused to give it up for one in a “colored only” car. Using the pen name Iola, Wells in 1891 also wrote some newspaper articles critical of the education available to African American children. Her teaching contract was not renewed. She thereupon turned to journalism, buying an interest in the Memphis Free Speech.

In 1892, after three friends of hers had been lynched by a mob, Wells began an editorial campaign against lynching that quickly led to the sacking of her newspaper’s office. She continued her anti-lynching crusade, first as a staff writer for the New York Age and then as a lecturer and organizer of anti-lynching societies. She traveled to speak in a number of major U.S. cities and twice visited Great Britain for the cause. In 1895 she married Ferdinand L. Barnett, a Chicago lawyer, editor, and public official, and adopted the name Wells-Barnett. From that time she restricted her travels, but she was very active in Chicago affairs. Wells-Barnett contributed to the Chicago Conservator, her husband’s newspaper, and to other local journals; published a detailed look at lynching in A Red Record (1895); and was active in organizing local African American women in various causes, from the anti-lynching campaign to the suffrage movement.

From 1898 to 1902 Wells-Barnett served as secretary of the National Afro-American Council. In 1909, she participated in the meeting of the Niagara Movement and the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) that sprang from it. Although she was initially left off the NAACP’s controlling Committee of Forty, Wells-Barnett later became a member of the organization’s executive committee; however, disenchanted with the NAACP’s white and elite black leadership, she soon distanced herself from the organization.

In 1910 Wells-Barnett founded and became the first president of the Negro Fellowship League, which aided newly arrived migrants from the South. In 1913 she founded what may have been the first black woman suffrage group, Chicago’s Alpha Suffrage Club. From 1913 to 1916 she served as a probation officer of the Chicago municipal court. She was militant in her demand for justice for African Americans and in her insistence that it was to be won by their own efforts.
…It seems incredible to them that the Christian churches of the South refuse to admit African Americans into their houses of worship save in the galleries or in the back seats. When I told of a young mulatto named James Cotton who was dragged out of one of the leading churches in Memphis, Tennessee, by a policeman and shut up in the station house all day Sunday, for taking a seat in the church, one lady remarked that it was easy to believe anything after that.

…I was asked if Northern churches knew of this discrimination and continued fellowship with the churches which practiced it. Truth compelled me to reply in the affirmative, and to give instances which showed that in every case the Northern churches, which do not practice these things themselves, tacitly agreed to them by the southern churches; and that so far as I knew principle has always yielded to prejudice in the hope of gaining the good will of the South.

…I had especially in mind the National Baptist Convention which met in Philadelphia in June 1892. An effort was made to have a resolution passed by that convention condemning lynching, as the Methodist Episcopal Conference had done at Omaha in May. The committee on resolutions decided that it could not be done as they had too many southern delegates present and did not wish to offend them.
Cartoon was created by John Henry Adams. Going into the election of 1912 President Taft seemingly should have enjoyed a significant advantage when asking for African-American votes. After all, he was the Republican candidate in 1912, the voice of the "Party of Lincoln." Unfortunately for Taft, however, a tenuous political connection with the "Great Emancipator" did not matter as much in the minds of many African American voters as did Taft’s own actions as president. Black leaders were torn between their loyalty to the one party that had given them opportunities and their belief that the Republican Party had never given African Americans enough support and protection in return. The cartoon shows a pot labeled "White Help Only" with Chef Taft giving only a "taste" of the "Federal Offices" stew to an African American stuck on the wrong side of the "color line."
Legacy of Ida B. Wells

Ida B. Wells’ groundbreaking analysis of lynchings at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century chronicled in her autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*, and two pamphlets, *Southern Horrors* and *The Red Record*, has often gone under appreciated. *Crusade for Justice* provides a new way to think about black death and its relationship to modern capitalism. According to Wells, the logic of lynching was not criminal; it was economic. Lynching and mob violence were tactics of economic subordination.

As a result of the publishing of Wells’ findings, $500 was raised for Wells to publish her New York Age article into a pamphlet retitled *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* in 1892. Not long afterwards, in 1895, Wells published a more ambitious project, *The Red Record*. Similar to her first pamphlet but on a larger scale, Wells provided details of lynchings including the victims’ names, dates, location, and alleged motives. The *Red Record* was an account of the research on lynchings she conducted between 1892 and 1894 across the country. The book also included narratives and lynching photographs. The pamphlets were useful in dispelling the rape myth, as they established a clear pattern of using lynchings in the service of white supremacy.8

Wells’ radical inquiry into lynching had a profound effect on the future of civil rights in the United States. Wells is responsible for a number of extraordinary “firsts” in the effort to rid America of lynchings. She was the first person to risk her life, time after time, while conducting dangerous lynching investigations. Wells was the first American to travel abroad to seek international support in the fight against lynchings. She also wrote the first article and pamphlet exposing the economic underpinnings of lynching. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Wells was the first to effectively situate lynching at the crux of American democracy: in order to protect the voting, education, and workplace rights of African Americans, their senseless killings had to stop.
Ida Tarbell was an American journalist born on November 5, 1857, in Erie County, Pennsylvania. She was the only woman in her graduating class at Allegheny College in 1880. The McClure’s magazine journalist was an investigative reporting pioneer; Tarbell exposed unfair practices of the Standard Oil Company, leading to a U.S. Supreme Court decision to break its monopoly. The author of an array of acclaimed works, she died on January 6, 1944.

Early Life
Ida Minerva Tarbell was born on November 5, 1857, in the oil-rich region of northwestern Pennsylvania. Her father was an oil producer and refiner whose livelihood—like many others in the area—was negatively impacted by an 1872 price-fixing scheme concocted by the Pennsylvania Railroad and John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company, who were operating under the guise of the South Improvement Company. As a result of their tactics, many of the smaller producers were forced to sell to Standard, and most of those who didn’t—including Tarbell’s father—struggled to keep their businesses afloat. Witnessing the impact of these events on her family and others left a profound impression on the young girl and would prove pivotal in her later life.

Education
Tarbell attended Titusville High School and graduated with honors in 1875. The following year she enrolled at Allegheny College, where she pursued studies in biology but also began to develop a strong interest in writing. She graduated as the only woman in her class in 1880 and took a teaching job in Poland, Ohio. But after two years, she resigned from her post in pursuit of a writing career.

Chautauquan’ and ‘McClure’
Returning to Pennsylvania, Tarbell became acquainted with the editor of a small magazine called The Chautauquan and was offered a job with the journal. She worked there for the remainder of the decade, holding various positions before becoming its managing editor. In 1890, however, she left both the paper and the country, moving overseas to Paris for several years to pursue graduate studies at the Sorbonne and the College de France.
While in Paris, Tarbell continued to work as a journalist, contributing articles to American magazines. Her work eventually came to the attention of Samuel McClure, founder of the illustrated monthly McClure’s Magazine, which featured both political articles and serialized printings of literary works. Tarbell thrived at McClure’s and during her time with the journal authored numerous successful pieces, including popular biographies of Napoleon Bonaparte and Abraham Lincoln. But it was when Tarbell decided to mine her own past that her writing would achieve its greatest effect.

Groundbreaking Investigation
Like many young journalists of her era, Tarbell had become concerned by the proliferation of monopolies and trusts. In 1900, she proposed a series of articles in which she would use her experiences as a child during the South Improvement scandal to illustrate her points and spent the next several years deeply immersed in research on the Standard Oil Company and John D. Rockefeller’s business practices.
Titled The History of the Standard Oil Company, the first installment was published by McClure’s in 1902 and was so immediately successful that what had been originally planned as a three-part series was eventually
expanded to a 19-part work. In it she exposed Standard’s often questionable practices, including those surrounding the events that had so greatly impacted her family and others in their area decades earlier. The last installment was published in October 1904, at which point it was collected in a book of the same title. Tarbell’s exhaustive study not only gave rise to a new style of investigative journalism sometimes referred to as muckraking but also was instrumental in the 1911 dismantling of the Standard Oil Company behemoth, which was determined to be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act.

'All in the Day’s Work'
Tarbell left McClure’s in 1906 and for the next nine years wrote for American Magazine, of which she was also a co-owner and co-editor. She authored numerous longer works as well, including The Business of Being a Woman (1912) and The Ways of Women (1915), whose traditional conceptions of gender roles put her at odds with the suffragist movement of the era. Tarbell’s less controversial offerings include several extensive books on Abraham Lincoln and her 1939 autobiography, All in the Day’s Work. She also stayed connected to politics for much of the remainder of her life, serving as a member of the Industrial Conference during the administration of Woodrow Wilson as well as Warren Harding’s Unemployment Conference. In December 1943, at the age of 86, Ida Tarbell contracted pneumonia and was hospitalized in Bridgeport, Connecticut. She died there on January 6, 1944. In recognition of her achievements, in 2000 Tarbell was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame, and two years later she was featured as part of a United States Postal Service stamp series commemorating women journalists. Her History of the Standard Oil Company stands as one of the most important works of journalism in the 20th century.
Mr. Rockefeller . . . secured an alliance with the railroads to drive out rivals. For fifteen years he received rebates of varying amounts on at least the greater part of his shipments, and for at least a portion of that time he collected drawbacks of the oil other people shipped; at the same time he worked with the railroads to prevent other people getting oil to manufacture, or if they got it he worked with the railroads to prevent the shipment of the product. If it reached a dealer, he did his utmost to bully or wheedle him to countermand his order. If he failed in that, he undersold until the dealer, losing on his purchase, was glad enough to buy thereafter of Mr. Rockefeller. . . . . . . There is no independent refiner or jobber who tries to ship oil freight that does not meet incessant discouragement and discrimination. . . “If I get a barrel of oil out of Buffalo,” an independent dealer told the writer not long ago, “I have to sneak it out. There are no public docks; the railroads control most of them, and they won’t let me out if they can help it. If I want to ship a car-load they won’t take it if they can help it. They are all afraid of offending the Standard Oil Company.” . . .

[A] community of interests exists between railroads and the Standard Oil Company sufficiently strong for the latter to get any help it wants in making it hard for rivals to do business. The Standard owns stock in most of the great systems. It is represented on the board of directors of nearly all the great systems, and it has an immense freight not only in oil products, but in timber, iron, acids, and all of the necessities of its factories. It is allied with many other industries, iron, steel, and copper, and can swing freight away from a road which does not oblige it. It has great influence in the stock market and can depress or inflate a stock if it sets about it. Little wonder that the railroads, being what they are, are afraid to “disturb their relations with the Standard Oil Company[.]”

So long as the Standard Oil Company can control transportation as it does to-day, it will remain master of the oil industry, and the people of the United States will pay for their indifference and folly. . . We are a commercial people. We cannot boast of our arts, our crafts, our cultivation; our boast is in the wealth we produce. As a consequence business success is sanctified, and, practically, any methods which achieve it are justified by a larger and larger class. . . .

We, the people of the United States, and nobody else, must cure whatever is wrong in the industrial situation, typified by this narrative of the growth of the Standard Oil Company. That our first task is to secure free and equal transportation privileges by rail, pipe and waterway is evident. It is not an easy matter. . . . At all events, until the transportation matter is settled, and settled right, the monopolistic trust will be with us, a leech on our pockets, a barrier to our free efforts.
Standard Oil was one of the world's first and largest multinational corporations until it was broken up by the Supreme Court in 1911. Today's Exxon Mobil Corporation is a direct descendant. The magazine, *Puck*, published this cartoon by Joseph Keppler in 1904 showing an oil tank/octopus labeled “Standard Oil.”
May 15, 1911 | Supreme Court Orders Standard Oil to Be Broken Up

On May 15, 1911, the Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of Standard Oil Company, ruling it was in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act.

The Ohio businessman John D. Rockefeller entered the oil industry in the 1860s and in 1870, and founded Standard Oil with some other business partners. Mr. Rockefeller expanded Standard Oil by buying its competitors and using its size to receive benefits not available to smaller companies, like, for example, discount rates from railroads.

In 1882, Mr. Rockefeller joined with his partners to create the Standard Oil Trust, which controlled a large number of companies that allowed Standard to control refining, distribution, marketing and other aspects of the oil industry. Standard eventually gained control of nearly 90 percent of the country’s oil production.

Standard’s domination of the oil industry came under criticism from both the public and the government. In 1890, Congress passed the Sherman Antitrust Act in an attempt to restrain the power of trusts, banning “every contract, combination in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce.” Standard lost a Sherman-related lawsuit in Ohio in 1892, but it was later able to incorporate in New Jersey as a holding company.

In the early 1900s, after Mr. Rockefeller had retired from Standard, the muckraking journalist Ida Tarbell published a series of articles in *McClure’s* magazine. The series portrayed Mr. Rockefeller and Standard Oil as ruthless and immoral, and the articles contributed to public outrage against Standard.

The Department of Justice filed a federal antitrust lawsuit against Standard in 1909, contending that the company restrained trade through its preferential deals with railroads, its control of pipelines and by engaging in unfair practices like price-cutting to drive smaller competitors out of business.

The Supreme Court ruled against Standard “on the ground that it is a combination in unreasonable restraint of inter-State commerce,” *The New York Times* explained, adding that the court “thus definitely reads the word ‘unreasonable’ into the law.” The ruling, that only “unreasonable” restraint of trade constitutes a monopoly, was received by antitrust advocates as a narrow decision that favored the trusts. The Times reported that “the opinion prevailed that the decision was distinctly favorable to ‘big business.’”

The court’s decision forced Standard to break into 34 independent companies spread across the country and abroad. Many of these companies have since split, folded or merged; today, the primary descendants of Standard include ExxonMobil, Chevron and ConocoPhillips.