The Progressive Movement- Notes

* Child Labor
  + There were 2 million child laborers in the US
  + Most of the unskilled workers in factories (cotton mills) were children
  + No enforced age limit or working hours
* Muckrakers
  + They demand social improvement through political action
  + The main tactic of the movement was to get the public involved and government intervention to stop the worst offenders
  + There had always been muckrakers but the photograph changed the impact b/c there was evidence, not opinion
* Upton Sinclair
  + Upton Sinclair’s “The Jungle”
  + Wrote about meat packing plants
  + This book describes the filthy conditions of stored meat and danger to the workers
  + The conditions horrified the public into demanding changes in the industry
* Jacob Riis
  + The book describes the poverty, disease and crime of NY
  + Rich citizens donated $ and put public pressure on politicians to make changes
* Garment Strikes
  + Nov. 23, 1909, more than 20,000 Slavic/ Jewish immigrants (mostly women, teens/ 20s) launched an 11 week strike against the NY garment industry
  + Bail averaged $2,500 a day, court fines of $5,000
  + One striker had 6 broken ribs from police, a 10 year old girl was sent to a workhouse for 5 days w/out a trial
  + The strike cost the factory over $100,000 in profits
  + The women won only a few demands but started a 5 year campaign for better working conditions
* Triangle Shirtwaist fire
  + Fire engulfed top 3 floors—200 workers trapped on 8th floor
  + 146 people died, mostly teenage girls—smoke inhalation, burned, jumped
  + 3 days to identify bodies
  + Owners tried for manslaughter—not guilty; no laws to break
  + Factory opened within weeks
* *Outcomes of Triangle Fire*
  + Could not ignore reality of sweatshops any longer
  + Concerned citizens, politicians, business leaders led the fight
  + Tammany Hall saw political benefits of allowing change