



# The Progressive Era

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The Age of American Domestic  
Reform



# What was the Progressive Era?

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- The P. era was the period of time during the late 1800's & early 1900's when the federal government began to regulate business, labor, etc. to improve the lives of Americans.
  - Designed to protect the people from the wealth and power of big business and its abuses.
  - Historians date the P. era from 1890-1917.



# Progressives

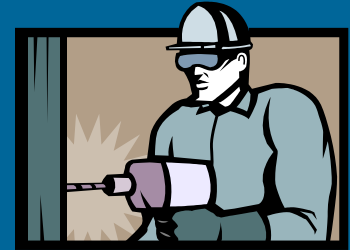
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- Progressives sought change in all policies at all levels of government
  - Initially their efforts were successful at the local level, reforming city bosses like Boss Tweed and the Tammany Hall ring.
  - Gradually their reforms progressed to state and national levels.



# Progressive Goals

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- Some politicians, such as Theodore Roosevelt, and many civilians pushed for better working conditions for the average worker, better living conditions for the poor, the cleaning up of corruption in politics, & environmental conservation.



# The Four Original Goals of Progressivism

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- Protecting social welfare - YMCA
- Promoting moral improvement - prohibition of alcohol
- Creating economic reform - change of individual behavior and busting of trusts
- Fostering efficiency - "Taylorism"
  - Frederick Taylor wrote "The Principles of Scientific Management" in 1911



# Tenets of Taylorism

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- Develop a "science" for every job, including rules motion, standardized work implements, and proper working conditions.
- Carefully select workers with the right abilities for the job.
- Carefully train these workers to do the job, and give them proper incentives to cooperate with the job science.
- Support these workers by planning their work and by smoothing the way as they go about their jobs.



# Who were the Progressives?

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- The reformers were predominantly members of the middle class.
- Women came to the fore in the Progressive era
  - Many proved their value as social workers.
- The Progressives pushed for social justice and general equality



# The Power of the Pen

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- A **muckraker** is a journalist, author, or filmmaker who investigates and exposes societal issues such as political corruption, corporate crime, child labor, conditions in slums and prisons, unsanitary conditions in food processing plants, fraudulent claims by manufacturers of patent medicines and similar topics.



# Muckrakers

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- In the early 1900s, muckrakers shed light on such issues by writing books and articles for popular magazines and newspapers.
- One of the more well known from the early period is Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, (1906) which led to reforms in meat packing in the United States.
- Some of the most famous of the early muckrakers are Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and Ray Stannard Baker.



# Muckrakers

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- “There is filth on the floor, and it must be scraped up with the muck rake; and there are times and places where this service is the most needed of all the services that can be performed.”
- 1906 speech by T. Roosevelt to the House of Reps.
  - Described the role of the journalists who focused on the need for reform in politics, business, and society.



10 CENTS  
A COPY Stage Memories BY Clara Morris \$1.00  
A YEAR

# MCCLURE'S MAGAZINE

FOR JANUARY 1901



PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE S. S. MCCLURE CO., 141-155 E. 25TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY  
10 Norfolk St., Strand, London, W.C., Eng. Copyright, 1900, by The S. S. McClure Co. Entered at N.Y. Post-Office as Second-Class Mail Matter

## Muckrakers

- McClure's Magazine (cover, Jan, 1901) published many early muckraker articles.



# Constitutional Reforms

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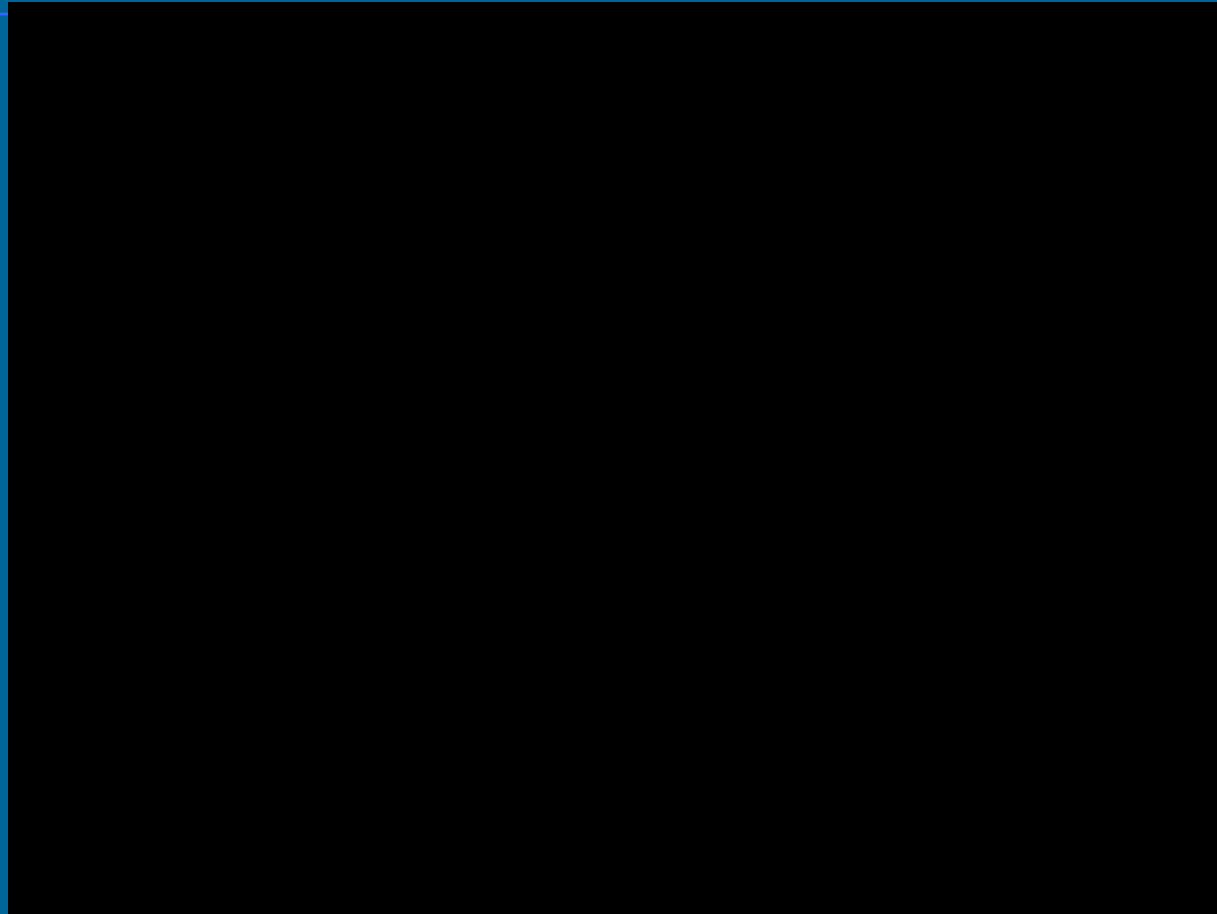


- Prohibition: 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1920)
- Women's suffrage: 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1920)
- Income tax: 16<sup>th</sup> amendment
- Direct Election of senators: 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment



# Women's Suffrage

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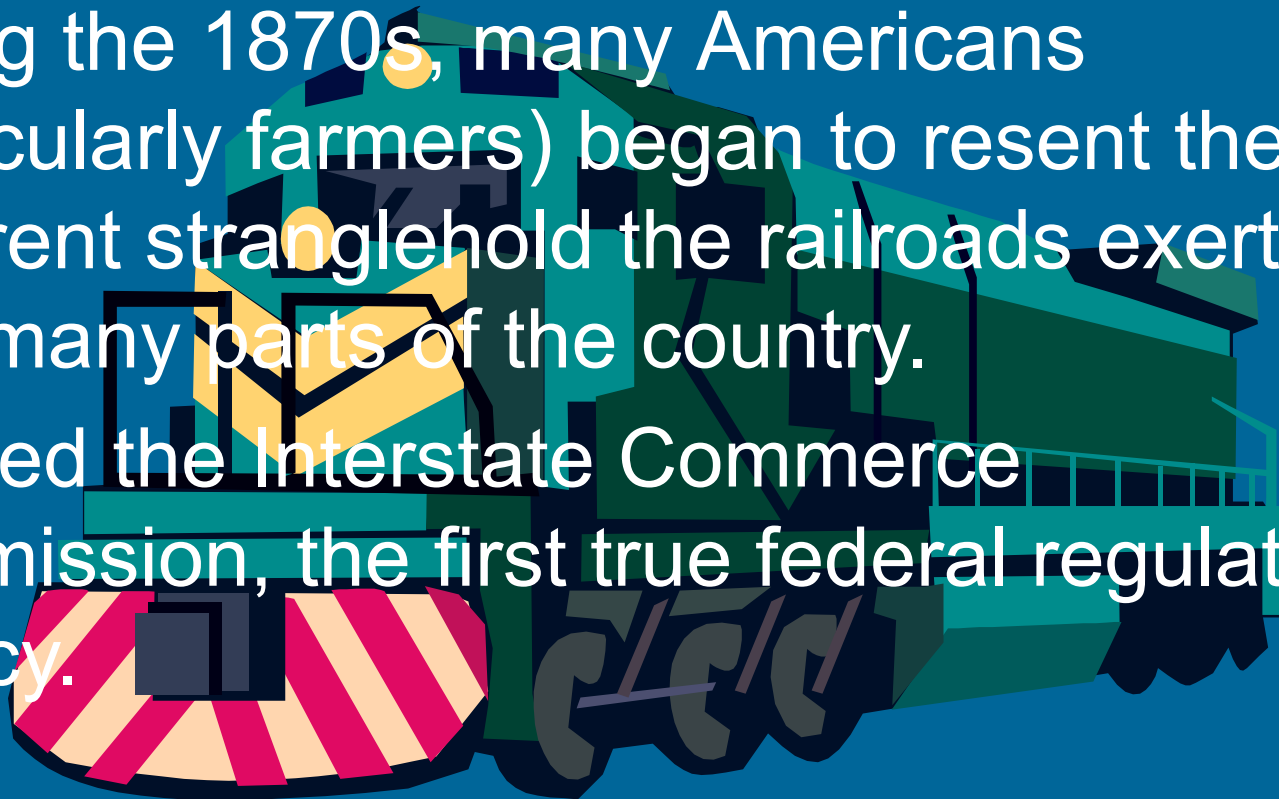




# Interstate Commerce Act: 1887

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- During the 1870s, many Americans (particularly farmers) began to resent the apparent stranglehold the railroads exerted over many parts of the country.
- Created the Interstate Commerce Commission, the first true federal regulatory agency.





# Interstate Commerce Act: 1887

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- designed to address the issues of railroad abuse and discrimination and required the following:
  - Shipping rates had to be "reasonable and just"
  - Rates had to be published
  - Secret rebates were outlawed
  - Price discrimination against small markets was made illegal.



# Sherman Anti-Trust Act: 1890

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- Designed to limit the power of trusts & based on the Congressional ability to regulate interstate commerce
- Declared illegal every contract, combination (in the form of trust or otherwise), or conspiracy in restraint of interstate and foreign trade.
- Authorized the federal government to institute proceedings against trusts in order to dissolve them but Supreme Court rulings prevented federal authorities from using the act for some years.



# Sherman Anti-Trust Act

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- As a result of President Theodore Roosevelt's "trust-busting" campaigns, the Sherman Act began to be invoked with some success.
- In 1904 the Supreme Court upheld the government in its suit for dissolution of the Northern Securities Company.
- The act was further employed by President Taft in 1911 against the Standard Oil trust and the American Tobacco Company.



# Future Implications

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- AT&T breakup of 1980's
- Price fixing by several corporations of the 1960's & 1970's regulated and their monopolies destroyed.





# Elkins Railroad Act, 1903

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- The Elkins Act ended the common practice of the railroads granting rebates to their most valuable customers.
- The great oil and livestock companies of the day paid the rates stated by the railroads, but demanded rebates on those payments.
  - The giants paid significantly less for rail service than farmers and other small operators.
  - The railroads had long resented being extorted by the trusts and welcomed the Elkins legislation.
- The law provided further that rates had to be published and that violations of the law would find both the railroad and the shipper liable for prosecution.



# Future Implications

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- Anti-kick-backs today
- Regulates common carriers of people and freight—UPS, FedEx, Greyhound, Amtrak, airlines



# Hepburn Act, 1906

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- Strengthened existing railroad regulations
  - Increased the size of the Interstate Commerce Commission from five to seven members & gave the ICC the power to establish maximum rates
  - Restricted the use of free passes
  - Brought other *common carriers* such as terminals, storage facilities, pipelines, ferries and others, under ICC jurisdiction



# Hepburn Act, 1906

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- Required the adoption of uniform accounting practices for all carriers
- In appeals situations, placed the burden of proof on the shipper, not the ICC; this was a major change from the previous practice in which the railroads had blunted regulations by lengthy appeals.





# Future Implications

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- Still regulates rates for passengers as well as freight
- Air travel and air freight price controls



# Pure Food & Drug Act, 1906

- Muckrakers successfully heightened public awareness of safety issues stemming from careless food preparation procedures and the increasing incidence of drug addiction from patent medicines, both accidental and conscious.
- Scientific support came from Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, the Department of Agriculture's chief chemist, who published his findings on the widespread use of harmful preservatives in the meat-packing industry.
- The experience of American soldiers with so-called “embalmed beef” during the Spanish-American war added impetus to the movement.



# Future Implications

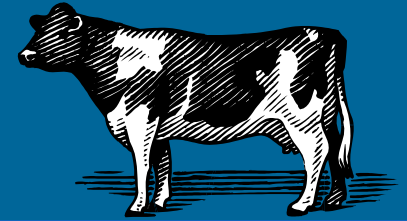
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- Contents of food and drug packages must now be listed on the label
- All additives/chemicals must be listed on the labels, as well.
- Cosmetics are not covered.



# Meat Inspection Act, 1906

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- Companion to the Pure Food & Drug Act.
- Brought the following reforms to the processing of cattle, sheep, horses, swine and goats destined for human consumption:
  - All animals were required to pass an inspection by the U.S. Drug Administration prior to slaughter
  - All carcasses were subject to a post-mortem inspection
  - Cleanliness standards were established for slaughterhouses and processing plants.



# Future Implications

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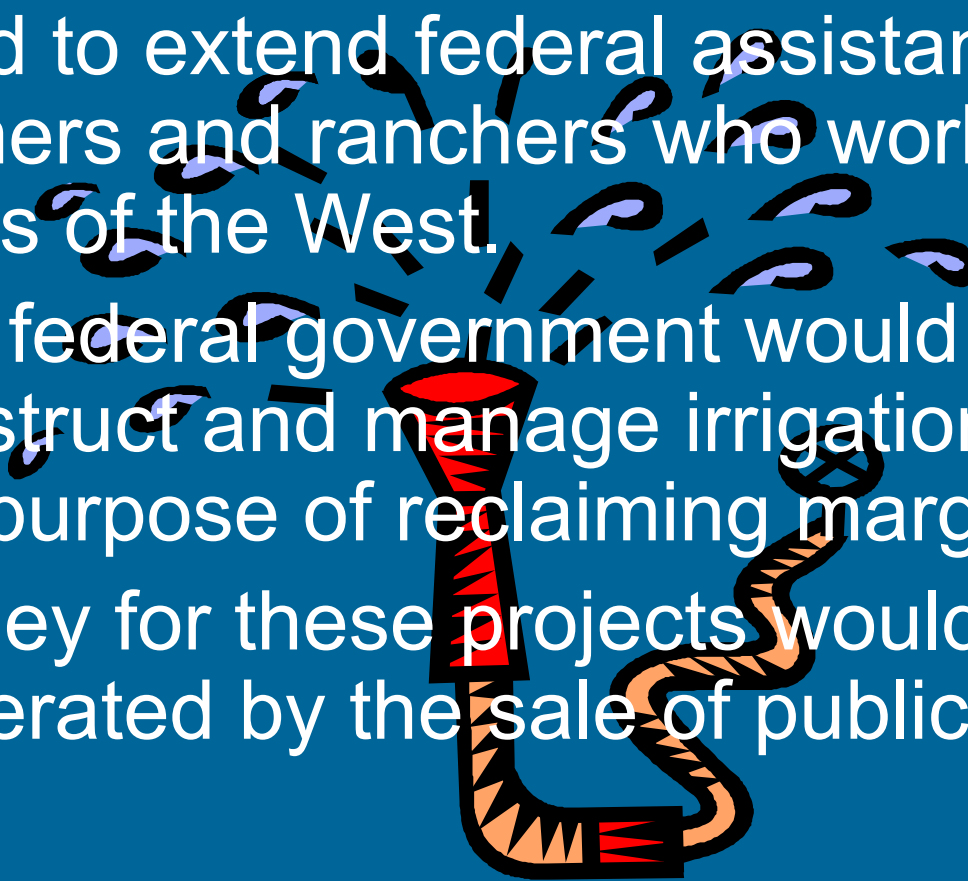
- Meat inspections regulate and grade the meat that is sold
- Fish is still not regulated



# Newlands Reclamation Act, 1902

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- Tried to extend federal assistance to farmers and ranchers who worked the arid lands of the West.
- The federal government would plan, construct and manage irrigation projects for the purpose of reclaiming marginal lands
- Money for these projects would be generated by the sale of public lands





# Newlands Reclamation Act, 1902

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- The on-going expenses of the projects would be supported by fees paid by farmers and ranchers using the water.
- This measure, along with subsequent legislation, brought thousands of new acres under cultivation and placed the federal government front and center in the water distribution question in the West.



# Future Implications

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- Much unusable land was reclaimed for use today
- Many recreation areas created.
- Erosion of much land was halted and many ponds and lakes were created.
- Fed. gov't built dams, tunnels, flumes, etc.





# Shirtwaist Workers Strike 1909 - 1910



**Rosa  
Schneiderman,  
Garment Worker**







Child Labor



# Average Shirtwaist Worker's Week

51 hours or less	4,554	5%
52-57 hours	65,033	79%
58-63 hours	12,211	15%
Over 63 hours	562	1%

Total employees, men and women  
82,360



# Women's' Trade Union League







**Women Voting for a Strike!**



# The Uprising of the Twenty Thousands

- (Dedicated to the Waistmakers of 1909)
- In the black of the winter of nineteen nine,  
When we froze and bled on the picket line,  
We showed the world that women could fight  
And we rose and won with women's might.
- *Chorus:*  
Hail the waistmakers of nineteen nine,  
Making their stand on the picket line,  
Breaking the power of those who reign,  
Pointing the way, smashing the chain.
- And we gave new courage to the men  
Who carried on in nineteen ten  
And shoulder to shoulder we'll win through,  
Led by the I.L.G.W.U.





Local 25 with Socialist Paper, *The Call*



# Social and Political Activists



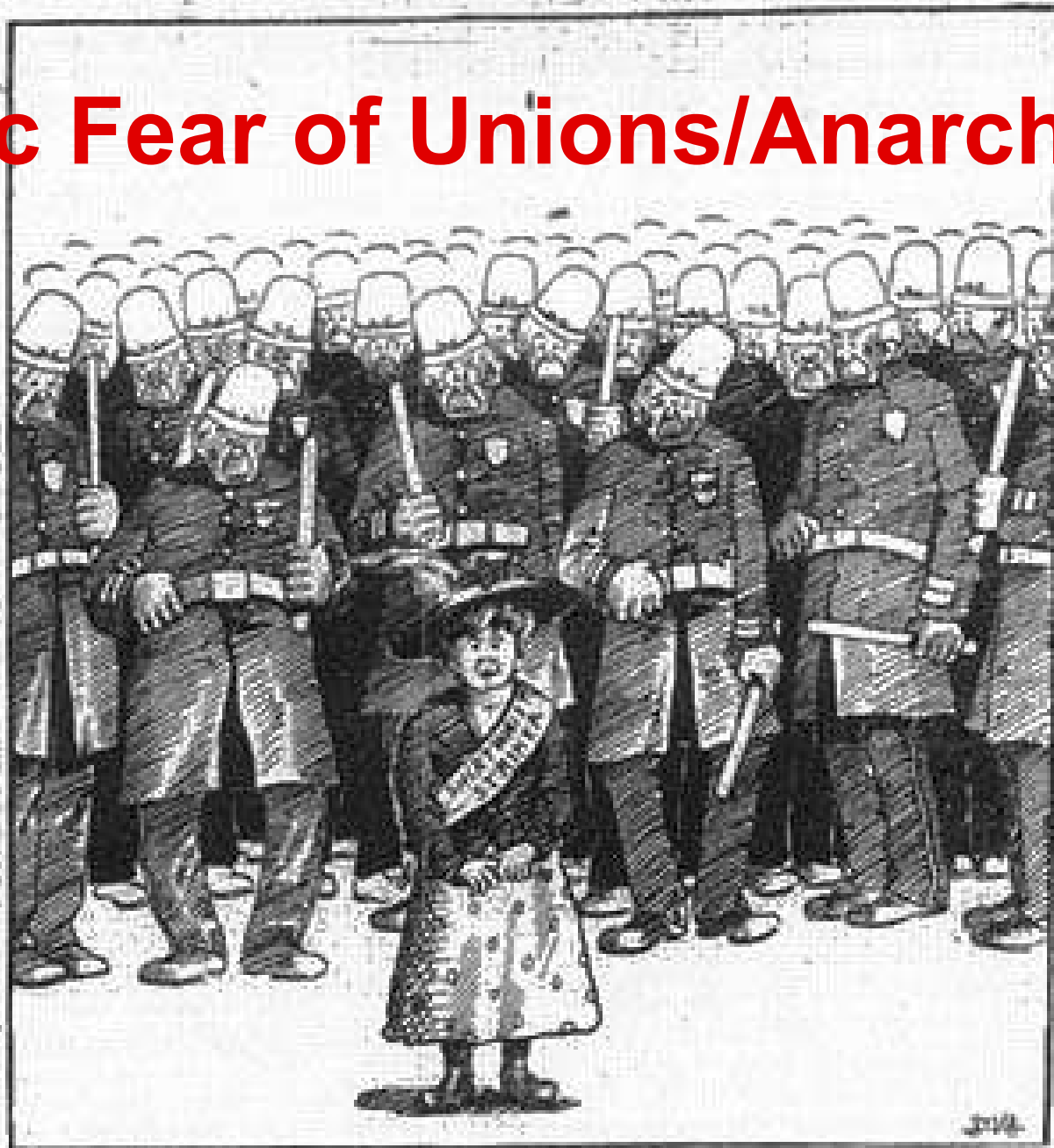
**Clara Lemlich,  
Labor Organizer**



**Carola Woerishoffer,  
Bryn Mawr Graduate**



# Public Fear of Unions/Anarchists



How the Police Are Protecting the Public From the Terrible Shirtwaist Strikers.



# Arresting the Girl Strikers for Picketing







**Scabs Hired**





# The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, March 25, 1911





“The  
Shirtwaist  
Kings”  
Max Blanck  
and Isaac  
Harris





# Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Asch

Building,  
8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>  
Floors





## ■ Contemporary Cartoon



# Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910





# Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910





# Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910





# Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910





# Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910





# Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910





# Inside the Building After the Fire



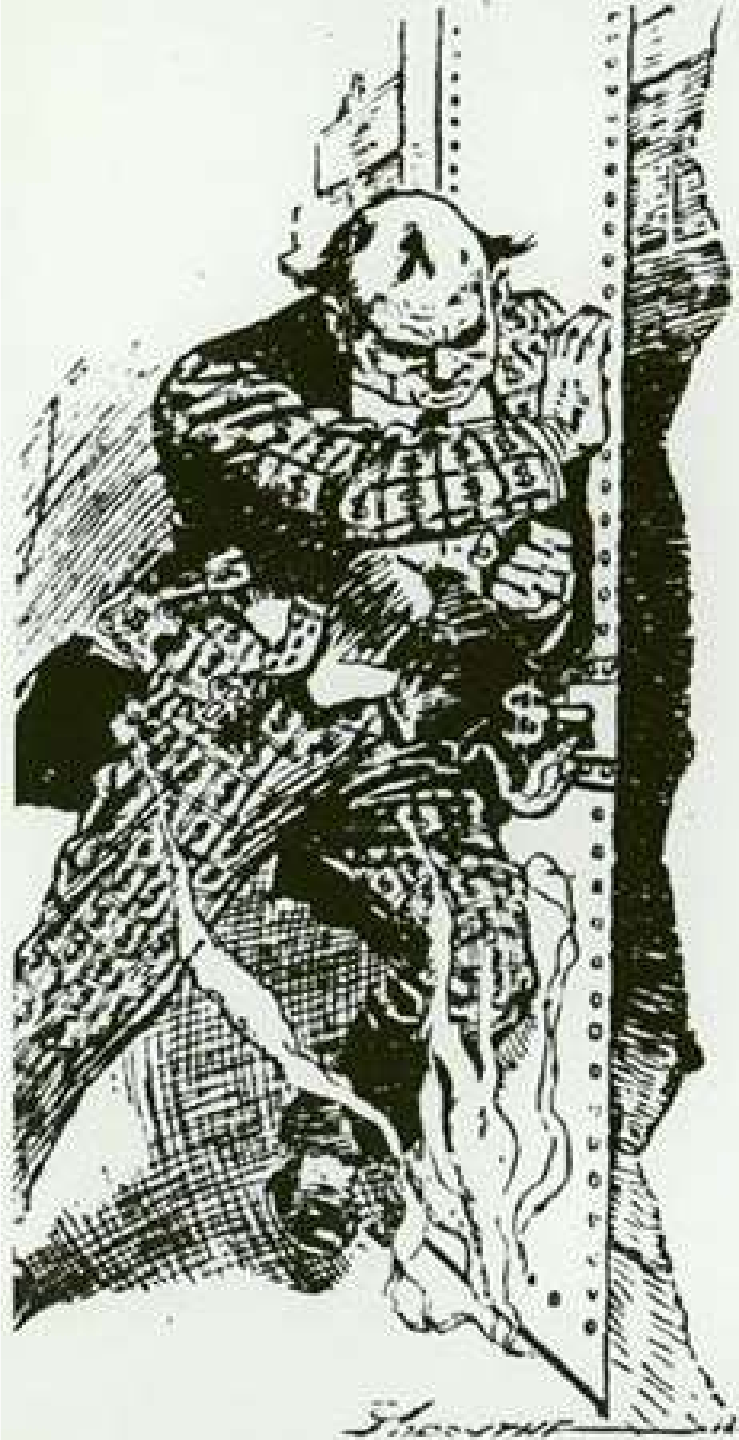


Most Doors  
Were  
Locked



24. Sarah Cammestine  
Swore doors were all locked







# Crumpled Fire Escape, 26 Died

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# One of the Heroes



**25. Joseph Zito**  
Elevator Boy. Performed heroic work



# 10<sup>th</sup> Floor After the Fire







Dead Bodies on the Sidewalk



One of the "Lucky" Ones?



18. One girl who escaped, lost two sisters in fire



Rose Schneiderman

The Last  
Survivor





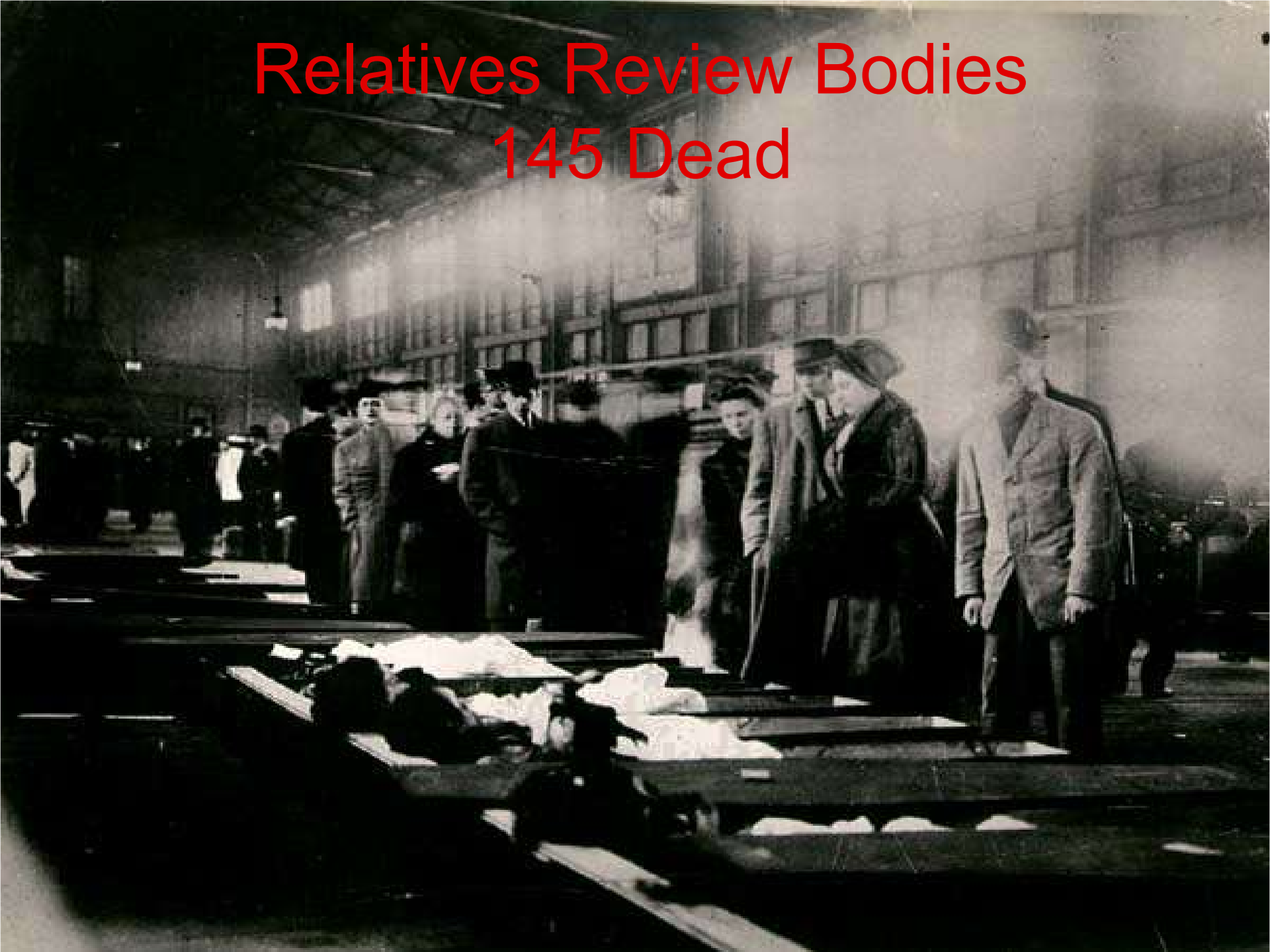


Scene at  
the Morgue



# Relatives Review Bodies

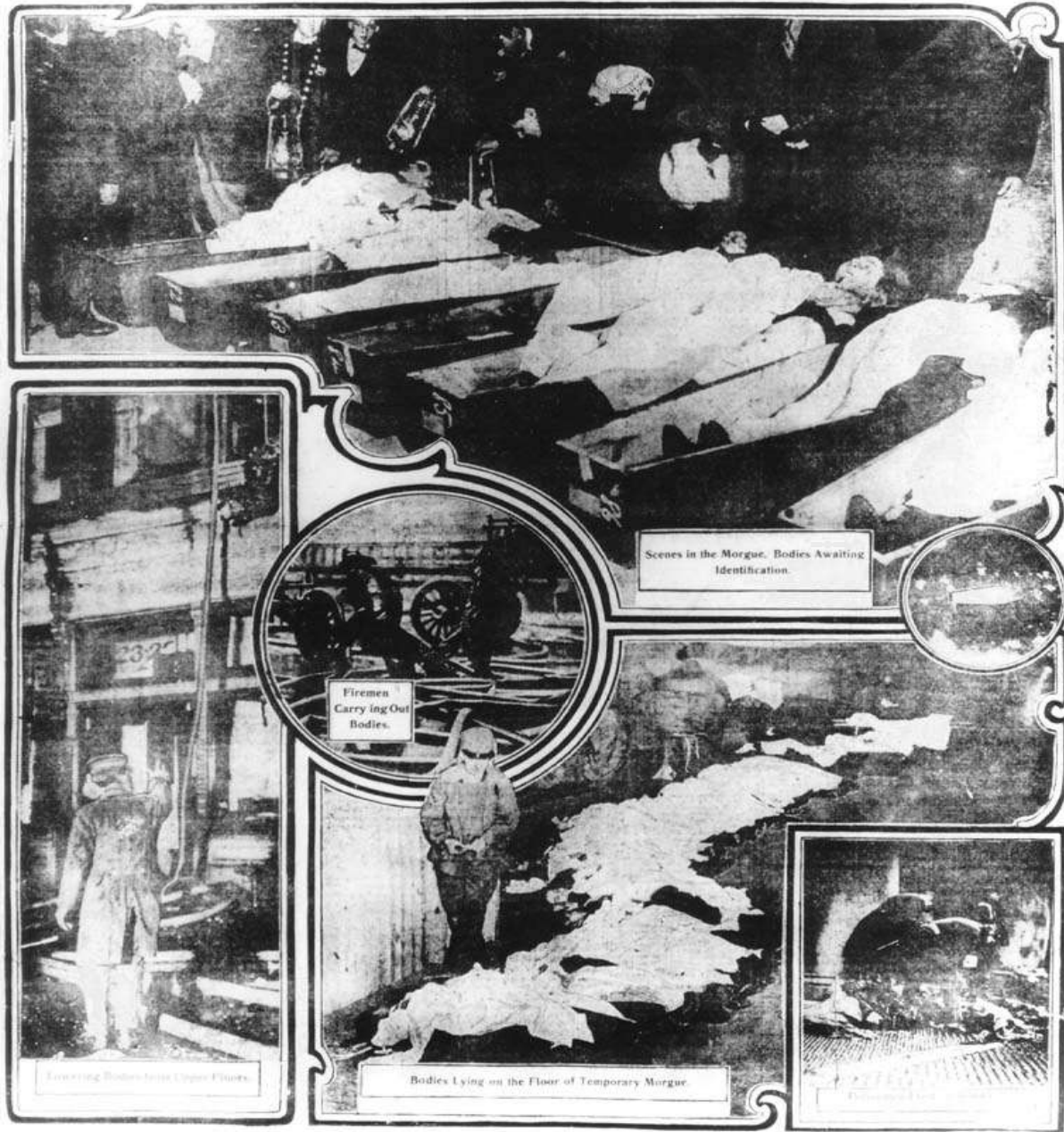
## 145 Dead





# SCENES OF DEATH AND SORROW AT THE GREAT NEW YORK FIRE DISASTER

Photographs taken especially for the Evening Journal.



Scenes in the Morgue. Bodies Awaiting Identification.

Firemen Carrying Out Bodies.

Carrying Bodies from Upper Floors.

Bodies Lying on the Floor of Temporary Morgue.

Discovered Dead.

Page  
of the  
*New York  
Journal*



# One of the Many Funerals





# Protestors March to City Hall





# Labor Unions March as Mourners







Women Workers March  
to City Hall





26. Mayor Gaynor

Commissioner Waldo

Chief Croker

It is now up to them for investigation

The Investigation



# INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS!





Francis Perkins  
Future Secretary  
Of Labor



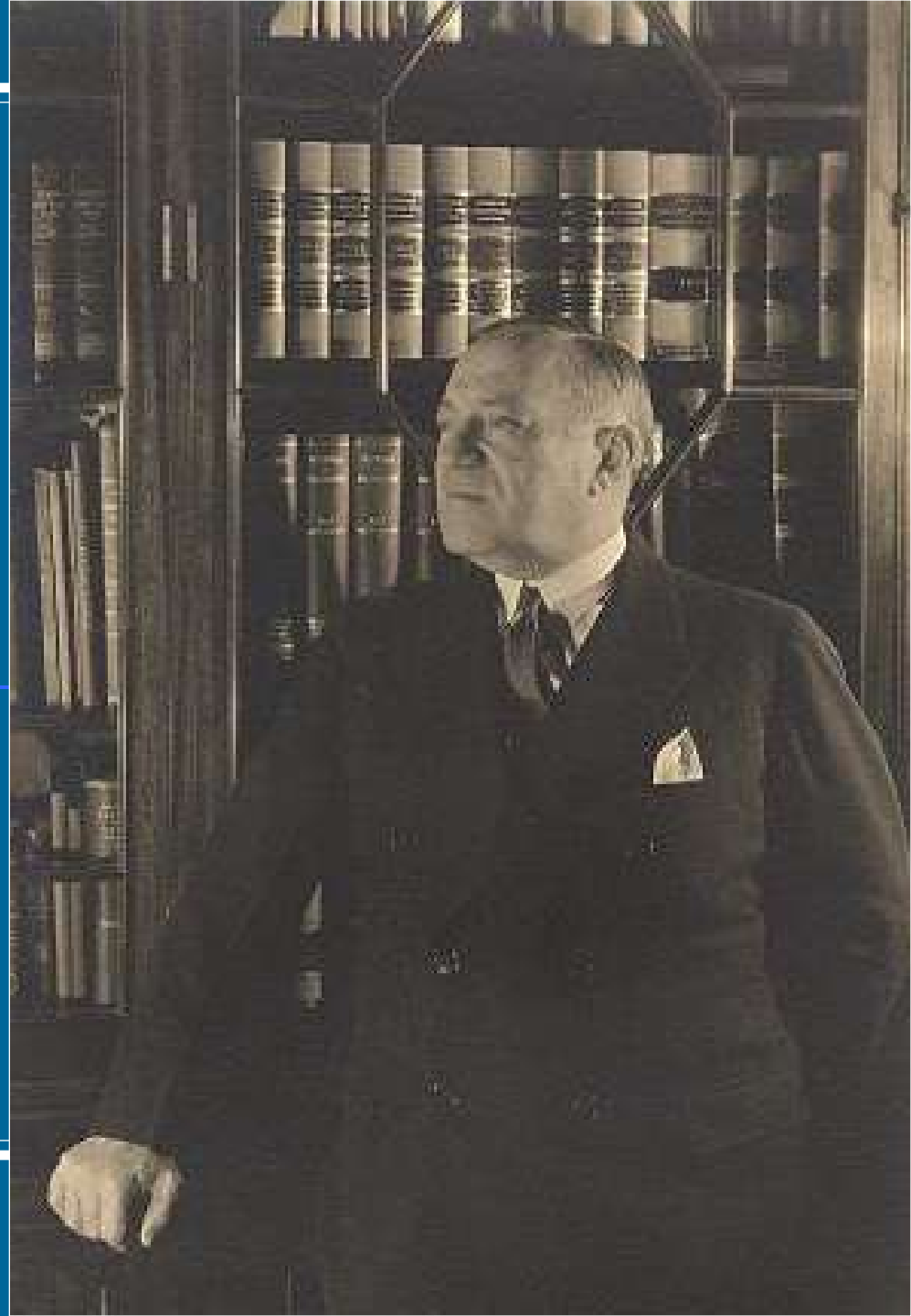


Alfred E. Smith –  
Future NYC  
Mayor and  
Presidential  
Candidate





Future  
Senator  
Robert  
Wagner





# Out of the Ashes

- ▶ ILGWU membership surged.
- ▶ NYC created a Bureau of Fire Prevention.
- ▶ New strict building codes were passed.
- ▶ Tougher fire inspection of sweatshops.
- ▶ Growing momentum of support for women's suffrage.



# The Foundations Were Laid for the New Deal Here in 1911

- ▶ Al Smith ran unsuccessfully in 1928 on many of the reform programs that would be successful for another New Yorker 4 years later – FDR.



# Foundations

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- In the 1930s, the federal government created OSHA [the Occupational Safety & Health Administration].
- The Wagner Act.
- Francis Perkins → first female Cabinet member [Secretary of Labor] in FDR's administration.



# *History of the Needlecraft Industry by Ernest Feeney, 1938*

