and other reformers believed that wealth inequality eroded democracy and reformers had to win back for the people the power usurped by the moneyed trusts. But what exactly were these "trusts," and why did it suddenly seem so important to reform them?[22]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a trust was a monopoly or cartel associated with the large corporations of the Gilded and Progressive Eras who entered into agreements—legal or otherwise—or consolidations to exercise exclusive control over a specific product or industry under the control of a single entity. Certain types of monopolies, specifically for intellectual property like copyrights, patents, trademarks, and trade secrets, are protected under the Constitution "to promote the progress of science and useful arts," but for powerful entities to control entire national markets was something wholly new, and, for many Americans, wholly unsettling.

The rapid industrialization, technological advancement, and urban growth of the 1870s and 1880s triggered major changes in the way businesses structured themselves. The Second Industrial Revolution, made possible by available natural resources, growth in the labor supply through immigration, increasing capital, new legal economic entities,

This illustration shows a Standard Oil storage tank as an octopus with tentacles wrapped around the steel, copper, and shipping industries, as well as a state house and the U.S. Capitol. The only building not yet within reach of the octopus is the White House—President Teddy Roosevelt had won a reputation as a trust buster. Udo Keppler, *Next!*, 1904. Library of Congress.

novel production strategies, and a growing national market, was commonly asserted to be the natural product of the federal government's laissez faire, or "hands off," economic policy. An unregulated business climate, the argument went, allowed for the growth of major trusts, most notably Andrew Carnegie's Carnegie Steel (later consolidated with other producers as U.S. Steel) and John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company. Each displayed the vertical and horizontal integration strategies common to the new trusts: Carnegie first used vertical integration by controlling every phase of business (raw materials, transportation, manufacturing, distribution), and Rockefeller adhered to horizontal integration by buying out competing refineries. Once dominant in a market, critics alleged, the trusts could artificially inflate prices, bully rivals, and bribe politicians.

Between 1897 and 1904, over four thousand companies were consolidated down into 257 corporate firms. As one historian wrote, "By 1904 a total of 318 trusts held 40% of US manufacturing assets and boasted a capitalization of $7 billion, seven times bigger than the US national debt."[23] With the twentieth century came the age of monopoly. Mergers and the aggressive business policies of wealthy men such as Carnegie and Rockefeller earned them the epithet *robber barons*. Their cutthroat stifling of economic competition, mistreatment of workers, and corruption of politics sparked an opposition that pushed for regulations to rein in the power of monopolies. The great corporations became a major target of reformers.

Big business, whether in meatpacking, railroads, telegraph lines, oil, or steel, posed new problems for the American legal system. Before the Civil War, most businesses operated in a single state. They might ship goods across state lines or to other countries, but they typically had offices and factories in just one state. Individual states naturally regulated industry and commerce. But extensive railroad routes crossed several state lines and new mass-producing corporations operated across the nation, raising questions about where the authority to regulate such practices rested. During the 1870s, many states passed laws to check the growing power of vast new corporations. In the Midwest, farmers formed a network of organizations that were part political pressure group, part social club, and part mutual aid society. Together they pushed for so-called Granger laws that regulated railroads and other new companies. Railroads and others opposed these regulations because they restrained profits and because of the difficulty of meeting the standards of each state's separate regulatory laws. In 1877, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld these laws in a series of rulings, finding in cases such as *Munn v. Illinois* and *Stone v. Wisconsin* that railroads and other companies of such size necessarily affected the public interest and could thus be regulated by individual states. In *Munn*, the court declared, "Property does become clothed with a public interest when used in a manner to make it of public consequence, and affect the community at large. When, therefore, one devoted his property to a use in which the public has an interest, he, in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use, and must submit to be controlled by the public for the common good, to the extent of the interest he has thus created."[24]

Later rulings, however, conceded that only the federal government could constitutionally regulate interstate commerce and the new national businesses operating it. And as more and more power and capital and market share flowed to the great corporations, the onus of regulation passed to the federal government. In 1887, Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act, which established the Interstate Commerce Commission to stop discriminatory and predatory pricing practices. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 aimed to limit anticompetitive practices, such as those institutionalized in cartels and monopolistic corporations. It stated that a "trust . . . or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce . . . is declared to be illegal" and that those who "monopolize . . . any part of the trade or commerce . . . shall be deemed guilty."[25] The Sherman Anti-Trust Act declared that not all monopolies were illegal, only those that "unreasonably" stifled free trade. The courts seized on the law's vague language, however, and the act was turned against itself, manipulated and used, for instance, to limit the growing power of labor unions. Only in 1914, with the Clayton Anti-Trust Act, did Congress attempt to close loopholes in previous legislation.

Aggression against the trusts—and the progressive vogue for "trust busting"—took on new meaning under the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, a reform-minded Republican who ascended to the presidency after the death of William McKinley in 1901. Roosevelt's youthful energy and confrontational politics captivated the nation.[26] Roosevelt was by no means antibusiness. Instead, he envisioned his presidency as a mediator between opposing forces, such as between labor unions and corporate executives. Despite his own wealthy background, Roosevelt pushed for antitrust legislation and regulations, arguing that the courts could not be relied on to break up the trusts. Roosevelt also used his own moral judgment to determine which monopolies he would pursue. Roosevelt believed that there were good and bad trusts, necessary monopolies and corrupt ones. Although his reputation as a trust buster was wildly exaggerated, he was the first major national politician to go after the trusts. "The great corporations which we have grown to speak of rather loosely as trusts," he said, "are the creatures of the State, and the State not only has the right to control them, but it is in duty bound to control them wherever the need of such control is shown."[27]

His first target was the Northern Securities Company, a "holding" trust in which several wealthy bankers, most famously J. P. Morgan, used to hold controlling shares in all the major railroad companies in the American Northwest. Holding trusts had emerged as a way to circumvent the Sherman Anti-Trust Act: by controlling the majority of shares, rather than the principal, Morgan and his collaborators tried to claim that it was not a monopoly. Roosevelt's administration sued and won in court, and in 1904 the Northern Securities Company was ordered to disband into separate competitive companies. Two years later, in 1906, Roosevelt signed the Hepburn Act, allowing the Interstate Commerce Commission to regulate best practices and set reasonable rates for the railroads.

Roosevelt was more interested in regulating corporations than breaking them apart. Besides, the courts were slow and unpredictable. However, his successor after 1908, William Howard Taft, firmly believed in court-oriented trust busting and during his four years in office more than doubled the number of monopoly breakups that occurred during Roosevelt's seven years in office. Taft notably went after Carnegie's U.S. Steel, the world's first billion-dollar corporation formed from the consolidation of nearly every major American steel producer.

Trust busting and the handling of monopolies dominated the election of 1912. When the Republican Party spurned Roosevelt's return to politics and renominated the incumbent Taft, Roosevelt left and formed his own coalition, the Progressive or "Bull Moose" Party. Whereas Taft took an all-encompassing view on the illegality of monopolies, Roosevelt adopted a New Nationalism program, which once again emphasized the regulation of already existing corporations or the expansion of federal power over the economy. In contrast, Woodrow Wilson, the Democratic Party nominee, emphasized in his New Freedom agenda neither trust busting nor federal regulation but rather small-business incentives so that individual companies could increase their competitive chances. Yet once he won the election, Wilson edged nearer to Roosevelt's position, signing the Clayton Anti-Trust Act of 1914. The Clayton Anti-Trust Act substantially enhanced the Sherman Act, specifically regulating mergers and price discrimination and protecting labor's access to collective bargaining and related strategies of picketing, boycotting, and protesting. Congress further created the Federal Trade Commission to enforce the Clayton Act, ensuring at least some measure of implementation.[28]

While the three presidents—Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson—pushed the development and enforcement of antitrust law, their commitments were uneven, and trust busting itself manifested the political pressure put on politicians by the workers, farmers, and progressive writers who so strongly drew attention to the ramifications of trusts and corporate capital on the lives of everyday Americans.

V. Progressive Environmentalism

The potential scope of environmental destruction wrought by industrial capitalism was unparalleled in human history. Professional bison hunting expeditions nearly eradicated an entire species, industrialized logging companies denuded whole forests, and chemical plants polluted an entire region's water supply. As American development and industrialization marched westward, reformers embraced environmental protections.

Historians often cite preservation and conservation as two competing strategies that dueled for supremacy among environmental reformers during the Progressive Era. The tensions between these two approaches crystalized in the debate over a proposed dam in the Hetch Hetchy Valley in California. The fight revolved around the provision of water for San Francisco. Engineers identified the location where the Tuolumne River ran through Hetch Hetchy as an ideal site for a reservoir. The project had been suggested in the 1880s but picked up momentum in the early twentieth century. But the valley was located inside Yosemite National Park. (Yosemite was designated a national park in 1890, though the land had been set aside earlier in a grant approved by President Lincoln in 1864.) The debate over Hetch Hetchy revealed two distinct positions on the value of the valley and on the purpose of public lands.

John Muir, a naturalist, a writer, and founder of the Sierra Club, invoked the "God of the Mountains" in his defense of the valley in its supposedly pristine condition. Gifford Pinchot, arguably the father of American forestry and a key player in the federal management of national forests, meanwhile emphasized what he understood to be the purpose of conservation: "to take every part of the land and its resources and put it to that use in which it will serve the most people." Muir took a wider view of what the people needed, writing that "everybody needs beauty as well as bread."[29] These dueling arguments revealed the key differences in environmental thought: Muir, on the side of the preservationists, advocated setting aside pristine lands for their aesthetic and spiritual value, for those who could take his advice to "[get] in touch with the nerves of Mother Earth."[30] Pinchot, on the other hand, led the charge for conservation, a kind of environmental utilitarianism that emphasized the efficient use of available resources, through planning and control and "the prevention of waste."[31] In Hetch Hetchy, conservation won out. Congress approved the project in 1913. The dam was built and the valley flooded for the benefit of San Francisco residents.

While preservation was often articulated as an escape from an increasingly urbanized and industrialized way of life and as a welcome respite from the challenges of modernity (at least, for those who had the means to escape), the conservationists were more closely aligned with broader trends in American society. Although the "greatest good for the greatest number" was very nearly the catchphrase of conservation, con-

Photograph of the Hetch Hetchy Valley before damming, January 1908. Wikimedia.

servationist policies most often benefited the nation's financial interests. For example, many states instituted game laws to regulate hunting and protect wildlife, but laws could be entirely unbalanced. In Pennsylvania, local game laws included requiring firearm permits for noncitizens, barred hunting on Sundays, and banned the shooting of songbirds. These laws disproportionately affected Italian immigrants, critics said, as Italians often hunted songbirds for subsistence, worked in mines for low wages every day but Sunday, and were too poor to purchase permits or to pay the fines levied against them when game wardens caught them breaking these new laws. Other laws, for example, offered up resources to businesses at costs prohibitive to all but the wealthiest companies and individuals, or with regulatory requirements that could be met only by companies with extensive resources.

But Progressive Era environmentalism addressed more than the management of American public lands. After all, reformers addressing issues facing the urban poor were also doing environmental work. Settlement house workers like Jane Addams and Florence Kelley focused on questions of health and sanitation, while activists concerned with working conditions, most notably Dr. Alice Hamilton, investigated both worksite hazards and occupational and bodily harm. The progressives' commitment to the provision of public services at the municipal level meant more coordination and oversight in matters of public health, waste management, and even playgrounds and city parks. Their work focused on the intersection of communities and their material environments, highlighting the urgency of urban environmental concerns.

While reform movements focused their attention on the urban poor, other efforts targeted rural communities. The Country Life movement, spearheaded by Liberty Hyde Bailey, sought to support agrarian families and encourage young people to stay in their communities and run family farms. Early-twentieth-century educational reforms included a

Taken almost a century after the previous image, this 2002 photograph shows the difference caused by the valley's damming. Wikimedia.

commitment to environmentalism at the elementary level. Led by Bailey and Anna Botsford Comstock, the nature study movement took students outside to experience natural processes and to help them develop observational skills and an appreciation for the natural world.

Other examples highlight the interconnectedness of urban and rural communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The extinction of the North American passenger pigeon reveals the complexity of Progressive Era relationships between people and nature. Passenger pigeons were actively hunted, prepared at New York's finest restaurants and in the humblest of farm kitchens. Some hunted them for pay; others shot them in competitions at sporting clubs. And then they were gone, their ubiquity giving way only to nostalgia. Many Americans took notice at the great extinction of a species that had perhaps numbered in the billions and then was eradicated. Women in Audubon Society chapters organized against the fashion of wearing feathers—even whole birds—on ladies' hats. Upper- and middle-class women made up the lion's share of the membership of these societies. They used their social standing to fight for birds. Pressure created national wildlife refuges and key laws and regulations that included the Lacey Act of 1900, banning the shipment of species killed illegally across state lines. Examining how women mobilized contemporary notions of womanhood in the service of protecting birds reveals a tangle of cultural and economic processes. Such examples also reveal the range of ideas, policies, and practices wrapped up in figuring out what—and who—American nature should be for.

VI. Jim Crow and African American Life

America's tragic racial history was not erased by the Progressive Era. In fact, in all too many ways, reform removed African Americans ever farther from American public life. In the South, electoral politics remained a parade of electoral fraud, voter intimidation, and race-baiting. Democratic Party candidates stirred southern whites into frenzies with warnings of "negro domination" and of black men violating white women. The region's culture of racial violence and the rise of lynching as a mass public spectacle accelerated. And as the remaining African American voters threatened the dominance of Democratic leadership in the South, southern Democrats turned to what many white southerners understood as a series of progressive electoral and social reforms—disenfranchisement and segregation. Just as reformers would clean up politics by taming city