undercover to expose abuses in mental asylums. William T. Stead earned both admiration and resentment for If Christ Came to Chicago (1894), his expose of Chicago’s political corruption and its gambling and prostitution racketers. Stead died in the sinking of the Titanic after a colorful career as a muckraking journalist in the United States, Australia, and his native England.

Muckraking got its name following the publication of journalist David Graham Phillips’s series, “The Treason of the Senate,” which appeared in Cosmopolitan in 1906. Phillips’s articles accused politicians in both parties of accepting bribes from lobbyists. President Theodore Roosevelt responded in a speech complaining that crusading journalists were overly obsessed with squalor and scandal. He compared them to an unappealing character in the 17th-century religious allegory, Pilgrim’s Progress, “the man who could look no way but downward with the muck-rake in his hands.” Although Roosevelt championed many of the reforms backed by the muckraking journals, he took offense at articles criticizing some of his political associates. The journalists themselves felt they were being maligned by Roosevelt’s label, but the name muckraker stuck. The muckrakers’ social reform successes included the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act and more than four dozen legislative curbs on big business combinations (trusts) during Roosevelt’s administration alone. The writers of the muckraking era inspired later generations of investigative journalists.

SEE ALSO
Journalism; Literature; Photography; Pure Food and Drug Act (1906); Regulation; Riis, Jacob; Roosevelt, Theodore; Sinclair, Upton Beall; Wells-Barnett, Ida B.

FURTHER READING

Muir, John

- Born: Apr. 21, 1838, Dunbar, Scotland
- Education: three years at the University of Wisconsin
- Accomplishments: founder, Sierra Club (1892); author, Our National Parks (1901), 12 other books, and more than 300 articles
- Died: Dec. 24, 1914, Los Angeles, Calif.

JOHN MUIR was 11 when his family emigrated from Scotland to a farm near Portage, Wisconsin, where he and his younger brother roamed the countryside, reveling in the beauties of nature. Young Muir’s inventions, including an alarm system that tipped him out of bed in the morning, won prizes at the Wisconsin State Fair. He spent three years at the University of Wisconsin before beginning a life of travel and odd jobs. Nearly blinded in an accident, Muir decided to cherish his eyesight and observe the natural world. His travels took him all over the United States and down into Central America. In California he explored the Sierra Nevada mountain range, making it his spiritual home, and lived in Yosemite as a shepherd.

In the 1870s Muir began to write. His travel books, nature studies, and lyrical articles about the Sierras and Yosemite gained him a national audience. His writings had a spiritual quality that was both compelling and energizing. He called on Americans to protect the country’s natural beauty for their own enjoyment and to conserve it for future generations. “Only by going alone in silence, without baggage, can one truly get into the heart of the wilderness. All other travel is mere dust and hotels and baggage and chatter,” he wrote in a letter to his wife in 1888. Luminaries such as poet Ralph Waldo Emerson and President Theodore Roosevelt came to consult with Muir. Government officials were impressed with his passionate love of nature. His influence led to the preservation of vast areas of natural beauty and the creation of Sequoia, Yosemite, Mr. Rainier, Petrified Forest, and Grand Canyon national parks.

In 1892, Muir and his supporters founded the Sierra Club, an organization dedicated to wilderness conservation and outdoor recreation. Muir served as the club’s president for the rest of his life. The Sierra Club remains a large and active conservation group.

Muir’s failure to save the Hetch Hetchy Valley near Yosemite was a devastating disappointment. In 1913, engineers dammed the Tuolumne River, completely flooding the valley, to create a water supply for the city of San Francisco. Still, John Muir saved hundreds of thousands of square miles of matchless terrain from development and exploitation.

SEE ALSO
Conservation; Environment; Parks and playgrounds; Roosevelt, Theodore

FURTHER READING

Muller v. Oregon (1908)

MULLER V. OREGON was a U.S. Supreme Court case that played an important role in the development of protective labor legislation for women. It arose when laundry owner Curt Muller appealed his conviction for violating a 1903 Oregon law that limited women laundry workers to 10 hours of work per day. Courts had invalidated similar laws for men on the basis that they violated “freedom of contract,” the right of individuals to sell their labor at any rate or under any conditions agreeable to them and their employers.

In arguing for limiting women’s work hours, lawyer Louis D. Brandeis, representing the state, based his brief on sociological and medical data collected by Josephine Goldmark of the National Consumers’ League. This data demonstrated that long work hours harmed women’s health and reproductive capabilities in ways that