

This commentary prefaces every primary source set. The well-researched introductions provide teachers with the content knowledge necessary to teach on the themes found within the primary source set. Resor's commentaries situate the primary sources into a wider context and chronology, as well as provide an overview of how historians have considered, conceptualized, and studied these themes over time. The notes and additional sources that follow these commentaries provide a treasure-trove of additional resources teachers can use to further deepen their content knowledge for teaching. Resor's engaging tone transforms what could be seen as mundane or ordinary topics (such as road trips, evening dinner, or over-the-counter medicines) into fascinating historical studies, unearthing the captivating, and at times, surprising or shocking, pasts of these commonplace ideas.

These volumes do face some publishing limitations. None of the visual sources are printed in color, and both the primary sources and the graphic organizers lack the whitespace necessary to make student copies directly from the book. However, the connected website at www.teachingwiththemes.com provides full color images, editable digital versions of the graphic organizers, and additional primary sources to supplement the printed books. While some of the content on this website requires a passcode from the printed books, most is freely available to all.

Teachers with significant autonomy over the content and scope of their social studies courses – including interdisciplinary, project-based learning, or history elective courses – could easily adapt the sources and materials contained in these volumes into rich instructional units. For teachers in more traditional courses, the units in these volumes would require more heavy adaptation and supplementation. Resor draws her primary resources only from the United States and Europe, a major limitation she acknowledges. This geographic spread of content would fit naturally within a course on Western Civilization; world history teachers, however, would need to incorporate other regions of the globe. Teachers of either United States history or European history may find themselves incorporating only some of the included sources in their courses. Teachers wishing to follow a chronologically-based sequence of units would have difficulty teaching these thematic units, as each unit crosses decades and centuries examining their particular theme. However, these themes and their sources could still provide a historical framework or an enduring issue that could be revisited at multiple points throughout a course. The themes of domestic life in the second volume, in particular, could easily form an enduring issue to revisit again and again in chronological units. Across teaching context, this series both justifies and exemplifies enlivening social studies curricula through social history.

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Gorton, Stephanie. *Citizen Reporters: S.S. McClure, Ida Tarbell, and the Magazine that Rewrote America*. New York: Harper Collins, 2020. Pp. 368, \$28.99.

In 1873, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner authored *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, a novel that used satire to define the late nineteenth century in the United States as shaped as much by unbridled greed and corruption as dramatic economic progress. As Americans read the novel, the global economy, as if to acknowledge the book that gave the era its name, had deteriorated into what became known as the Panic of 1873, the largest global financial crisis until the Great Depression. Twenty years later, as Americans once again faced what became known as the Panic of 1893, readers first encountered a subversive new magazine entitled *McClure's* which aimed to use investigative reporting, rather than humor, to uncover the era's most pressing political, economic, and social issues. Stephanie Gorton's *Citizen Reporters: S.S. McClure, Ida Tarbell, and the Magazine that Rewrote America* provides accessible biographies of two of the magazine's primary figures to illustrate *McClure's* seminal role in creating Progressive Era journalism.

Along with economic growth and instability, the decades after the Civil War also brought a more literate American population and the rapid increase in popular magazines – 575 in 1860 to around 5,000 in 1895. An impoverished Irish immigrant whose mercurial personality was responsible for both his successes and failures, Samuel S. McClure was an unlikely candidate to create one of these magazines that at one point had over

400,000 subscribers and, as Gorton claims, “defined the muckraking movement” (3). McClure did not author any of the magazine stories, but *Citizen Reporters* suggests that he had an uncanny eye for discerning the issues, and words, that resonated with Americans. He also recruited and supported tenacious investigative reporters such as Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and Ray Stannard Baker whose articles exposed many of the social ills that later came to define the challenges of Progressive Era reform. At the same time, *McClure's*, which initially cost only 15 cents an issue, also published the work of such literary figures as Rudyard Kipling, Jack London, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Willa Cather.

If McClure was an unpredictable and often unrealistic visionary whose personal problems ultimately led to the demise of the magazine, Tarbell served as the anchor that held much of *McClure's* together during its peak between 1893 and 1906. Born in the Pennsylvania oil region and witness to the unprecedented success and social costs of Standard Oil Company's monopoly, Tarbell started with biographies of such historical figures as Napoleon and Abraham Lincoln before authoring, after years of research, the groundbreaking series, “The History of Standard Oil.” Tarbell rejected convention that restricted middle class women to marriage, teaching, or nursing and instead traveled to Paris to write and, upon accepting McClure's offer to join his staff as a full-time journalist, forged a career investigating the countless economic and political injustices of a rapidly modernizing America. Although Tarbell's ambivalent stance toward feminism and women's suffrage deserves far more attention, Gorton's portrait is clear as to Tarbell's commitment to using the pen to fight the increasingly problematic role of wealth and power. The Gilded Age may have been fodder for humor for writers such as Twain, but for Tarbell, the period was, as she declared years later, “dripped in blood” with clear lines between the forces of good and evil (57).

In contrast to standard historical surveys and recent books such as Doris Kearns Goodwin's prize-winning, *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of American Journalism* (2013), *Citizen Reporters* illustrates the rise of Progressive reform from the perspectives of the writers and editors themselves. Gorton includes the role of Roosevelt, John D. Rockefeller, and other elites, but the best parts of the book explore the commitment of McClure, Tarbell, and their talented colleagues to craft an unprecedented form of journalism that combined rigorous field research, analysis, and activism for a new age. Gorton's account reminds teachers of the Progressive Era of the value of having students examine the accessible [digital archives](#) of *McClure's*. For example, the 1902 volume alone included the first chapter in Tarbell's scathing portrait of Standard Oil, a piece from Lincoln Steffens on political corruption in St. Louis that he later published as a book entitled, *The Shame of the Cities* (1904), and an account of the lengthy coal strike in Pennsylvania from John Mitchell, the president of the United Mine Workers. Other volumes of the period included Ray Stannard Baker's insightful and often intimate reports on familiar topics such as the nationwide Pullman Strike, Coxey's Army, and the Spanish-American War. Baker's 1905 series, “What is a Lynching? A Study of Mob Justice, South and North,” remains a groundbreaking case study of community, culture, and racial violence in Georgia and Ohio that both challenged persistent assumptions about race and region and foreshadowed many of the race riots of the next decade.

Many instructors will find the last portion of *Citizen Reporters*, as Gorton describes the demise of the magazine and the later years of McClure and Tarbell, less valuable and, at times, frustratingly incomplete. Both McClure and Tarbell lived during the Great Depression, yet Gorton provides little hint as to how these two pivotal reformers interpreted the New Deal and its challengers. Regardless, the book's well-written account of the pinnacle of muckraking journalism will enrich familiar classroom discussions of the battles of Progressive Era reform. As Tarbell wrote in her first installment of the history of Standard Oil,

...this history of the Standard is enough to show that although written from documents and with entire fidelity to facts, it is more than a mere record, that it is a great human drama, the story of thirty years of bitter, persistent warfare between the advocates of the two great commercial principles of our day – competition and combination. ... It is a story of daring action, of bold projects ably realized, of

heart-breaking tragedies – a story in which the shape of new conditions of business life in America are illustrated as in no other of which we know (*McClure's*, Volume 19, November 1902, p. 592).

Despite the limitations of biography to capture the complexity of social forces that shaped the era, *Citizen Reporters* provides students and teachers of history with an unique and instructive sense of the “great human drama” and “persistent warfare” that lay behind both the most vexing of the period’s social problems and the unprecedented efforts of writers to right the wrongs of a modernizing America.

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Daegan Miller. *This Radical Land: A Natural History of American Dissent*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. Pp. 318. \$30.00.

Daegan Miller’s *This Radical Land* is a critical and enchanting analysis of the tradition of progress in America and what he calls the “bruising legacy of domination” (9) connected to a continuous desire and effort to master the landscape. Centered around the idea of the witness tree, Miller’s book is divided into four acts, each highlighting a historical moment where human interaction with the environment might best be described as a living moment profoundly effecting the world in which we now live. Familiar with the testimonies of the human story regarding progress and advancement across America, Miller instead focuses on the trees and asks us as readers to listen with him to their stories and “to read what is written on their leaves, to get down on paper those lessons once-living metaphors might still hold for today” (12). Definitely not your father’s history book, it is a refreshing tale of environmental resistance and the radical way in which the land has expressed dissent to our persistent and unrelenting usage and exploitation of this most precious gift.

This Radical Land rightfully begins with Thoreau and his time surveying on the Concord River. His joy in setting out to “spend time with one of his muses,” (29) Miller explains, soon turned to disillusionment as evidence of the advancement of capitalism could be seen in the irregularity of its ebb and flow. It is this advancement and the increasing impact of the market that makes Miller’s book read as a passionate eulogy to the ever-changing and manipulated landscape. Turning next to the Adirondacks, it highlights the efforts of what Miller labels the “utopian agrarianism” (60) exemplified in the work of black abolitionists to carve a modest and communal livelihood out in the Great Northern Wilderness – Timbuctoo as it were. Like Thoreau’s river, the surrounding forest, too, became a breeding ground for intense capitalization as lumber mills, tanneries, and charcoal forges rapidly depleted the area while removing near one million logs a year by 1870.

Act Three of Miller’s book concerns the 1000 Mile Tree in Utah’s Weber Canyon which witnessed the Union Pacific’s laying that length of track in 1869. Starting the chapter with a beautifully descriptive account of photographer A.J. Russell’s capturing what Miller calls “a richly gold-toned image of a beautiful mystery” (109) in the moments immediately after the rail was hammered down, the chapter draws upon the power of imagery in helping tell the story of America’s changing landscape. From the paintings of Thomas Cole to the photography of Ansel Adams, image has been used to both protect and profane nature. And photography in particular tells a story that needs listening to, especially in the images captured concerning America’s expansion westward and their usage to fan the flames of nationalism and ecological dominion.

In the final act of Miller’s work, the reader is introduced to the Karl Marx tree, one of the great sequoias found in the Sierra Nevada Mountains aptly named by the Kaweah Colony of socialists who had settled there in the 1880s. Now known as the General Sherman tree and located in Sequoia National Park, Miller tells the story of how the efforts of the communalists also fell victim to the advancement of capitalism, this time in the form of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Here Miller’s passion is honestly expressed in his account of the intentions behind the enlargement of the Yosemite land in which the Kaweahans had settled – “Though there is no smoking gun, the motive...was not preservation at all – or rather it was, preservation of the Southern Pacific’s wealth; preservation of capitalism” (205).