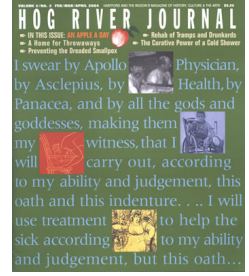


Name:



Progressive Solutions for Connecticut

1. Choose one of the reformers below, from the perspective of which you will evaluate life in urban America.
 - Lillian Wald
 - Ida Tarbell
 - Jane Addams
 - Lincoln Stephens
 - Florence Kelley
 - Margaret Sanger
 - Upton Sinclair
 - Robert LaFollette
 - WCTU

2. Explore the resources about urban life in the article “Had Too Much” and in the excerpts from *How the Other Half Lives*. Both of these resources could be considered photo essays. Remember the following when evaluating photos (“SOAPSS”):
 - **Subject:** What is the topic of the piece?
 - **Occasion:** When was the image created? How does it relate to the significant historical events or trends of the period?
 - **Audience:** For whom was the image created? How does this impact the significance and message of the source? Is there possible bias?
 - **Purpose:** Why was the image created? How does this impact the significance and message of the source? Again, is there possible bias due to its purpose?
 - **Speaker:** Who is the creator of the image? What background information do you have on this person? How would his or her background impact this source?
 - **Summarize:** Summarize the historical significance of this source.

3. Choose one of the following assignments:
 - From the **perspective of your particular reformer**, write a reform proposal to be presented to a city council. Your proposal should include the following:
 - a) What problems are plaguing urban America in the late 1800s?
 - b) What are the root causes of these problems? (Think specifically from the **point of view** of your reformer.)
 - c) What reforms should be instituted? Propose **THREE** specific reforms to the city council. Explain **WHY** they are necessary reforms.
 - d) Does urbanization offer any positive elements to American life?

- From the **perspective of your particular reformer**, create your own photo essay analyzing a local city today. Your photo essay should include the following:
 - a) What reforms that you desired have been made? What do you believe is the greatest improvement made? **WHY?**
 - b) What reforms are still needed? Propose specific reforms and explain **WHY** they are necessary.
 - c) What are the root causes of modern urban problems? (Think specifically from the **point of view** of your reformer.)

☆ For your response to each question, you should have at least **TWO** photos and one paragraph of explanation. Your photos may be gathered from online sources (in which case, you need to document the source) or you may take the photos yourself.

Your response should be persuasive, show your knowledge of the **specific views your reformer**, and should demonstrate use of both of the photo essays.

Excerpts and Images from How the Other Half Live: Studies
Among the Tenements of New Yorks, by Jacob Riis, published
1890

This pioneering work of photojournalism by Jacob Riis focused on the plight of the poor in the Lower East Side, and greatly influenced future "muckraking" journalism. Due to the recent invention of magnesium flash, Riis was able to venture into the dimly lit areas of tenements and document the wretched conditions in which the "other half" lived and worked. Riis's work was also pioneering in that he mostly attributed the plight of the poor to environmental conditions. However, his work was not without its flaws. He divided the poor into two categories: deserving of assistance (mostly women and children) and undeserving (mostly the unemployed and intractably criminal). He wrote with prejudice about Jews, Italians, and Irish, and he stopped short of calling for government intervention. Still, the catalyst of his work was a genuine sympathy for his subjects, and his work shocked most wealthy New Yorkers who had no idea such a world existed within a few miles of their own opulent neighborhoods.



Excerpt from *How the Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis, (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890).



CHAPTER 15: The Problem of the Children

THE problem of the children becomes, in these swarms, to the last degree perplexing. Their very number make one stand aghast. I have already given instances of the packing of the child population in East Side tenements. They might be continued indefinitely until the array would be enough to startle any community. For, be it remembered, these children with the training they receive—orr do not receive—with the instincts they inherit and absorb in their growing up, are to be our future rulers, if our theory of government is worth

anything. More than a working majority of our voters now register from the tenements. I counted the other day the little ones, up to ten years or so, in a Bayard Street tenement that for a yard has a triangular space in the centre with sides fourteen or fifteen feet long, just room enough for a row of ill-smelling closets at the base of the triangle and a hydrant at the apex. There was about as much light in this "yard" as in the average cellar. I gave up my self-imposed task in despair when I had counted one hundred and twenty-eight in forty families. Thirteen I had missed, or not found in. Applying the average for the forty to the whole fifty-three, the house contained one hundred and seventy children. It is not the only time I have had to give up such census work. I have in mind an alley--an inlet

rather to a row of rear tenements--that is either two or four feet wide according as the wall of the crazy old building that gives on it bulges out or in. I tried to count the children that swarmed there, but could not. Sometimes I have doubted that anybody knows just how many there are about. Bodies of drowned children turn up in the rivers right along in summer whom no one seems to know anything about. When last spring some workmen, while moving a pile of lumber on a North River pier, found under the last plank the body of a little lad crushed to death, no one had missed a boy, though his parents afterward turned up...

...The old question, what to do with the boy, assumes a new and serious phase in the tenements. Under the best conditions found there, it is not easily answered. In nine cases out of ten he would make an excellent mechanic, if trained early to work at a trade, for he is neither dull nor slow, but the short-sighted despotism of the trades unions has practically closed that avenue to him. Trade-schools, however excellent, cannot supply the opportunity thus denied him, and at the outset the boy stands condemned by his own



to low and ill-paid drudgery, held down by the hand that of all should labor to raise him. Home, the greatest factor of all in the training of the young, means nothing to him but a pigeon-hole in a coop along with so many other human animals. Its influence is scarcely of the elevating kind, if it have any. The very games at which he takes a hand in the street become polluting in its atmosphere. With no steady hand to guide him, the boy takes naturally to idle ways... What is done in the end is to let him take chances--with the chances all against him. The result is the rough young savage, familiar from the street. Rough as he is, if any one doubt that this child of common clay have in him the instinct of beauty, of love for the ideal of which his life has no embodiment, let him put the matter to the test. Let him

take into a tenement block a handful of flowers from the fields and watch the brightened faces... I have seen an armful of daisies keep the peace of a block better than a policeman and his club... I have not forgotten the deputation of ragamuffins from a Mulberry Street alley that knocked at my office door one morning on a mysterious expedition for flowers, not for themselves, but for "a lady," and having obtained what they wanted, trooped off to bestow them, a ragged and dirty little band, with a solemnity that was quite unusual. It was not until an old man called the next day to thank me for the flowers that I found out they had decked the bier of a pauper, in the dark rear room where she lay waiting in her pine-board coffin for the city's hearse. Yet, as I knew, that dismal alley with its bare brick walls, between which no sun ever rose or set, was the world of those children. It filled their young lives. Probably not one of them had ever been out of the sight of it. They were too dirty, too ragged, and too generally disreputable, too well hidden in their slum besides, to come into line with the Fresh Air summer boarders.

A little fellow who seemed clad in but a single rag was among the flotsam and jetsam stranded at Police Headquarters one day last summer. No one knew where he came from or where he belonged. The boy himself knew as little about it as anybody, and was the least anxious to have light shed on the subject after he had spent a night in the matron's

nursery. The discovery that beds were provided for boys to sleep in there, and that he could have "a whole egg" and three slices of bread for breakfast put him on the best of terms with the world in general...and then settled down to the serious business of giving an account of himself. The examination went on after this fashion:

"Where do you go to church, my boy?"

"We don't have no clothes to go to church." And indeed his appearance, as he was, in the door of any New York church would have caused a sensation.

"Well, where do you go to school, then?"

"I don't go to school," with a snort of contempt.

"Where do you buy your bread?"

"We don't buy no bread; we buy beer," said the boy, and it was eventually the saloon that led the police as a landmark to his "home." It was worthy of the boy. As he had said, his only bed was a heap of dirty straw on the floor, his daily diet a crust in the morning, nothing else.



Into the rooms of the Children's Aid Society were led two little girls whose father had "busted up the house" and put them on the street after their mother died. Another, who was turned out by her stepmother "because she had five of her own and could not afford to keep her," could not remember ever having been in church or Sunday-school, and only knew the name of Jesus through hearing people swear by it. She had no idea what they meant. These were specimens of the overflow from the tenements of our home-heathen that are growing up in New York's streets to-day...

Nothing is now better understood than that the rescue of the children is the key to the problem of city poverty, as presented for our solution to-day; that character may be formed where to reform it would be a hopeless task. The concurrent testimony of all who have to undertake it at a later stage: that the young are naturally neither vicious nor hardened, simply weak and undeveloped, except by the bad influences of the street, makes this duty all the more urgent as well as hopeful...

Introduction, excerpts and images courtesy of
<http://www.authentichistory.com/postcivilwar/riis/contents.html>



Tenement House Yard



The "Bend" on Mulberry Street

© Text and Hog River Journal article, *Connecticut Explored*

Connecticut Explored Curriculum
Lesson Plan:
Progressive Solutions for Connecticut



Room in a Tenement



The man slept in this cellar for about four years.



Bohemian Cigar Makers at Work in their Tenement



Street Arabs in Sleeping Quarters