

③ Teddy Roosevelt's Square Deal

MAIN IDEA As president, Theodore Roosevelt worked to give citizens a Square Deal through progressive reforms.

When President William McKinley was killed in 1901, Theodore Roosevelt became president. He showed great energy and bold decision making and won publicity. He launched a program of reforms called the "Square Deal." With his vigorous leadership, he changed the presidency.

Roosevelt thought that a more complex American society needed a powerful federal government. He intervened in a bitter 1902 coal strike to lead both sides to an agreement. He had the government sue business trusts to improve competition. He pushed through laws increasing the government's power to regulate railroads. His actions during a Pennsylvania coal strike set a precedent of government intervention when a strike threatened public welfare. After reading a book, *The Jungle*, that exposed poor sanitary practices in the meatpacking industry, Roosevelt gained passage of the Meat Inspection Act. The Pure Food and Drug Act banned food processors from adding dangerous chemicals to food or from making false claims regarding medicines. Roosevelt also took steps to preserve the nation's wild natural areas.

Roosevelt, though, did not back civil rights for African Americans. So black leaders, plus some white reformers, formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909 to push for full racial equality.