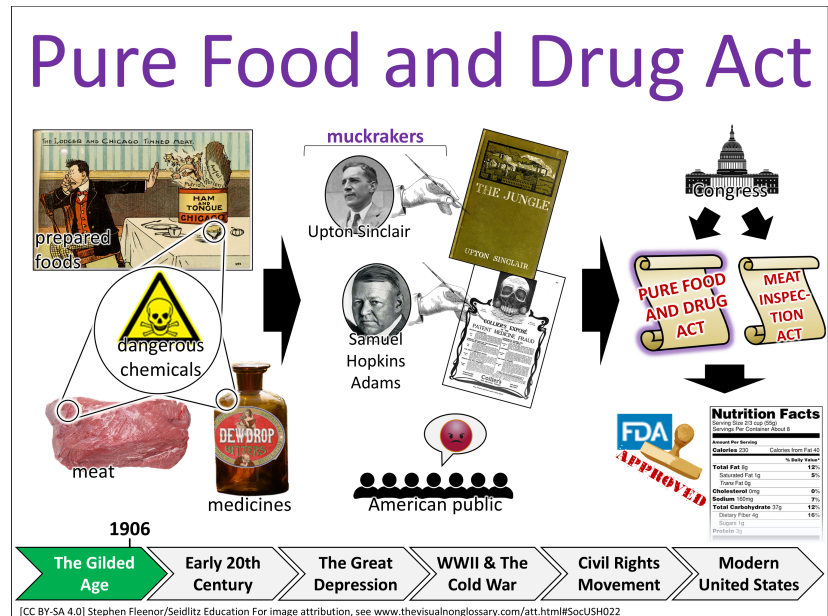


The Pure Food and Drug Act

The purpose for reading is to explain how the Pure Food and Drug Act changed the balance of power between private companies and the federal government.

Pay Attention To:

- The conditions of food and medicine production before the Pure Food and Drug Act
- How muckrakers exposed unsafe or dishonest business practices
- What role President Theodore Roosevelt and Congress played in passing the law
- How the Pure Food and Drug Act changed the government's power over business
- The long-term effects of this law, including the creation of the FDA



In the early 1900s, America was changing quickly. Many people moved to cities to work in large factories. Stores were filled with new **foods** and medicines that people had never seen before. But there was a big problem, no one was checking to make sure these products were safe. There were no national rules or laws to protect customers. Some **foods** were spoiled, and others contained dangerous chemicals. Medicine bottles often had fake labels that promised cures but actually made people sick.

At that time, the government believed in *laissez-faire*, which meant “let it be.” This idea allowed businesses to do what they wanted without many rules. As a result, companies made decisions that hurt the public just to earn more money. The public began to wonder who would keep them safe.

A group of writers known as **muckrakers** decided to find the truth. These journalists wrote stories and articles to show what was really happening in factories. Upton Sinclair wrote a famous book called *The Jungle*. He described how meat was made in dirty, unsafe conditions. Samuel Hopkins Adams wrote about medicine companies that lied to people and used harmful ingredients. When Americans read their work, they were shocked and angry.

President Theodore Roosevelt believed the government should protect people, not just businesses. After reading about the terrible conditions, he pushed Congress to make new laws. In 1906, the **Pure Food and Drug Act** and the Meat Inspection **Act** were passed. The **Pure Food and Drug Act** made it against the law to sell **food** or medicine that was dangerous or labeled incorrectly. The law also created the **Food and Drug** Administration, or FDA, to test products and make sure they were safe.

The **Pure Food and Drug Act** changed how the government worked with businesses. It showed that protecting the public was more important than letting companies do whatever they wanted. This new idea was part of the Progressive Era, a time when people worked together to make life safer and fairer for everyone in the United States.

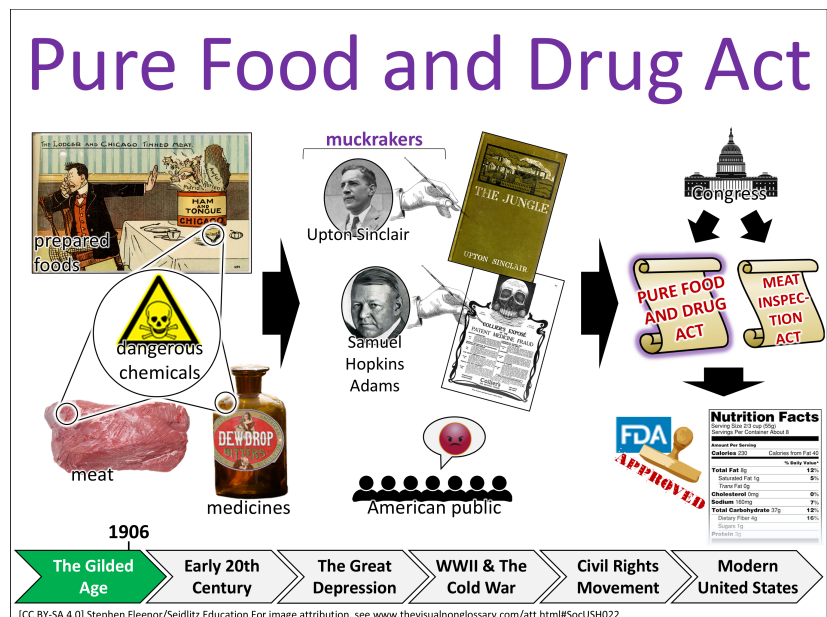


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By the early 1900s, the United States had become one of the most industrialized nations in the world. New inventions and mass production made goods cheaper and more available than ever before. However, the rapid growth of industry came with serious problems. Because the government followed a *laissez-faire* approach, meaning it rarely interfered in business, many companies placed profit above public safety. Factories often produced **food** and medicine in dirty conditions, and there were few laws to protect consumers from dangerous or mislabeled products. Bottles of “medicine” might contain alcohol, opium, or other harmful chemicals, and canned **foods** were sometimes contaminated with spoiled meat.

This situation began to change when journalists known as **muckrakers** began exposing corruption and unsafe practices in business and government. These investigative writers used newspapers, magazines, and books to inform the public

about social and economic issues. Two of the most influential **muckrakers** were Upton Sinclair and Samuel Hopkins Adams. Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle* shocked the nation with its vivid descriptions of the filthy conditions in Chicago's meatpacking plants. Around the same time, Adams published articles revealing how drug companies sold false or dangerous medicines to unsuspecting Americans. Their work helped spark outrage among citizens and forced politicians to respond to growing public pressure for reform.

President Theodore Roosevelt, who believed the government had a duty to protect ordinary people from powerful corporations, pushed Congress to act. That same year, lawmakers passed both the **Pure Food and Drug Act** and the Meat Inspection **Act**. The **Pure Food and Drug Act** made it illegal to produce, sell, or ship contaminated or falsely labeled **food** and drugs across state lines. It was one of the first major laws to regulate private industry in the interest of public health. The law also led to the creation of the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, which continues to test and approve products before they reach consumers.

The passage of the **Pure Food and Drug Act** marked a turning point in American history. It demonstrated that the federal government could no longer remain hands-off in matters that affected people's lives and safety. Instead, the government began taking a more active role in regulating businesses to protect the public good. This change reflected the larger goals of the Progressive Era, using government power to address the problems created by industrialization and restore the trust of the American people.

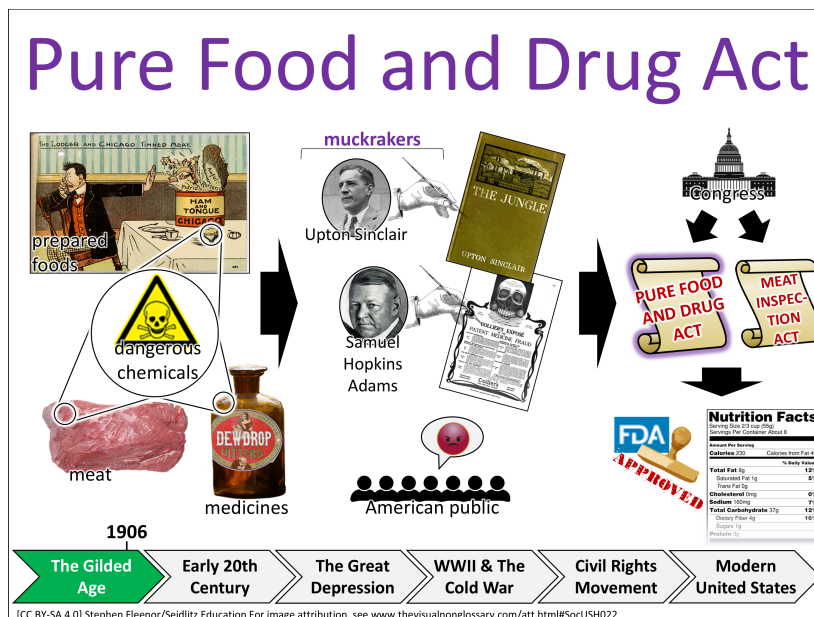


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At the beginning of the twentieth century, the United States experienced rapid industrial and economic growth. Factories produced goods faster and cheaper than ever before, and city populations exploded as workers sought new opportunities. However, industrial progress came with a hidden cost. Without federal regulation, many corporations ignored public safety in their pursuit of profit. **Food** was often produced in unsanitary factories, and medicines contained harmful ingredients such as alcohol, cocaine, and opium. The government's *laissez-faire* approach allowed these unsafe practices to continue unchecked.

During this time, journalists known as **muckrakers** began to challenge the idea that businesses should operate without government interference. Their goal was to expose corruption and raise public awareness about the dangers of unregulated industries. One of the most influential **muckrakers**, Upton Sinclair, published *The Jungle*

in 1906. His shocking descriptions of meatpacking plants in Chicago revealed contamination, poor working conditions, and a total lack of cleanliness. Another reformer, Samuel Hopkins Adams, investigated the patent medicine industry and exposed false advertising and unsafe ingredients in over-the-counter drugs. Their work stirred outrage across the nation.

President Theodore Roosevelt recognized that these revelations demanded action. In 1906, under mounting public pressure, he signed two major reform laws: the Meat Inspection **Act** and the **Pure Food and Drug Act**. The **Pure Food and Drug Act** banned the manufacture, sale, or shipment of misbranded or contaminated **foods** and medicines across state lines. For the first time, the federal government required honesty in labeling and production. The law also established the Bureau of Chemistry, later renamed the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, to enforce these new rules.

The **Pure Food and Drug Act** represented a historic shift in the balance between the government and private industry. Before this law, businesses operated with minimal oversight, guided by the belief that free enterprise worked best without interference. Afterward, the federal government took a more active role in protecting the welfare of its citizens. This transformation reflected the larger goals of the Progressive Era: to use government power to limit corruption, promote fairness, and ensure public health.

In the decades that followed, the FDA continued to grow in importance, expanding its authority to regulate cosmetics, **drugs**, and **food** production. The passage of the **Pure Food and Drug Act** remains one of the earliest and most influential examples of government reform in the United States, proof that public pressure and investigative journalism could create lasting change in the relationship between business and the federal government.

