

# **The Progressive Era: 1890-1919**

A Presentation Based on the  
Georgia Standards of Excellence  
(GSE) Objectives for High School  
History Students

# Objective SSUSH13: Evaluate efforts to reform American society and politics in the Progressive Era.



# Progressivism (circa 1880-1920 )

- Progressivism was the response of many different groups of people to address a wide range of problems created by rapid industrialization and urbanization after the Civil War.
- These problems included poverty, poor working conditions, health and safety, political corruption (esp. via political machines), and concentration of big business into fewer, more powerful interests.
- **Progressives were not a united group:** indeed, some Progressives' goals and tactics actually conflicted with others'.
- But in general all Progressives worked toward what they felt were correcting wrongs and problems of American society.

# Objective SSUSH13a

Describe the influence of **muckrakers** on affecting change by bringing attention to social problems.

# The Muckrakers

- A ***muckraker*** was a journalist or author who investigated and wrote about political corruption and social conditions.
- The term comes from “stirring up muck” (dirt, filth, slime, etc.).
- The Progressive Era is notable for a number of muckraking journalists who exposed the ills of society through their writings.



# How the Other Half Lives

Jacob Riis [was an] . . . American newspaper reporter, social reformer, and photographer who, with his book ***How the Other Half Lives*** (1890), shocked the conscience of his readers with factual descriptions of slum conditions in New York City.



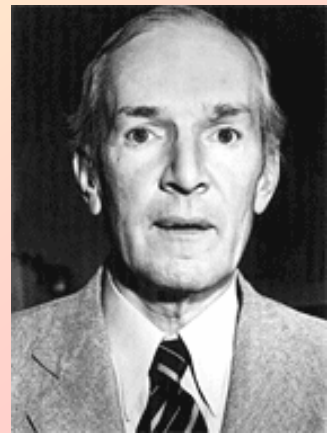




# Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and federal oversight of the meatpacking industry.

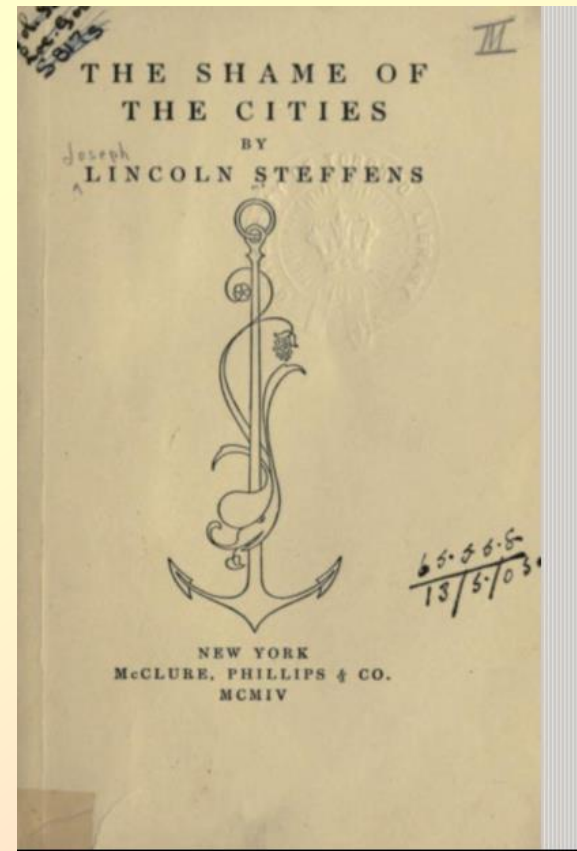
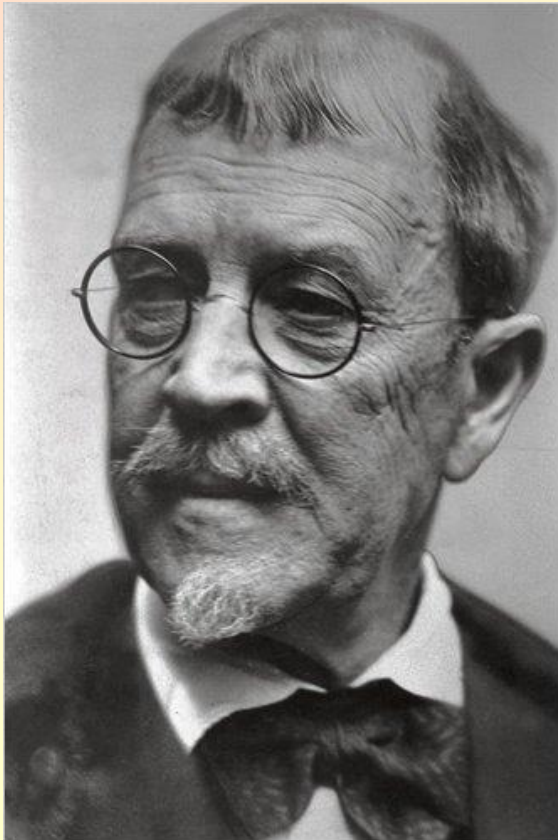
- In 1904 Upton Sinclair, a muckraker, published *The Jungle*. This book was based on Sinclair's observations of Chicago meat slaughterhouses and described the horrible conditions in the industry: It became a best seller and caught the attention of Congress and President Roosevelt.
- In response to the book, Congress passed the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act, as a way of overseeing and inspecting the meat and food industries.

“..sausage that had been rejected, and that was moldy and white-it would be dosed with borax and glycerin, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption.”



# Lincoln Steffens

- In *The Shame of the Cities*, muckraking author Lincoln Steffens wrote about government corruption.



“Because politics is business. That's what's the matter with it.”

# Objective SSUSH13b

Examine and explain the roles of women in reform movements.

# Women in Reform Movements

- *Women during this time period became involved in many reform efforts including education, prison, prohibition and women's rights and suffrage.*
- For example, **Jane Addams** founded the **Hull House** in Chicago in 1889 to provide immigrants with social and educational opportunities and training. It was one of the first “settlement houses” in the U.S.



# Ida Tarbell

- Journalist Ida Tarbell's writings focused on Rockefeller's Standard Oil Corporation and its monopolistic practices
- Eventually, Standard Oil was broken up into several smaller companies.



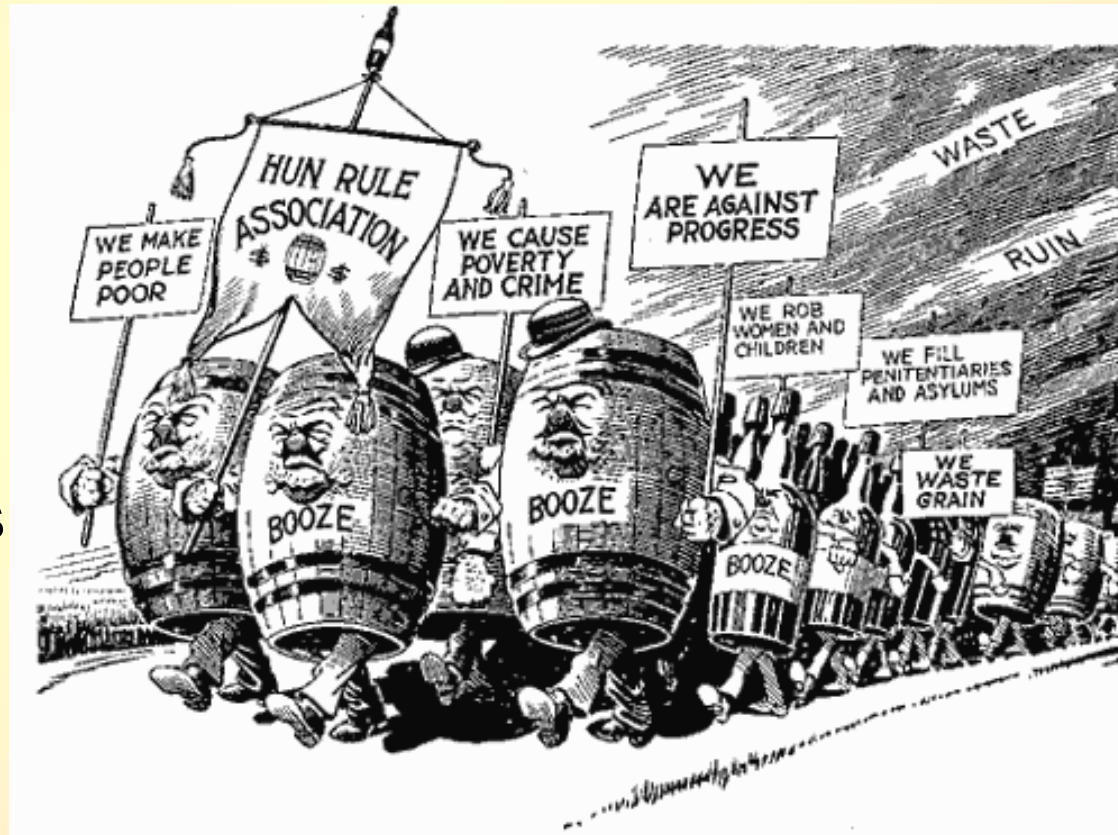
# Prohibition: The 18th Amendment

- The **18<sup>th</sup> Amendment** was ratified in 1919 and took effect in 1920 banning the manufacturing, sale, and transportation of alcohol.

Some supporters of prohibition thought it would reduce poverty, domestic violence, and unemployment.

Others viewed it as an **anti-German reaction** as many U.S. beer makers were of German origins.

Which groups of people do you think supported prohibition?



# Effects of Prohibition

- Prohibition had several negative effects:
  1. “**Bootlegging**” - some people profited by illegally smuggling and selling alcohol
  2. “**Speakeasies**” - secret saloons and gambling halls where alcohol was served.
  3. Organized Crime – “**The Mob**” began to run illegal bootlegging and speakeasy activities. Competing mobs resorted to violence in eliminating their competitors.

# Repeal of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Prohibition was unpopular with many people and extremely difficult to enforce. By 1933 (during the Great Depression), the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was repealed by the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment.

Why do you think the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was so difficult to enforce? What wasn't banned by the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment?





# Women's Suffrage: The 19th Amendment

Women's Suffrage: The right to vote



Women's suffrage movement groups had originally tied their cause to that of African-American suffrage

# Nineteenth Amendment

- In 1890, the **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)** was formed.
- Carrie Chapman Catt** became the leader in 1915 and threw support behind Wilson's 1916 presidential campaign.
- NAWSA encouraged individual states to grant women the right to vote, gaining support for a Constitutional Amendment
- Alice Paul** led the more militant **National Women's Party (NWP)**, whose "suffragettes" held protest marches to attract attention to their cause.
- In June 1919, Congress passed the **Nineteenth Amendment**, and it was ratified by the states in 1920.



**Carrie Chapman Catt**

# Effects of the Nineteenth Amendment

- The right to vote led greater equality and independence for women.
- This also emboldened their social autonomy. Women began to challenge the moral taboos of the Victorian era through their dress, activities, and attitudes (e.g., smoking in public, risqué dress and dances, etc.).

# Objective SSUSH13c

Connect the decision of **Plessy v. Ferguson** to the expansion of **Jim Crow laws** and the **formation of the NAACP**.

# Jim Crow

- By the late 1800s individual states began to pass laws that limited the individual rights of African Americans.
- Voting rights were curtailed by using poll taxes, literacy tests, and enforcing grandfather clauses.
- **Jim Crow** laws were laws that helped enforce segregation, first in the private sector, and then at the state level.



# Plessy v. Ferguson

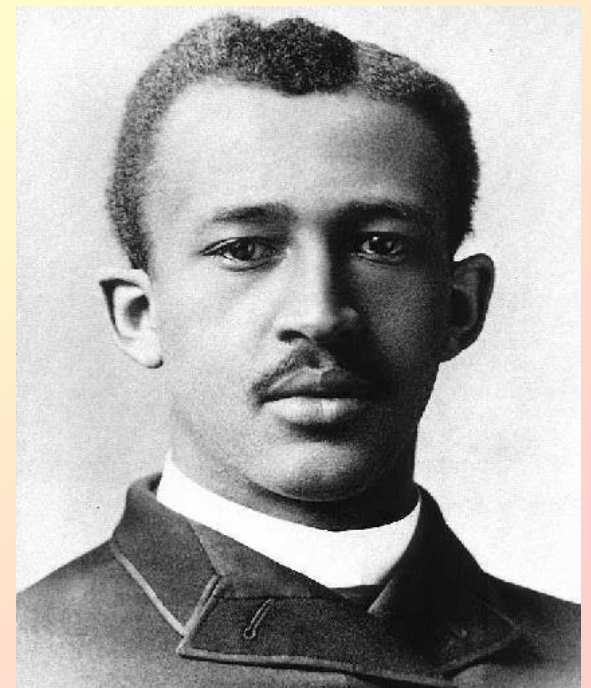
- Homer Plessy, an African American by state classification, challenged a Louisiana law requiring him to ride in a separate railroad car from white passengers.
- Plessy was 7/8ths white, but was still classified as “colored” under Louisiana State law and the concept of “hypodescent.” (NB See “one drop theory”)
- The case went to the Supreme Court where they ruled against Plessy in the case known as Plessy v. Ferguson (1896).
- The court’s decision in Plessy v. Ferguson **legalized segregation and discrimination** in the U.S. under the “separate but equal doctrine” by stating that it was legal to require separate facilities for African Americans as long as those facilities were equal to facilities for others.

# Washington and Du Bois

- Two leaders of the black community in this era were Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. They disagreed on how African Americans could achieve social and economic progress.
- **Washington**, an educator, believed African Americans should “pull themselves up by their **bootstraps**,” that self-help, thrift & hard work would lead to prosperity and social acceptance.
- **Du Bois** believed the time had come to use **political action** to achieve civil rights agenda. He was a founder of the NAACP, a group of lawyers who pursued civil rights through the American legal system courts.
- He also believed a small group of college-educated blacks he called “the **Talented Tenth**” would lead the way to progress.

# NAACP

- Founded in 1909 to promote African American voting rights in order to end racial discrimination
- W.E.B. Du Bois was one of the founding members of the organization





# Objective SSUSH13d

Describe **Progressive legislative actions** including **empowerment of the voter, labor laws**, and the **conservation movement**.

# Tammany Hall: A Political Machine

- The most notorious political boss of the age was William "Boss" Tweed of New York's Tammany Hall political machine.
- He gave generously to the poor, but he also fleeced the public out of millions of taxpayer money, which went into his and his friends pockets.
- An attorney named Samuel Tilden convicted Tweed and his rule came to an end in 1876.

# Political Reform

- Another major focus of the Progressive Movement was political reform. To give power to the voters, the following reforms were enacted in many states:
  - \* **initiative**: allowed citizens to introduce legislation
  - \* **recall**: allowed voters to remove elected officials through a special vote
  - \* **referendum**: allowed proposed legislation to be approved by voters
  - \* **direct election of senators**: The 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed in 1913 to give voters the power to elect senators directly in an attempt to prevent corruption

# Labor Laws

- Progressives fought for safer working conditions.
- At this time, child workers in many factories and mines made less than 60¢ for a 10-hour day.
- Progressives also worked to end child labor.



# Coal Mining

- Coal was the chief fuel source of the Industrial Revolution.
- During the 1880s, many European immigrants and African Americans took jobs in West Virginia coal mines.
- Mining was then and still is one of the most dangerous jobs in America. Collapse, fires, and explosions of underground gasses and coal dust are the chief causes of injury or death.
- To work for safer conditions and better pay, the **United Mine Workers** union was formed in 1890.
- Still, numerous disasters as well as strikes and even “mine wars” plagued this industry.
- By 1910, the U.S. Government created the Bureau of Mines to regulate the industry.

# The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire

- This March 25, 1911 fire in New York City:
  - was the deadliest disaster in New York City until the destruction of the World Trade Center 90 years later.
  - was the deadliest industrial disaster in the history of NYC
  - resulted in the fourth highest loss of life from an industrial accident in U.S. history.
  - caused the deaths of 146 garment workers, who either died from the fire or jumped to their deaths.
- Most victims were young immigrant women aged 16-23
- Workers were trapped in the burning building because managers had locked doors to stairwells and exits to prevent theft.
- This event **led to over 30 new health and labor laws requiring improved factory safety standards**
- It also contributed to growth of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), which fought for better working conditions for its members.

# Progressives worked to improve conditions for the poor

- The Social Gospel movement worked to better conditions for the urban poor through **organizations** such as the **YMCA**, **Salvation Army**, and **settlement houses**
- Education also played a role in the Progressive Movement with school becoming compulsory and used as a means of assimilating immigrants into American society

# The Conservation Movement

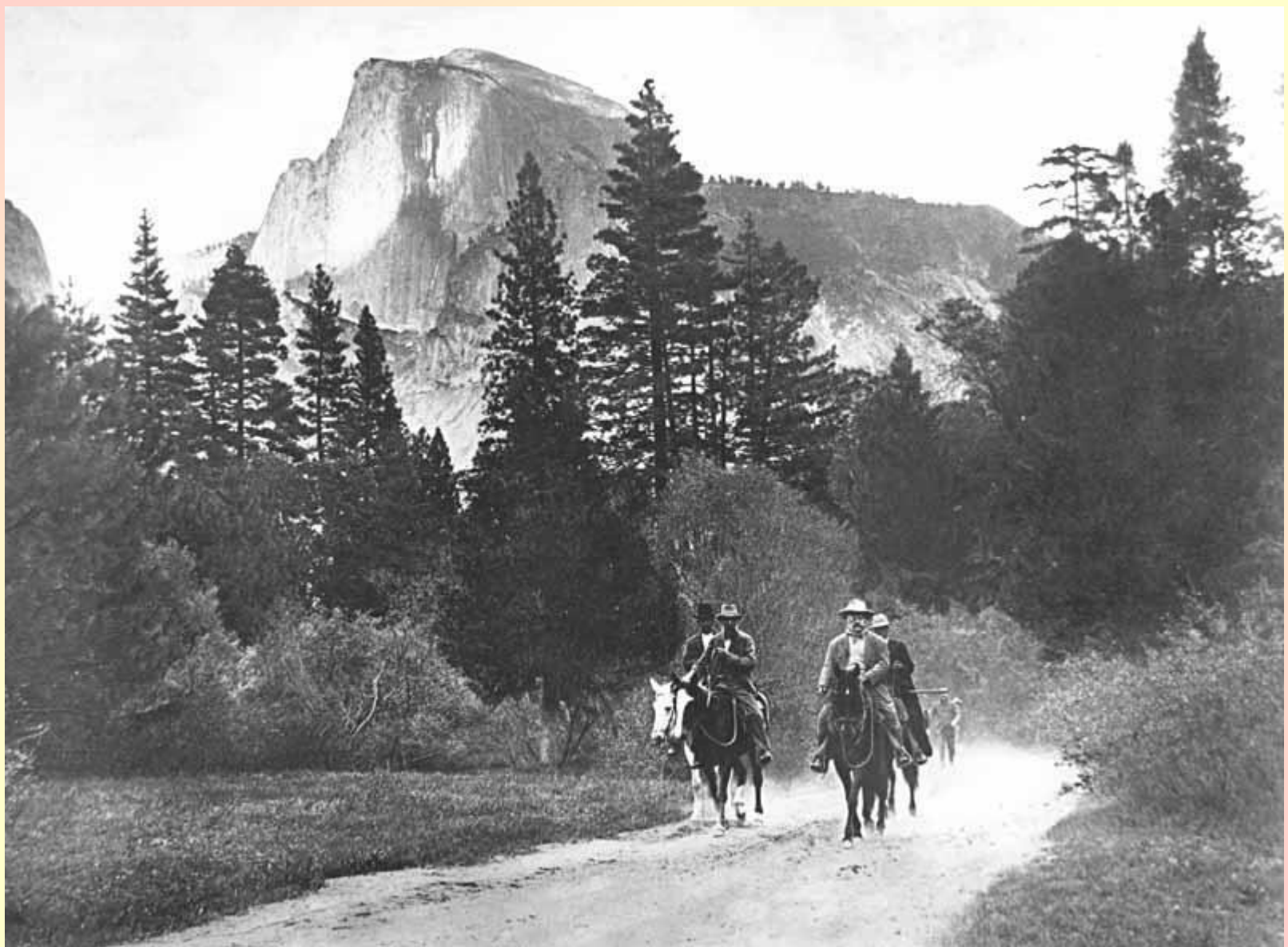
- During the Progressive Era, many people became concerned with protecting the natural **environment**.
- President Theodore Roosevelt worked with U.S. Forest Service head **Gifford Pinchot** to develop long-term plans devised by experts to maximize the long-term economic benefits of natural resources.
- **President Roosevelt** used his authority to **set aside public lands as national forests** in order to make them off-limits to commercial exploitation of lumber, minerals, and waterpower. He designated nearly five times as much land as all of his predecessors combined.
- In contrast, preservationists such as **John Muir**, founder of the **Sierra Club**, believed that humans should act as citizens of nature, not conquerors of it.
- In **1916**, Congress passed the National Park Organic Act, which created the **National Park System** we know today as managers of our national parks.



# Yosemite National Park (California)

- First protected in 1864, Yosemite National Park is best known for its waterfalls, but within its nearly 1,200 square miles, you can find deep valleys, grand meadows, ancient giant sequoias, a vast wilderness area, and much more.

# Roosevelt & Muir at Yosemite



# Yosemite Valley



# Yellowstone National Park (Wyoming)

- Yellowstone National Park was established by an Act signed by President Ulysses S. Grant on March 1, 1872.
- Early after Yellowstone Park was established, the U.S. military assisted in protecting and administering the park.
- Yellowstone is famous for its many geysers.
- There are more people hurt by bison than by bears each year in Yellowstone.



# Yellowstone National Park

Old Faithful Geyser - Next Predicted Eruption 12:53 PM  $\pm$ 10 minutes  
Temperature: 77.9°F (25.5°C) Humidity: 16% Pressure 23.15 in.

Sat Sep 02, 2006, 12:55:35 PM, Exposure 383  
National Park Service Photo



# Mt. Moran, Grand Teton National Park (Wyoming)



# Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Tennessee, North Carolina)



# North Cascades (Washington)





# Petrified Forest (Arizona)



# Zion National Park (Utah)



# Joshua Tree National Park (California)

