Upton Sinclair Essay, Research Paper

READ ALL ABOUT IT…

UPTON SINCLAIR!!

?My cause is the Cause of a man who has never yet

been defeated, and whose whole being is one all devouring,

God-given holy purpose?, declared Upton Beall Sinclair. This

man is not only an American novelist, essayist, journalist, but

also deeply involved in politics. He has accomplished so

many things throughout his life span, it is tough to compare

him to anyone else. Until Sinclair was in his later life, he

was an unknown failure to many, but then for forty years

after that, he was America?s most important writer.

Sinclair was born in Baltimore on the 20th of

September in 1878. He was born in near poverty conditions

to his dysfunctional family consisting of his father who

drank himself to death, and his mother a southern aristocrat.

He taught himself to read and write by the time he was

five years old. By the time he was 14, he had already

graduated the City College of New York. He furthered his

education by becoming a special student at Columbia

University. He was supporting himself and paying his own

way through his education by writing and selling book. While

at Columbia University he was inspired by another student

to write even more novels. He started writing weekly novels

consisting of more than 30,000 words and selling them as

?half-dime novels?. With the frustration of trying to make it

on such little profit, he left Columbia University.

Once Sinclair left, he started his first real novel entitled

Springtime and Harvest. Publishers did not see his point to

the novel, so they figured no one else would and with much

disappointment, turned down the novel. ?In order to

succeed, one must fail at least once? was often a quote

used by Sinclair. He followed this quote often due to the

next couple of novels he wrote. Within the two years, he

wrote four long novels, and all were reviewed negatively

and very few had sales.

1906 was Sinclair?s lucky year. In years earlier, he

would often fight for free speech and write about politics,

but he decided to try a new approach this year. Sinclair is

most famous for the novel he wrote this year entitled The

Jungle. As for the rejection, six publishers turned him down

on the book at first, so Sinclair decided to publish the book

himself. One publisher wrote ? I advise without hesitation

and unreservedly against the publications of this book which

is gloom and horror unrelieved. One feels that what is at the

bottom of his fierceness is not nearly so much desire to

help the poor as hatred of the rich.? To prove this publisher

wrong, Sinclair advertised for his book, and received orders

for 972 copies of The Jungle. Within in the next couple of

years, more than 150,000 copies were sold, and the book

was printed in seventeen different languages and was a

best seller all over the world.

During this period of time, the President of the United

States was Theodore Roosevelt. He read The Jungle, and

immediately following he declared an investigation of the

meat-packing industry. Although Roosevelt was not happy

with such a book, he was not happy at what he saw in the

industries he investigated. The impact of this book, had the

same impact as Harriet Beecher Stowe?s book called Uncle

Tom?s Cabin.

With the profit made from The Jungle, Sinclair decided

to build the Helicon Hall. This was a utopian community that

contained all of the virtues he believed in for socialism. On

November 1, 1906 this building was opened. Over $30,000

was invested in this utopia. Journalists remarked that the

Helicon Hall was only built for a ?free love nest? just to

have mistresses available, but truly it was a communal living

hall for families upholding high moral standards. Sinclair?s

greatest hero was that of Jesus Christ, so to have such

stereotypes journalists should rethink what they might have

said. Not even a year later, on March 7, 1907, Sinclair

awoke to the smell of smoke and cries of fire. He made his

way outside, half burned, and looked back upon his dream

as it went disappeared. ?The beautiful utopia was flaming

and roaring, until it crashed in and died away to a dull

glow? Sinclair recalled. Some say that the Helicon Hall was

only built to burn down for insurance collecting, but actually

insurance only paid for about two-thirds of the damage and

Sinclair ended up paying for the other damage. The profit he

made on The Jungle was now lost.

Years would go by, and Sinclair would continue writing

novels, poems, and pretty much everything. He was known

as a Renaissance man because he wrote in nearly every

form. Sinclair died on the 25 of November in the year 1968.

By the time Sinclair died, he was again virtually unknown.

www.uptonsinclair.com