

Jacob Riis

“It is difficult for me to write of Jacob Riis only from the public standpoint. He was one of my truest and closest friends. I have ever prized the fact that once, in speaking of me, he said, ‘since I met him he has been my brother.’ I have only admired and respected him beyond measure, but I have loved him dearly...and I mourn him as if he were one of my own family.”

-Quoted by Theodore Roosevelt

- ❖ Born on May 3, 1849 in Ribe, Denmark.
- ❖ Came to the United States at the age of 21, in 1870, as a carpenter.
- ❖ After years of poverty, he finally found a job as a police reporter for *The New York Tribune* in 1877.
- ❖ In 1888, he began working for *The New York Evening Sun*.
- ❖ He wrote a book called *How the Other Half Lives* in 1890. His book was a call to reform slum dwellings and the abuse of lower-class urban life. Riis wanted better living conditions for the immigrants coming to New York.
- ❖ He was a famous documentary photographer.
- ❖ Riis was one of the first journalists to use flashbulb photography.
- ❖ Theodore Roosevelt called him “the most useful citizen of New York”, and later the two became good friends.
- ❖ Riis founded a pioneer settlement house in New York in 1901.
- ❖ He pushed for better public parks and playgrounds. Because of this, Riis had a park named after him on Long Island.