



The Progressive Era--Overview

Progressivism is an umbrella label for a wide range of economic, political, social, and moral reforms. These included efforts to outlaw the sale of alcohol; regulate child labor and sweatshops; scientifically manage natural resources; insure pure and wholesome water and milk; Americanize immigrants or restrict immigration altogether; and bust or regulate trusts. Drawing support from the urban, college-educated middle class, Progressive reformers sought to eliminate corruption in government, regulate business practices, address health hazards, improve working conditions, and give the public more direct control over government through direct primaries to nominate candidates for public office, direct election of Senators, the initiative, referendum, and recall, and women's suffrage.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, muckraking journalists were calling attention to the exploitation of child labor, corruption in city governments, the horror of lynching, and the ruthless business practices employed by businessmen like John D. Rockefeller. At the local level, many Progressives sought to suppress red-light districts, expand high schools, construct playgrounds, and replace corrupt urban political machines with more efficient system of municipal government. At the state level, Progressives enacted minimum wage laws for women workers, instituted industrial accident insurance, restricted child labor, and improved factory regulation.

At the national level, Congress passed laws establishing federal regulation of the meat-packing, drug, and railroad industries, and strengthened anti-trust laws. It also lowered the tariff, established federal control over the banking system, and enacted legislation to improve working condition. Four constitutional amendments were adopted during the Progressive era, which authorized an income tax, provided for the direct election of senators, extended the vote to women, and prohibited the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages.

Progressivism

Few periods in American history witnessed more ferment than the years between the founding of Hull House and American entry into World War I. This movement touched every aspect of American life. It transformed government into an active, interventionist entity at the national level, most notably under Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, but also at the state and local levels. For the first time Americans were prepared to use government, including the federal government, as an instrument of reform.

Progressive reformers secured a federal income tax based on the ability to pay; formulated inheritance taxes; devised a modern national banking system; and developed government regulatory commissions to oversee banking, insurance, railroads, gas, electricity, telephones, transportation, and manufacturing.

Education also became a self-conscious instrument of social change. The ideas of the educator and philosopher John Dewey influenced the reformers. Progressive educational reformers broadened school curricula to include teaching about health and community life; called for active learning that would engage students' minds and draw out their talents; applied new scientific discoveries about learning; and tailored teaching techniques to students' needs. Progressive educators promoted compulsory education laws, kindergartens, and high schools. They raised the literacy rate of African Americans from 43 percent to 77 percent.

During the Progressive era, public health officers launched successful campaigns against hookworm, malaria, and pellagra, and reduced the incidence of tuberculosis, typhoid, and diphtheria. Pure milk campaigns also slashed rates of infant and child mortality.

Urban Progressives created public parks, libraries, hospitals, and museums. They also constructed new water and sewer systems and eliminated "red-light" districts, such as New Orleans' Storyville, in most major cities.

To bridge the gap between capital and labor, Progressives called for arbitration and mediation of labor disputes. Meanwhile, many Progressive businessmen called for a new-style "welfare capitalism" that provided workers with higher wages and pensions.

The Progressive era was one of the most creative in the realm of culture and the arts. In the hands of Alfred Stieglitz, photography became an art form for the first time. Architects like Frank Lloyd Wright helped create modern architecture. The first exhibition of modern art, the Armory Show in New York in 1913, was held in the United States.

A new vocabulary characterized this era. Americans would speak about a "public interest" that was opposed by "special interests." They would also speak about "efficiency" and "expertise" in government and "morality" in foreign affairs. For the first time, Americans spoke of "social workers," "muckrakers," "trustbusters," "feminists," "social scientists," and "conservation."

To increase popular control over government, Progressive reformers lobbied successfully for direct primaries; the elimination of boss rule; the direct election of Senators; woman's suffrage; and in many state legislatures, adoption of the referendum, the initiative, and the recall. Reformers also saw adoption of the first restrictions on political lobbyists and the first regulations on campaign finances.

To modernize government finances, Progressives successfully instituted the income tax and established the Federal Reserve System to oversee the nation's economy. To regulate corporate behavior, Progressives enforced new anti-trust laws and established the country's first effective

regulatory commissions. They also established licenses for such professionals as pharmacists, veterinarians, and undertakers. To improve social welfare, they lobbied for workmen's compensation laws, minimum wage laws for women workers, and old-age and widow's pensions. To improve public health, Progressive reformers successfully lobbied for water standards, state and local departments of health, sanitary codes for schools, and laws prohibiting the sale of adulterated foods and drugs.

The Progressive era also had a much more negative side. It saw the spread of disfranchisement and segregation of African Americans in the South and even in the federal government. This era also saw the enactment of reforms, such as at-large voting, that lessened the political influence of immigrant groups at a time when city budgets were increasing. Critics frequently condemned Progressives as moralistic, undemocratic, and elitist.

Progressives did not agree on a single agenda. They disagreed vehemently in their attitudes toward such subjects as immigration restriction and prohibition of alcohol. They were a diverse lot that included Republicans and Democrats, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, and urban and rural reformers. Women's organizations stood at the forefront of the social reforms and policy innovations during the Progressive era. Women activists were especially active in efforts to end child labor and to protest companies that had unsafe working conditions or produced unsafe products. For the most part, Progressives were urban and college-educated, including journalists, academics, teachers, doctors, and nurses, as well as many business people.

Uniting these various reform movements stemmed from a preoccupation with the elimination of corruption and waste and an emphasis on efficiency, science, and professional expertise as the best ways to solve social problems. A book published in 1913, Benjamin Parker De Witt's *The Progressive Movement*, argued that three tendencies underlay progressive reforms: the desire to eliminate political corruption, the impulse to make government more efficient and effective, and a belief that government should "relieve social and economic distress." Progressives wanted to apply the techniques of systematization, rationalization, and bureaucratic administrative control developed by business to problems posed by the city and industry.

For all its flaws and limitations, the Progressive era was instrumental in formulating the rationale for much of the welfare state, including Social Security, unemployment insurance, and aid to single parent families.

The Roots of Progressivism

The Social Gospel

Religious ideas and institutions have always been one of the wellsprings of the American reform impulse. Progressive reformers were heavily influenced by the body of religious ideas known as the Social Gospel, the philosophy that the churches should be actively engaged in social reform. As elaborated by such theologians as Walter Rauschenbusch, the Social Gospel was a form of

liberal Protestantism which held that Christian principles needed to be applied to social problems and that efforts needed to be made to bring the social order into conformity with Christian values.

Muckrakers

Muckraking reporters, exploiting mass circulation journalism, attacked malfeasance in American politics and business. President Theodore Roosevelt gave them the name "muckrakers" after a character in the book *Pilgrim's Progress*, "the Man with the Muckrake," who was more preoccupied with filth than with Heaven above.

Popular magazines such as *McClure's*, *Everybody's*, *Pearson's*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Collier's* published articles exposing the evils of American society--political corruption, stock market manipulation, fake advertising, vices, impure food and drugs, racial discrimination, and lynching. Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* exposed unsanitary conditions in the meat packing industry. John Spargo's *Bitter Cry of the Children* disclosed the abuse of child laborers in the nation's coal mines. Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of the Cities* uncovered corruption in city government.

Herbert Croly and *The Promise of American Life*

If any one book can be said to offer a manifesto of Progressive beliefs, it was Herbert Croly's *The Promise of American Life*. Croly (1869-1930), a political theorist and journalist who founded *The New Republic*, was Progressivism's preeminent philosopher. Published in 1909, his book argued that Americans had to overcome their Jeffersonian heritage, with its emphasis on minimal government, decentralized authority, and the sanctity of individual freedom, in order to deal with the unprecedented problems of an urban and industrial age. Industrialism, he believed, had reduced most workers to a kind of "wage slavery," and only a strong central government could preserve democracy and promote social progress.

Croly, like most Progressives, was convinced that only a public-spirited, disinterested elite, guided by scientific principles, could restore the promise of American life. Thus, he called for the establishment of government regulatory commissions, staffed by independent experts, to protect American democracy from the effects of corporate power. He also believed that human nature "can be raised to a higher level by an improvement in institutions and laws."

Progressivism in Government

According to Croly, the challenge confronting early 20th century America was to respond to the problems that had accompanied the transformation of American society from a rural, agricultural culture into an urban, industrial society. Filled with faith in the power of government, Progressives launched reform in the areas of public health, housing, urban planning and design, parks and recreation, workplace safety, workers' compensation, pensions, insurance, poor relief, and health care.

Municipal Progressivism

Tom L. Johnson represented model of Progressivism at the local level. He was a four-term mayor of Cleveland from 1901 to 1909. In office, he removed all the "Keep Off the Grass" signs from parks and embarked on an aggressive policy of municipal ownership of utilities. He fought the streetcar monopoly, reformed the police department, professionalized city services, and built sports fields and public bathhouses in poor sections of the city. He also coordinated the architecture and placement of public buildings downtown, set around a mall.

James Michael Curley, Boston's mayor, represented the kind of leader that many Progressives opposed. The *Boston Evening Transcript* called Curley "as clear an embodiment of civic evil as ever paraded before the electorate." Twice sent to prison for fraud, he acquired a 21-room mansion (which had gold-plated bathroom fixtures) paid for by kickbacks from contractors.

The son of an Irish washerwoman, Curley won office by speaking the language of class and ethnic resentment. But Curley also built new schools for the children of working-class Bostonians, tore down slum dwellings, established beaches and parks for the poor, and added an obstetrics wing to the city hospital. He also helped the poor in very direct ways; he provided bail money, funeral expenses, and temporary shelter for those made homeless by fire or eviction. When he died, a million people lined Boston's streets to pay their last respects.

To weaken political machines, municipal Progressives sought to reduce the size of city councils and to eliminate the practice of electing officials by ward (or neighborhood). Instead, they proposed electing public officials on a city-wide (an at-large) basis. Candidates from poorer neighborhoods lacked funds to publicize their campaigns across an entire city. Urban Progressives also diminished the influence of machines by making municipal elections non-partisan, by prohibiting the use of party labels in local voting. A number of cities attempted to eliminate politics from city government by introducing city managers. Beginning with Staunton, Virginia, in 1908, a number of cities began to hire professional administrators to run city government.

Many Progressives wanted to improve the quality of urban life. The World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893, marking the 400th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage of discovery, was an inspiration to many urban reformers. As a symbol of its recovery from the disastrous Great Fire of 1871, Chicago erected a massive "White City" to hold the event. Chicago's White City demonstrated the value of careful planning and beautification and provided the impetus for many Progressive efforts to introduce city planning, zoning regulations, housing reform, and slum clearance.

The most far-reaching progressive effort to transform the city was known as "municipal socialism." Many cities established municipal waterworks, gasworks, and electricity and public transportation systems.

State Progressivism

During the Progressive era, the states were "laboratories for democracy," where state governments experimented with a wide range of reforms to eliminate governmental corruption, abolish unsafe working conditions, make government more responsive to public needs, and protect working people.

The severe Depression beginning in 1893 had discouraged states from engaging in policy innovation. Government retrenchment was the watchword of many lawmakers in the 1890s. Most of the endeavors reformers undertook during these years were efforts to eliminate political bossism, corruption, and governmental waste. The Depression also encouraged the consolidation of corporations, a development that would make trusts a major issue after the turn of the century. The Spanish American War had also diverted attention from domestic matters.

During the early 20th century, many states adopted reforms that had been enacted years earlier in Massachusetts, which, along with Rhode Island, had been the first state to have a majority of its population live in cities. Many of these reforms involved protections for working people, including:

- compulsory school attendance laws, adopted in every state except Mississippi by 1916;
- laws limiting work hours for women and children in 32 states, and minimum wages for women workers in 11 states;
- workmen's compensation, which provided compensation for workers injured on the job in 32 states.

Other laws established an eight-hour workday for state employees; authorized credit unions; created public utility commission; established state employee pensions; and instituted a host of health and safety regulations. Several states also passed laws prohibiting children from working at night.

To make the electoral process more democratic, all but three states adopted direct primaries by 1916, which allowed voters to choose among several candidates for a party's nomination. To allow voters to express their dissatisfaction with elected officials, Progressives proposed the recall, which allowed voters to vote to remove them before the end of their term in office. To give voters a greater voice in law making, Progressives proposed the initiative and the referendum. The initiative allowed voters to propose a bill and legislation, and the referendum permitted them to vote directly on an issue. Oregon, South Dakota, and Utah were the first states to adopt the initiative and referendum.

Beginning in the 1880s, Britain, France, Germany, and Scandinavia adopted a series of social welfare programs--unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, and industrial accident and health insurance. During the Progressive era, many reformers borrowed these ideas and adapted them to meet American circumstances.

Perhaps the most dramatic American innovation was "widow's pensions." Adopted by most states, these programs provided widows with a monthly payment that allowed them to keep their children at home, rather than putting them in orphanages or up for adoption.

National Progressivism

On September 6, 1901, President William McKinley was shaking hands with a line of well-wishers at the Pan American Exposition held in Buffalo, N.Y. Fifty soldiers and secret service agents roamed the premises, scrutinizing the crowd. A 28-year-old ex-Cleveland factory worker and farm hand named Leon Czolgosz (pronounced Chol-gots) moved toward the president and drew a 32-caliber revolver from his pockets. He wrapped his left hand and the gun with a large handkerchief.

A secret service agent touched Czolgosz shoulder. "Hurt your hand?" the agent asked. Czolgosz nodded. "Maybe you better get to the first aid station." Czolgosz replied: "After I meet the president. I've been waiting a long time."

Czolgosz approached McKinley and said, "Excuse my left hand, Mr. President." McKinley shook his hand and the farm hand moved on. After several more citizens extended their greetings, Czolgosz lunged toward the president. As a secret service agent tried to grab him, Czolgosz fired twice in rapid succession. One bullet was deflected by McKinley's breastbone, but the other ripped through his stomach and lodged in his back. "I done my duty!" Czolgosz cried out. The president died eight days later.

Czolgosz was an anarchist who didn't believe in governments, rulers, voting, religion, or marriage. In a handwritten confession, he complained that McKinley had been going around the country shouting about prosperity, when there was no prosperity for the working man.

McKinley's assassination marked the symbolic end of one era in national politics and the beginning of a new one. The 1890s had been a decade of depression, labor strife, and agrarian unrest, and the upheaval was not confined to the United States. The great European powers were struggling to control Africa, the Near East, and the Far East. An attempted revolution took place in Russia. At the turn of the century, six heads of state were assassinated by anarchists.

By 1900, many of the great questions of the 19th century seemed to be settled. Corporate enterprise would dominate the American economy, justified by Social Darwinism. The United States had decided to join the global struggle for trade and markets. The status of African Americans was going to be largely defined by white Southerners.

But in fact, the 20th century would not be a continuation of the 19th century. It was obvious from the moment that Theodore Roosevelt became president that new issues would dominate the 20th century.

Theodore Roosevelt

At the Republican convention in 1900, a senator warned his colleagues not to make Theodore Roosevelt their vice presidential nominee: "Don't any of you realize that there's only one life between this madman and the presidency?" As New York's governor, Roosevelt had challenged banking and insurance interests; Republican Party boss Tom Platt wanted him out of state affairs.

Born in New York City in 1858, Roosevelt was, in his own words, "nervous and timid" as a youth. He suffered headaches, fevers, and stomach pains. He was so frail and asthmatic that he could not blow out a bedside candle. So he hiked, swam, boxed, and lifted weights to build up his strength and stamina. In 1912, he would be shot in the chest by a deranged man, but proceeded to deliver an hour-long speech before having the bullet removed.

At the age of 23, Roosevelt was elected to the New York state legislature. Then in 1884, his wife and his mother died on the same day. To distance himself from these tragedies, he retreated to a 25,000-acre ranch in North Dakota's Badlands and became a cowboy. He wore spurs and carried a pearl-handled revolver from Tiffany, the New York jewelers.

Roosevelt returned to serve as a U.S. Civil Service commissioner; he also served as New York City's crusading police commissioner, wearing disguises in order to root out corruption. He subsequently became assistant secretary of the Navy and governor of New York, before his election as vice president in 1900.

Lacking any military experience and wearing a uniform custom-tailored by Brooks Brothers, Roosevelt served as second-in-command of the Rough Riders, a volunteer cavalry unit that fought in Cuba during the Spanish American War. With William McKinley's assassination, he became, at the age of 42, the youngest president in American history.

Even those who know nothing about his presidency instantly recognize his image carved on Mount Rushmore--his huge, toothy smile and his wire-rimmed glasses. As president, he made anti-trust, conservation of natural resources, and consumer protection national priorities. He forced coal operators to recognize the United Mine Workers.

Roosevelt's life was filled with contradictions. He was a member of one of the country's 20 richest families, yet he denounced business magnates as "malefactors of great wealth." The first president born in a big city, he was a hunter as well as a conservationist. He was a bellicose man who boxed in the White House. He was also the first American to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for brokering peace between Russia and Japan.

Incredibly active and energetic, Roosevelt was "a steam engine in trousers" who somehow found time to write three dozen books, on topics ranging from history to hunting and in languages ranging from Italian and Portuguese to Greek and Latin. He was the first celebrity president known simply by his initials. Said a British envoy, "You must always remember the

president is about six."

In office, Roosevelt greatly expanded the powers of the presidency. A bold and forceful leader, he viewed the White House as a "bully pulpit" from which he could preach his ideas about the need for an assertive government, the inevitability of bigness in business, and an active American presence in foreign policy. He broke up trusts that dominated the corporate world and regulated big business. He created the Departments of Commerce and Labor and the U.S. Forest Service. He supported a revolt in a province of Colombia that allowed the United States to build the Panama Canal. He sent a Great White Fleet on an around-the-world voyage to symbolize America's rise to world power. He made a dramatic public statement about race when he invited Booker T. Washington to dine at the White House.

Roosevelt pushed legislation through Congress, authorizing and establishing the authority of the Interstate Commerce Commission to set railroad rates. In 1904, he won reelection by the largest popular majority up to that time. But on election night, he announced that he would not seek reelection in 1908--a statement that undercut his influence during his second term. In 1909, he retired to hunt big game in Africa, and passed the presidency to his hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft.

Apart from his philosophy of an active, interventionist government, Roosevelt's most lasting legacy is that he became the model for a new kind of president: a charismatic, hyperkinetic, heroic leader, who sought to improve every aspect of society. He made the presidency as large as the problems posed by industrialization and urbanization.

Anti-Trust

One of the most significant issues Roosevelt confronted as president was how best to deal with the growth of corporate power. Between 1897 and 1904, a total of 4,227 firms merged to form 257 corporations. The largest merger combined nine steel companies to create U.S. Steel. By 1904, some 318 companies controlled nearly 40 percent of the nation's manufacturing output. A single firm produced over half the output in 78 industries.

Many Progressives feared that concentrated, uncontrolled, corporate power threatened Republican government. Public opinion feared that large corporations could impose monopolistic prices to cheat consumers and could squash small independent companies.

Roosevelt's Justice Department launched 44 anti-trust suits, prosecuting railroad, beef, oil, and tobacco trusts. Henry Clay Frick, the steel baron complained, "We bought the son of a bitch and then he didn't stay bought." The most famous anti-trust suit, filed in 1906, involved John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company. It took five years for Roosevelt to win his case in the Supreme Court. In the end, however, Standard Oil was broken into 34 separate companies.

Theodore Roosevelt did not oppose bigness in and of itself. He only opposed irresponsible corporate behavior. He distinguished between "good trusts" and bad trusts" and advocated regulating big corporations in the public interest by means of a government commission.

Government Regulation

At the beginning of the 20th century, milk distributors frequently adulterated milk by adding chalk or plaster to improve its color and molasses and water to cut costs. Meatpackers killed rats by putting poisoned pieces of bread on their floors; sometimes, the poisoned rats made their way onto the production lines.

The publication of Upton Sinclair's book, *The Jungle*, exposed unsanitary conditions in the meatpacking industry, generating widespread public support for federal inspection of meatpacking plants. The Department of Agriculture disclosed the dangers of chemical additives in canned foods. A muckraking journalist named Samuel Hopkins uncovered misleading and fraudulent claims in non-prescription drugs.

To deal with these problems the federal government enacted:

- The Meat Inspection Act (1906), mandating government enforcement of sanitary and health standards in meatpacking plants;
- The Pure Food and Drug Act (1906), prohibiting false advertising and harmful additives in food

Progressives often portrayed their battles as simply the latest example of an older struggle between "the people" and business interests and proponents of democracy against the defenders of special privilege. In fact, this view is quite misleading. Corporate managers were often strong supporters of Progressive reform. During Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, mining companies worked closely with the administration in order to try to rationalize the extraction of natural resources. Big meatpackers promoted the Meat Inspection Act of 1906 to prevent smaller packers from exporting bad meat and closing foreign markets to all American meat products.

Taft

Today, William Howard Taft is better known for his weight than for his presidency. The most corpulent president, he was 6-feet, 2-inches tall and weighed 330 pounds. A special bathtub was installed in the White House large enough to accommodate four average sized adults. When he was governor of the Philippines, he sent a cable that referred to a horseback ride he had taken into the mountains. The reply: "Referring to your telegram--how is the horse?"

Taft had served as a federal judge and as the appointed governor of the Philippines before Roosevelt named him secretary of war. However, his talents as administrator served him

poorly as a president. He was perceived, wrongly, as a tool of entrenched interests. In 1930, he was appointed chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

As president, Taft had very substantial Progressive accomplishments. He filed twice as many anti-trust suits as Roosevelt, expanded Roosevelt's program of conserving public lands, created a Children's Bureau within the Labor Department, and pushed through Congress the Mann-Elkins Act of 1910, which strengthened the federal government's power to regulate the railroads. He also submitted a proposal for a tax on corporate income and called for a constitutional amendment to permit an income tax. The amendment was ratified in 1913 during the waning days of his administration.

Taft also fired Roosevelt's trusted lieutenant, Gifford Pinchot, who had attacked his conservation policies. He supported the reelection of Joe Cannon, the Republican old guard speaker of the House, in return for conservative support on other issues. He tried to lower tariffs on foreign trade, only to have his proposal gutted by Congress. Said Roosevelt of his successor:

Taft, who is such an admirable fellow, has shown himself such an utterly commonplace leader, good-natured, feebly well-meaning, but with plenty of small motive; and totally unable to grasp or put into execution any great policy.

Disenchanted with Taft and missing the glory of the presidency, Roosevelt challenged his successor for the 1912 presidential nomination. "We stand at Armageddon," said Roosevelt in 1912, "and we battle for the Lord."

During the campaign, Roosevelt called the president a "fathead" and a "puzzlewit" who was "dumber than a guinea pig." Roosevelt's remarks deeply embittered Taft. "Even a cornered rat will fight," he reported said to a journalist.

Roosevelt won most of the primaries, but lost a rules fight at the Republican convention, and won only a third of the delegates. Charging Taft with "hijacking" the nomination, Roosevelt launched a third party. As the Progressive Party candidate, Roosevelt received 27 percent of the vote--which today is still a record for a third-party presidential candidate. Taft only won 23 percent of the popular vote, partly due to his failure to publicize his progressive achievements.

Income Tax

The federal income tax is a surprisingly recent innovation. The modern income tax was only introduced in 1913. From 1866 to 1893, the federal government ran surpluses, thanks to revenues from tariffs and excise taxes.

Republicans defended protective tariffs as a positive good. They claimed that a high tariff encouraged industrialization and urbanization, generated high wages and profits, and created

a rich home market for farmers and manufacturers. Beginning in 1887, the Democrats, led by Grover Cleveland, argued that the tariff was a tax on consumers for the benefit of rich industrialists. They claimed that the tariff raised prices, encouraged foreign countries to retaliate against American farm exports, and encouraged the growth of economic trusts. In fact, there is little evidence that the tariff had much economic significance. Its major beneficiaries were the producers of raw material, especially sugar, wool, hides, and timber.

By the end of the 1890s, revenue from the tariff was declining (since the United States was mainly importing raw materials), as was revenue from federal land sales. Meanwhile, government spending was increasing. By 1905, the expanding U.S. Navy was receiving 20 percent of the federal budget. At the same time, Congress expanded pensions for Civil War veterans.

In 1894, the government ran the first deficit since the Civil War and enacted a short-lived income tax, which was declared unconstitutional in 1895. The Supreme Court ruled that it violated a constitutional provision that taxes had to be apportioned among the states. The court reached this decision even though it had earlier upheld an income tax levied during the Civil War.

In April 1909, Southern and Western congressmen sponsored another income tax bill, hopeful that the Supreme Court with a new membership might approve it. Their opponents responded by sponsoring a constitutional amendment that would authorize an income tax, which they thought could not be ratified by three-fourths of the states. Congress approved the amendment overwhelmingly. The Senate vote was 77 to 0 votes; the House vote was 318 to 14 votes.

By the end of 1911, a total of 31 states (including New York and Maryland as well as many Southern and Western states) had approved the amendment--five short of the required number to pass. It appeared that the amendment had failed since no previous amendment had taken so long to be ratified.

But during the 1912 election, Democrat Woodrow Wilson and third-party candidate Theodore Roosevelt rekindled support for the amendment. The amendment eventually passed and went into effect when Wyoming became the 36th state to ratify in February 1913.

The new federal income tax was modest and affected only about one-half of one percent of the population. It taxed personal income at one percent and exempted married couples earning less than \$4,001. A graduated surtax, beginning on incomes of \$20,000, rose to six percent on incomes of more than \$500,000. The \$4,000 exemption expressed Congress' conclusion that such a sum was necessary to "maintain an American family according to the American standard and send the children through college." It was about six times the average male's income. State officials were exempt from paying any taxes, as were federal judges and the president of the United States.

American involvement in World War I caused government expenditures to soar and international trade (and tariff revenues) to shrink. By 1919, the minimum taxable income had been reduced to \$1,000, and the top tax rate was 77 percent. As late as 1939, only 3.9 million Americans had to file taxes. But just six years later, 42.6 million Americans filed. Tax withholding was introduced in congressional legislation in 1943. President Franklin Roosevelt vetoed this provision, but Congress overrode his veto.

Wilson

The split in the Republican ranks in 1912 enabled Democrat Woodrow Wilson to win the presidency. Despite receiving only 42 percent of the popular vote, Wilson steered through Congress the creation of the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Trade Commission, tariff reduction, anti-trust legislation, and a graduated income tax.

Wilson began as something of an isolationist in foreign policy. He apologized to Colombia for the U.S. role in Panama's independence; and he appointed the pacifistic William Jennings Bryan as secretary of state. But he would later vow to teach Latin Americans lessons in democracy.

Only a week after taking office in 1913, Wilson called upon Mexico's president, Victoriano Huerta, who had seized power after the constitutional president was murdered, to step aside when elections were held. When Huerta refused, Wilson used minor incidents--including the arrest of some American sailors in Tampico and the arrival of a German merchant ship carrying supplies for Huerta--as a pretext for occupying the Mexico port of Veracruz. Within weeks, Huerta was forced to leave his country.

During the conflict, the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa had made a number of raids into U.S. territory near the Mexican border. Wilson responded by ordering Gen. John J. (Black Jack) Pershing to cross into Mexico.

As president, Wilson also sent American troops to occupy Haiti in 1915 and the Dominican Republic in 1916. A year later, the United States bought the Virgin Islands, thereby gaining control of every major Caribbean island except British Jamaica. He engaged in more military interventions abroad than any other American president.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in Virginia but grew up in Augusta, Georgia, where his father was an official of the Southern Presbyterian church. After briefly practicing as a lawyer (he only had two clients, one of whom was his mother), he attended graduate school at Johns Hopkins and taught history and political science at Bryn Mawr, Wesleyan, and Princeton--his alma mater. He wrote several highly acclaimed books, including *Congressional Government*, which decried the weakening of presidential authority in the United States, and *The State*, a call for increased government activism.

As Princeton's president, he developed a reputation as a reformer for trying to eliminate the school's elitist system of teaching clubs. Professional politicians in New Jersey, wrongly thinking that they could manipulate the politically inexperienced Wilson, helped make him the state's governor, and then, arranged his nomination as president in 1912. The nomination was a way to block another bid by William Jennings Bryan, whose prairie populism had been rejected three times by voters. Before he launched his campaign, Wilson described himself with these words:

I am a vague, conjectural personality, more made up of opinions and academic prepossessions than of human traits and red corpuscles. We shall see what will happen!

With the Republican vote split between Taft and Roosevelt, Wilson became the first Southerner to be elected president since the Civil War. He carried 40 states, but only 42 percent of the vote. After his election, the moralistic, self-righteous Wilson told the chairman of the Democratic Party: "Remember that God ordained that I should be the next president of the United States." Wilson later said that the United States had been created by God "to show the way to the nations of the world how they shall walk in the paths of liberty."

During his first term, he initiated a long list of major domestic reforms. These included:

- The Underwood Simmons Tariff (1913), which substantially lowered duties on imports for the first time since the Civil War and enacted a graduated income tax;
- The Federal Reserve Act (1913), which established a Federal Reserve Board and 12 regional Federal Reserve banks to supervise the banking system, setting interest rates on loans to private banks and controlling the supply of money in circulation;
- The Federal Trade Commission Act (1914), which established the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC sought to preserve competition by preventing businesses from engaging in unfair business practices;
- Clayton Act Anti-Trust Act (1914), which limited the ownership of stock in one corporation by another, implemented non-competitive pricing policies, and forbade interlocking directorship for certain banking and business corporations. It also recognized the right of labor to strike and picket and barred the use of anti-trust statutes against labor unions.

Unlike Roosevelt, who believed that big business could be successfully regulated by government, Woodrow Wilson believed that the federal government should break up big businesses in order to restore as much competition as possible. Other social legislation enacted during Wilson's first term included:

- The Seaman Act (1915), which set minimum standards for the treatment of merchant sailors;
- The Adamson Act (1916), which established an eight-hour workday for railroad workers;
- The Workingmen's Compensation Act (1916), which provided financial assistance to

- federal employees injured on the job;
- The Child Labor Act (1916), which forbade the interstate sale of goods produced by child labor; and
- The Farm Loan Act (1916), which made it easier for farmers to get loans.

Following Wilson's election in 1912, four constitutional amendments were ratified:

- 16th Amendment (1913) gave Congress the power to impose an income tax;
- 17th Amendment (1913) required the direct election of senators;
- 18th Amendment (1919) banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages; and
- 19th amendment (1920) gave women the right to vote.

Wilson's second term was dominated by American involvement in World War I. At the end of September 1919, Wilson suffered a mild stroke. Then in early October, he had a major stroke that almost totally incapacitated him.

More than most presidents, Wilson's historical reputation had swung up and down. During the 1920s, he was viewed as a priggish and an anti-business president, an impractical visionary and fuzzy idealist who embroiled the United States in a needless war. During the 1940s, in sharp contrast, he was depicted in the Hollywood film, *Wilson* (1944), as an idealistic leader struggling to create a new world order based on international law.

Jane Addams: Champion for the Working Poor

Jane Addams was the daughter of one of Illinois' richest men. Instead of leading a life of leisure, however, she dedicated her life to aiding the urban poor. A friend of labor, a proponent of women's suffrage, a foe of city bosses, and an opponent of war, she struggled to make the ideal of civic equality embodied in the Declaration of Independence a reality. Instead of offering charity, she sought to assimilate the immigrant poor into American society and became a pioneer social worker.

Born in 1860, Addams was just two years old when her mother died. Suffering a severe curvature of her spine, she was coddled by her family. Her Quaker-born father, a banker, mill owner, and Republican politician, sent her to Europe twice and to college at Rockford Female Seminary. But like many other members of America's first generation of college-educated women, she felt deeply torn about what to do with her life. "A woman," she wrote, "was practically faced with an alternative of marriage or a career." She could enter teaching, or medicine, or missionary work, or else she could marry and devote her life to homemaking.

She enrolled at Philadelphia's Women's Medical College, but suffered a nervous collapse after her father's sudden death. For eight years she suffered excruciating back pain, nervous prostration, and serious depression. She turned to Philadelphia's leading physician, Dr. S. Wier Mitchell, for help. He prescribed rest cure as treatment, confining her to bed and forbidding all visitors and activities. As he told another patient: "Live as domestic a life as possible. Have but two hours of intellectual life a day. And never touch pen, brush, or pencil as long as you live."

Addams spent most of her 30s adrift, undergoing repeated rest cures. Then, suddenly she found her mission in life while on a trip to England. She was shocked by the squalor of London's East End slums. In response, she and a friend, Ellen Starr, decided to set up an institution to uplift America's urban poor.

In 1889, they moved into Hull House, a decaying mansion in one of Chicago's most destitute neighborhoods, and provided social services to the city's poor. Hull House offered classes that taught cooking, hygiene, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Hull House also provided child care and a kindergarten and built the first playground in Chicago. Each week 9,000 people, mostly immigrants from 28 different countries, came to the mansion. Her example helped inspire more than 400 other settlement houses around the country.

From Hull House, Addams tirelessly campaigned for an end to sweat shops and a ban on child labor. She convinced many professors at the University of Chicago to produce empirical, social scientific data. She advocated an eight-hour work day and legal protections for immigrants. Addams called for compulsory education, woman suffrage, and improved sanitation. She also sought to organize unions for female workers; to establish a state bureau to inspect factories; and to create the nation's first juvenile court. In effect, she helped create the career of the social worker.

Addams was a key architect of what we would come to call the welfare state. She tirelessly campaigned to end sweatshops and tenement housing, end corrupt boss rule, ban child labor, provide legal protections for immigrants, and establish juvenile courts.

Her memoir, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, was a best-seller when it appeared in 1910. But in 1915, public opinion began to turn against her when she founded the Women's Peace Party, an international organization dedicated to waging "a women's war" against World War I. Elected president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919, she opposed the peace treaty ending the war as vindictive. In 1931, four years before her death, she won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Along the Color Line—Race and the Progressive Era

The period late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represented the nadir of American race relations. Nine-tenths of African Americans lived in the South, and most supported themselves as tenant farmers or sharecroppers. Most southern and border states instituted a legal system of segregation, relegating African Americans to separate schools and other public accommodations. Under the Mississippi Plan, involving the use of poll taxes and literacy tests, African Americans were deprived of the vote. The Supreme Court stripped the 14th and 15th Amendments of their meaning, especially in the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which declared that "separate but equal" facilities were permissible under the 14th Amendment. Each year approximately a hundred African Americans were lynched.

Booker T. Washington, the most prominent black leader, argued that African Americans should make themselves economically indispensable to southern whites, cooperate with whites, and accommodate themselves to white supremacy. But other figures adopted a more activist stance, such as the anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells, and W.E.B. DuBois, a founder of the NAACP, who demanded an end to caste distinctions based on race.

A tight labor market during World War I triggered the “Great Migration” of African Americans to the North, which continued into the 1920s. But the movement of blacks out of the South was met by racial violence in Chicago, East St. Louis, Houston, Tulsa, and other cities.

The Great Migration was accompanied by new efforts at black political and economic organization and cultural expression, including Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, which emphasized racial pride and economic self-help, and the Harlem Renaissance, a literary and artistic movement.

The State of African Americans in the South

In 1900, the plight of African Americans in the South was bleak. The average life expectancy of an African American was 33 years--a dozen years less than that of a white American and about the same as a peasant in early 19th century India.

Thirty-five years after the abolition of slavery, the overwhelming majority of African Americans toiled in agriculture on land that they didn't own. Nine out of ten African Americans lived in the South (almost the same proportion as in 1860), and three out of four were tenant farmers or sharecroppers.

At the beginning of the 20th century, some 44.5 percent of all African American adults were illiterate. In 1915, South Carolina spent one-twelfth as much on the education of a black child as on a white child. In 1916, only 19 black youths were enrolled in public high schools in North Carolina and 310 were enrolled in Georgia.

Increasingly, African Americans in the South were subject to a degrading system of social segregation and deprived of the right to vote and other prerogatives of citizenship. This system of racial discrimination based on law and custom was called "Jim Crow," after a mid-19th century black-faced minstrel act. Beginning with Mississippi in 1890, every Southern state, except Kentucky and Tennessee, had disenfranchised the vast majority of its African American population by 1907 through the use of literacy tests and poll taxes.

Lynching—Maintaining the Social Order through Terror

A crowd of nearly 2,000 people gathered in Georgia in 1899 to witness the lynching of Sam Hose, an African American farm laborer charged with killing his white employer. A newspaper described the scene:

Sam Hose...was burned at the stake in a public road.... Before the torch was applied to the pyre, the Negro was deprived of his ears, fingers, and other portions of his body.... Before the body was cool, it was cut to pieces, the bones were crushed into small bits, and even the tree upon which the wretch met his fate were torn up and disposed of as souvenirs. The Negro's heart was cut in small pieces, as was also his liver. Those unable to obtain the ghastly relics directly paid more fortunate possessors extravagant sums for them. Small pieces of bone went for 25 cents and a bit of liver, crisply cooked, for 10 cents.

From 1889 to 1918, more than 2,400 African Americans were hanged or burned at the stake. Many lynching victims were accused of little more than making "boastful remarks," "insulting a white man," or seeking employment "out of place."

Before he was hanged in Fayette, Mo., in 1899, Frank Embree was severely whipped across his legs and back and chest. Lee Hall was shot, then hanged, and his ears were cut off. Bennie Simmon was hanged, then burned alive, and shot to pieces. Laura Nelson was raped, then hanged from a bridge.

They were hanged from trees, bridges, and telephone poles. Victims were often tortured and mutilated before death: burned alive, castrated, and dismembered. Their teeth, fingers, ashes, clothes, and sexual organs were sold as keepsakes.

Lynching continues to be used as a stinging metaphor for injustice. At his confirmation hearings for the U.S. Supreme Court, Clarence Thomas silenced Senate critics when he accused them of leading a "high-tech lynching."

Lynching was community sanctioned. Lynchings were frequently publicized well in advance, and people dressed up and traveled long distances for the occasion. The January 26, 1921, issue of the *Memphis Press* contained the headline: "May Lynch 3 to 6 Negroes This Evening." Clergymen and business leaders often participated in lynchings. Few of the people who committed lynchings were ever punished. What makes the lynchings all the more chilling is the carnival atmosphere and aura of self-righteousness that surrounded the grizzly events.

Railroads sometimes ran special excursion trains to allow spectators to watch lynchings. Lynch mobs could swell to 15,000 people. Tickets were sold to lynchings. The mood of the white mobs was exuberant--men cheering, women preening, and children frolicking around the corpse.

Photographers recorded the scenes and sold photographic postcards of lynchings, until the Postmaster General prohibited such mail in 1908. People sent the cards with inscriptions like: "You missed a good time" or "This is the barbeque we had last night."

Lynching received its name from Judge Charles Lynch, a Virginia farmer who punished outlaws and Tories with "rough" justice during the American Revolution. Before the 1880s, most lynchings took place in the West. But during that decade the South's share of lynchings rose

from 20 percent to nearly 90 percent. A total of 744 blacks were lynched during the 1890s. The last officially recorded lynching in the United States occurred in 1968. However, many consider the 1998 death of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas, at the hands of three whites who hauled him behind their pick-up truck with a chain, a later instance.

It seems likely that the soaring number of lynchings was related to the collapse of the South's cotton economy. Lynchings were most common in regions with highly transient populations, scattered farms, few towns, and weak law enforcement--settings that fueled insecurity and suspicion.

The Census Bureau estimates that 4,742 lynchings took place between 1882 and 1968. Between 1882 and 1930, some 2,828 people were lynched in the South; 585 in the West; and 260 in the Midwest. That means that between 1880 and 1930, a black Southerner died at the hands of a white mob more than twice a week. Most of the victims of lynching were African American males. However, some were female, and a small number were Italian, Chinese, or Jewish. Mobs lynched 447 non-blacks in the West, 181 non-African Americans in the Midwest, and 291 in the South. The hangings of white victims rarely included mutilation.

Apologists for lynching claimed that they were punishment for such crimes as murder and especially rape. But careful analysis has shown that a third of the victims were not even accused of rape or murder; in fact, many of the charges of rape were fabrications. Many victims had done nothing more than not step aside on a sidewalk or accidentally brush against a young girl. In many cases, a disagreement with a white storeowner or landowner triggered a lynching. In 1899, Sam Hose, a black farmer, killed a white man in an argument over a debt. He was summarily hanged and then burned. His charred knuckles were displayed in an Atlanta store window.

The journalist G.L. Godkin wrote in 1893:

Man is the one animal that is capable of getting enjoyment out of the torture and death of members of its own species. We venture to assert that seven-eighths of every lynching part is composed of pure, sporting mob, which goes...just as it goes to a cock-fight or prize-fight, for the gratification of the lowest and most degraded instincts of humanity.

Opponents of lynching, like the African American journalist Ida B. Wells, sent detectives to investigate lynchings and published their reports.

Convict-Lease System

While most believe that the 13th Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, a loophole was opened that resulted in the widespread continuation of slavery in the Southern states of America--slavery as punishment for a crime. According to the 13th Amendment, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party

shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, nor any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Convict leasing began in Alabama in 1846 and lasted until July 1, 1928, when Herbert Hoover was vying for the White House. In 1883, about 10 percent of Alabama's total revenue was derived from convict leasing. In 1898, nearly 73 percent of total revenue came from this same source. Death rates among leased convicts were approximately 10 times higher than the death rates of prisoners in non-lease states. In 1873, for example, 25 percent of all black leased convicts died. Possibly, the greatest impetus to the continued use of convict labor in Alabama was the attempt to depress the union movement.

Convicts were invariably leased to prominent and wealthy Georgian families who worked them on railroads and in coal mining. Arkansas actually paid companies to work their prisoners for much of the time the system was in place. No state official was empowered to oversee the plight of the prisoners, and businesses had complete autonomy in the disposition and working conditions of convict laborers. Mines and plantations that used convict laborers commonly had secret graveyards containing the bodies of prisoners who had been beaten and/or tortured to death. Convicts would be made to fight each other, sometimes to the death, for the amusement of the guards and wardens.

Unlike the other Southern states, only half of Texas inmates were black. Blacks were sent to sugar plantations.

The Southern states were generally broke and could not afford either the cost of building or maintaining prisons. The economic but morally weak and incorrect solution was to use convicts as a source of revenue, at least, to prevent them from draining the fragile financial positions of the states. The abolition of the system was also motivated mostly by economic realities. While reformers brought the shocking truths and abuses of this notorious system before the eyes of the world, the real truth was far different. In every state, the evils of convict labor and abuses were in newspapers and journals within two years of implementation and were generally repeated during every election cycle.

The convict leasing system was not abolished but merely transformed. Prisoners, who labored for private companies and businesses increasing their profits, now labored for the public sector. The chain gang replaced plantation labor.

During the 1880s, many African Americans continued to vote in the South. The physical segregation of the races (which a later generation took for granted) was not yet a codified system. But beginning in Florida in 1887, Southern states moved to separate the races on railroads. After 1900, segregation spread to nearly every facet of Southern life. In 1890, Mississippi adopted several devices--including the poll tax and the literacy test--to disfranchise African Americans. All other Southern states followed suit by 1910.

Why race relations worsened in the late 1880s and 1890s is a hotly contested question:

In part, it reflected the collapse of the cotton economy, which led many whites to search for scapegoats.

Mounting discrimination was related to a fear among many Southern whites that a new generation of African Americans, which had been born after the Civil War and had not been subjected to slavery, would not defer to white authority.

In addition, the extreme violence was a reaction against the increasing economic independence of Southern blacks. From 1880 to 1900, black farm ownership increased from 19.6 to 25.4 percent, while sharecropping declined from 54.4. to 37.9 percent.

Jim Crow and the Courts

After the Civil War ended in 1865, the court severely limited federal power to fight lynchings and private discrimination. When the 14th Amendment was adopted in 1868, it was expected that the Supreme Court would protect the rights of African Americans. But in the 30 years after the 14th Amendment was adopted, the Supreme Court restricted its scope. Eight years after the Civil War, the Supreme Court ruled (in the *Slaughter-House Cases*) that the 14th Amendment's prohibition against states restricting the privileges or immunities of American citizens was not intended to protect citizens of a state against the legislative power of their state. The court made this 1873 ruling even though the 14th Amendment states in its first paragraph:

No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The Supreme Court decision in the *Slaughter-House Cases* reduced the "privileges and immunity" clause to a dead-letter. A 5-4 majority held that the clause only protected the rights of national citizenship and placed no new obligations on the states. This ruling left African American residents of the South powerless against discriminatory actions by state legislatures.

In the *Civil Rights Case* (1883), involving an inn in Jefferson, Mo., which barred blacks, the court ruled that the 14th Amendment did not give Congress the power to ban private discrimination in public accommodations.

In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the court said that the 14th Amendment "could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political, equality or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either." It would not be until 1954 that a unanimous Supreme Court would rule that legal segregation violated the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause.

Plessy v. Ferguson

In 1890, Louisiana passed a law prohibiting people of different races from traveling together on trains. This law was one of many forms of segregation, formal and informal, that came to be known as Jim Crow (named after a minstrel song). A group of African American educators, lawyers, journalists, and civic leaders in New Orleans decided to test the law in court. At the time, New Orleans had the country's largest African American population. "This act," black leaders declared, "will be a license to the evilly disposed...to insult, humiliate and maltreat...those who have a dark skin."

Homer Plessy, a shoemaker whose great-grandmother was black, challenged the law by sitting in a car reserved for white passengers. Despite the fact that he was seven-eighths white, he was arrested and convicted. Plessy's attorney argued that the state law violated the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection of the laws.

The Supreme Court ruled in Louisiana's favor in 1896. Segregation statutes were constitutional, the court said, as long as equal provisions were made for both races. The court's majority declared:

We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it.

The court's majority distinguished between legal or political equality and social equality. According to the majority opinion, the 14th Amendment only protected legal and political equality.

Justice John Marshall Harlan, the son of a Kentucky slave owner and himself a former Confederate officer, issued the lone dissent, saying it was wrong to separate citizens on the basis of race. "Our Constitution is color blind," he wrote, "...all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful." "What can more certainly arouse race hate, what more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races," he asked, "than state enactments which...proceed on the ground that colored citizens are so inferior...that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by white citizens?"

Harlan, who had a black half-brother 16 years his senior, warned that the Plessy decision "will in time prove to be quite as pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott Case." Harlan's half-brother, Robert Harlan, had purchased his freedom for \$500 and gone on to become Ohio's most prominent black Republican.

In the Plessy decision, the court gave its sanction to the "separate but equal doctrine" and gave states permission to legally separate blacks and whites at everything from drinking fountains to schools. *Plessy v. Ferguson* remained in effect until it was reversed in 1954 by the court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to integrate public schools.

The implications of the Plessy decision for education became apparent three years later. In 1897, the Richmond County, Ga., school board closed the only African American high school in Georgia, even though state law required that school boards "provide of the same facilities for each race, including schoolhouses and all other matters appertaining to education." At that time, the school board provided two high schools for white children. It also provided sufficient funds to educate all white children in the county, while it provided funding for only half of school-aged African American children.

The Supreme Court upheld the county's decision. In the case of *Cumming v. School Board of Richmond County, Ga.* (1899), it ruled that African Americans not only had to show that a law or practice discriminated against them, but that it was adopted because of "racial hostility."

The issues raised in the Plessy case are at the heart of a debate about race in America today: Whether race may be taken into account in hiring and promoting in the workplace, admission to schools, and the makeup of legislative districts. Today, it is opponents of affirmative action who quote Justice Harlan, arguing that race should not be used to remedy the effects of past discrimination.

Legal Segregation under Jim Crow

In Alabama, hospitals were segregated, as were homes for the mentally handicapped, the elderly, the blind and the deaf. In Florida, a law ordered that textbooks used for black and white children be kept separate, even when they were in storage. In Louisiana, a law regulating circuses and sideshows required separate entrances, exits, and ticket windows, and required that they be at least 25 feet apart.

In South Carolina, a code required that black and white workers in textile factories labor in different rooms, using different water fountains and toilets as well as different stairways and pay windows.

In Atlanta, an ordinance banned amateur baseball games within two blocks of each other if the players were of different races. In New Orleans, ferries, public libraries, and even brothels were segregated. For a time, public education for African American children was eliminated past the fifth grade. On streetcars, there was a movable screen that black riders had to sit behind.

Woodrow Wilson became the first Southern president since before the Civil War. He brought segregation to the federal bureaucracy, setting up all-black divisions within agencies.

Disfranchisement

Within five years of the Plessy decision, most Southern states had circumvented the 15th Amendment and deprived African Americans of the vote by using such devices as literacy tests, property requirements, poll taxes, and white-only primaries. In 1896, in Louisiana there were 130,334 black registered voters; in 1904, there were only 1,342. Proponents of

disfranchisement justified it as a way to end electoral fraud and violence and to ensure that only an educated citizenry would take part in elections.

The poll tax was typically a one or two-dollar tax, which was the equivalent of several days' pay. By 1910, all of the Southern states had adopted a poll tax. Turnout dropped dramatically, and in most areas, all-white primaries determined the election of government officials. As late as 1935, the Supreme Court allowed the Texas Democratic Party to exclude black voters from the Democratic primary, even though a primary victory was tantamount to election.

It should be noted that after 1900, Northern states also imposed literacy tests and registration requirements to "purify" their own electorate and to reduce the influence of "ignorant" or boss-controlled votes in urban centers.

Booker T. Washington and Accommodation

As the plight of African Americans in the South was beginning to worsen, Booker T. Washington, principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, was invited to speak before a bi-racial audience at the opening of the 1895 Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition--a celebration of the "new" industrializing South. A former slave who had toiled in West Virginia's salt mines and earned a degree from Hampton Institute, Washington was the first African American to ever address such a large group of Southern whites. Frederick Douglass had died several months earlier, and Washington would immediately take his place as the spokesperson for his people.

In his ten-minute oration, which is often termed the "Atlanta Compromise," Washington called for patience, accommodation, and self-help. He played down political rights and emphasized vocational education as the best way for African Americans to advance. "In all things that are purely social," Washington said, "we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress. African Americans should accommodate themselves to racial prejudice and concentrate on economic self-improvement." To his critics, this was capitulation to segregation.

From 1895 to 1915, Washington was viewed as African Americans' leading spokesperson. His autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, became a best seller. He was the first African American to dine at the White House, and he had an audience with Britain's Queen Victoria.

Yet, he also received bitter opposition from critics led by W.E.B. DuBois, the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard and a co-founder of the National Association of Colored People. DuBois, born in Great Barrington, Mass., believed that the only way to defeat segregation was through protest and agitation.

Washington was harshly criticized for failing to ask President Theodore Roosevelt to suppress a race riot in Atlanta (in which ten blacks died) or to condemn the President's dismissal of three companies of black soldiers after a riot in Brownsville, Texas. What Washington's critics did not

know was that he sometimes worked quietly behind the scenes. He secretly bankrolled legal challenges to disfranchisement and segregation on railroads.

At his death, a commentary in the *Nation* criticized Washington for failing to demand full civil and political equality for African Americans:

He had failed to speak out on the things which the intellectual men of the race deemed of far greater moment than bricks and mortar, industrial education, or business leagues--the matter of their social and political liberties.

The Struggle for Women's Suffrage

Among the most radical of all struggles in American history is the on-going struggle of women for full equality. The ideals of the American Revolution raised women's expectations, inspired some of the first explicit demands for equality, and witnessed the establishment of female academies to improve women's education. By the early 19th century, American women had the highest female literacy rate in the world.

But as American states widened suffrage to include virtually all white males, they began denying the vote to free blacks and, in New Jersey, to women, who had briefly won this privilege following the Revolution. In the 1820s and for decades to come married women could not own property, make contracts, bring suits, or sit on juries. They could be legally beaten by their husbands and were required to submit to their husbands' sexual demands.

During the early 19th century, however, a growing number of women became convinced that they had a special mission and responsibility to purify and reform American society. Women were at the forefront of efforts to establish public schools, abolish slavery, and curb drinking. But faced with discrimination within the antislavery movement, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others organized the first Women's Rights Convention in history in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.

The quest for full equality involved not only the struggle for the vote, but for divorce, access to higher education, the professions, and other occupations, as well as birth control and abortion. Women have had to overcome laws and customs that discriminated on the basis of sex in order to overcome the oldest form of exploitation and subordination.

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