

Ch 9 The Progressive Era

Section 1 The Origins of Progressivism

Progressive Movement – early 20th century reform movement seeking to return control of the government to the people, to restore economic opportunities, and to correct injustices in American life

1. Attracted middle class city dwellers (teachers, writers, and scholars)
2. Four goals of Progressivism:
 - a. Protecting Social Welfare – strove to relieve urban problems and soften the harsh effects of industrialization
 - i. Florence Kelley – was an advocate for improving the lives of women and children, helped pass the Illinois Factory Act in 1893 which prohibited child labor and limited women’s working hours
 - b. Promoting Moral Reform – offered a host of programs to uplift immigrants and poor city dwellers
 - i. Prohibition – banning of alcoholic beverages, alcohol was believed to be undermining American culture and democracy
 - ii. Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) – promoted the goal of prohibition,

became the world's largest women's group in the nation's history in 1911

iii. Anti-Saloon League – angered many immigrants when its members attacked saloons, which filled several roles in many immigrant communities

c. Creating Economic Reform – big business often received favorable treatment from government officials and politicians

i. Muckrakers – journalists who wrote about the corrupt side of business and public life in mass circulation magazines during the early 20th century

ii. Ida M. Tarbell – wrote the *History of the Standard Oil Company* in *McClure's Magazine*, described the company's cutthroat methods of eliminating competition

d. Fostering Efficiency – fought to increase the efficiency of American society

i. Scientific Management – the effort to improve efficiency in the workplace by applying scientific principles to make tasks simpler and easier

ii. Assembly Line – introduced by the Ford Motor Company in 1913 (Henry Ford), where automobile parts could move at a

steady rate leading to a huge increase in production

Reforming Local Government

1. Natural disasters led to the transformation from city councils to commissions to city managers
2. Reform Mayors – focused on dismissing corrupt and greedy private owners of utilities (gasworks, waterworks, and transit lines) and converting utilities to publicly owned enterprises

Reform at the State Level

1. Reform Governors – passed laws to regulate telephone companies, railroads, mines, mills, and other large businesses
 - a. Robert M. La Follete – governor of Wisconsin who led the way in regulating big business
 - i. Taxed RR property at the same rate as other business property, set up a commission to regulate rates, and forbade RRs to issue free passes to state officials
2. Protecting Workers – mainly geared towards child labor
 - a. Businesses hired children because they performed unskilled jobs for lower wages and their small hands made them more adept at handling small parts and tools

- b. Suffered serious health problems, more prone to accidents, and developed bad habits
 - c. National Child Labor Committee – organized to end child labor
 - d. Though they lost at the national level, they succeeded in forcing legislation banning child labor and setting maximum hours in nearly every state
3. Efforts to Limit Working Hours
- a. Muller v. Oregon – Supreme Court decided that a state could legally limit the working hours of women
 - b. Bunting v. Oregon – upheld a 10 hour workday for men
 - c. Succeeded in winning workers’ compensation to aid the families of workers who were hurt or killed on the job
4. Reforming Elections
- a. Initiative – a bill initiated by the people rather than lawmakers
 - b. Referendum – a vote on the initiative by the people rather than lawmakers
 - c. Recall – enabled voters to remove public officials from elected positions by forcing them to face another election before the end of their term if enough voters ask for it
 - d. Direct Primary – adopted by Wisconsin in 1903, voters, instead of political machines, would

choose candidates for public office through a special popular election

5. Direct Election of Senators

- a. 17th Amendment – adopted in 1913, provided for the election of U.S. senators by the people rather than by state legislatures

Section 2 Women in Public Life

Women in the Work Force

1. Farm Women – in the South and Midwest, women and children remained a critical part of the economic structure of the family with their roles changing little since the previous century
2. Domestic Workers – in 1870, 70% of American working women worked as servants, mostly African Americans and immigrants
3. Women in Industry – mostly young, white city dwellers who spent up to 12 hours a day sewing, folding, packing, or bottling
 - a. Worked for less money than men because it was assumed that most working women were single and only supporting themselves

Women's Leadership in Reform

1. Women in Higher Education – more and more women's colleges began to be established, but

female graduates were still expected to perform their domestic roles

2. Women and Reform

- a. “Social Housekeeping” – women targeted unsafe factories and labor abuses and promoted housing reform, educational improvement, and food and drug laws
- b. National Association of Colored Women (NACW) – managed nurseries, reading rooms, and kindergartens

3. The Fight for Vote

- a. Suffrage – the right to vote, had been a focus of women since the Seneca Falls convention in 1848
- b. Susan B. Anthony – prominent suffrage leader
- c. National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) – formed in 1890 in order to unite suffrage leaders

4. Three Part Strategy for Suffrage

- a. Tried to convince state legislatures to grant women the right to vote
 - i. 1869 the Wyoming territory granted women the right to vote, followed by Colorado, Utah, and Idaho
- b. Women pursued court cases to test the 14th Amendment

- i. Supreme Court ruled that women were indeed citizens, but citizenship did not automatically confer the right to vote
- c. Women pushed for a national constitutional amendment that would grant the right to vote

Section 3 Teddy Roosevelt's Square Deal

Theodore Roosevelt

1. Roosevelt's Rise

- a. Began his political career in New York serving on the State Assembly, then he became New York City's police commissioner and then assistant secretary of the U.S. navy
- b. Grabbed national attention in the war with Spain in 1898 with his cavalry brigade the "Rough Riders"
- c. He returned a hero and was promptly elected governor of New York and then vice president

2. Modern Presidency

- a. Roosevelt was not supposed to be president
- b. Political bosses in New York found him impossible to control so they thought by putting him in the vice presidency he could do no harm
- c. President McKinley was assassinated in 1901, thrusting Roosevelt into the presidency
- d. His leadership and publicity campaigns helped create the modern presidency

- e. He used his dynamic personality and popularity to advance his programs
- f. Square Deal – the various progressive reforms sponsored by the Roosevelt administration

Using Federal Power

1. 1902 Coal Strike – 140,000 miners in PA went on strike and demanded a 20% raise, a 9 hour work day, and the right to organize a union
 - a. Five months in, winter threatened, with coal reserves low Roosevelt called both sides to the White House
 - b. Roosevelt threatened to take over the mines
 - c. Both sides agreed to submit their differences to an arbitration commission (works with both sides to mediate the dispute)
 - d. In 1903, the commission issued its settlement:
 - i. Granted workers a 10% raise
 - ii. 9 hour workday
 - iii. Workers had to give up their closed shop (forcing all workers to belong to the union) and the right to strike for the next 3 years
 - e. When a strike threatened public welfare, the Federal government was expected to intervene
2. Trustbusting
 - a. By 1900, trusts controlled about 4/5 of the industries in the U.S.

- b. Roosevelt sought to curb trusts when their actions hurt the public interest, but also maintained that only big business could ensure national greatness
 - c. Roosevelt used the Sherman Antitrust Act to break up the Northern Securities Company, the beef trust, the oil trust, and the tobacco trust
3. Railroad Regulation – put teeth into the ICC
- a. Elkins Act of 1903 – made it illegal for RR officials to give, and shippers to receive, rebates (discounts or refunds for using particular RRs),
 - i. Couldn't change rates until they had notified the public once rates had been set
 - b. Hepburn Act of 1906 – limited the distribution of free RR passes (common form of bribery)
 - i. Gave ICC power to set maximum RR rates (subject to court approval) whenever shippers complained

Protecting Citizens and the Environment – Roosevelt used his considerable skill at compromise to make improvements in these areas

1. Protecting Health

- a. *The Jungle* – written by Upton Sinclair, uncovered the numerous health hazards that occurred in the meat packing industry

- b. Meat Inspection Act – dictated strict cleanliness requirements for meatpackers and created a program of federal meat inspection
 - c. Pure Food and Drug Act – law enacted in 1906 to halt the sale of contaminated foods and drugs and to assure truth in labeling
- 2. Conservation and Natural Resources – before Roosevelt the government had stood by while private interests gobbled up the shrinking wilderness
 - a. He set aside 148 million acres of forest reserves, 1.5 million acres of water-power sites, and another 80 million acres of land that experts would explore for mineral and water resources
 - b. He established more than 50 wildlife sanctuaries and several national parks
- 3. Gifford Pinchot – a professional conservationist, named as head of the U.S. Forest Service by Roosevelt
 - a. Conservation – some wilderness areas would be preserved while others would be developed for the common good
 - b. National Reclamation Act of 1902 (Newlands Act) – money from the sale of public lands in the West funded large scale irrigation projects

Roosevelt and Civil Rights – Roosevelt, like most progressives, wasn't a supporter of civil rights

1. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) – formed in 1909 by a number of African Americans and prominent white reformers
 - a. Aimed for nothing less than full equality among the races
 - b. Found little support from progressives who focused on the needs of middle class whites

Section 4 Progressivism Under Taft

Election of 1908

1. After being elected to a second term in 1904, Roosevelt pledged he would not run in 1908 and instead handpicked his successor, Secretary of War William Howard Taft
2. The Democrats chose William Jennings Bryan for the third time
3. Taft won the election

Taft as President

1. He pursued a cautiously progressive agenda, but received little credit for his accomplishments
2. Payne-Aldrich Tariff – set of tax regulations, enacted by Congress in 1909, that failed to significantly reduce tariffs on manufactured goods
 - a. Greatly angered the Progressive wing of Taft's party

3. Disputing Public Lands

- a. Taft appointed Richard A. Ballinger, a wealthy Seattle lawyer, as his secretary of the interior
- b. Ballinger removed 1 million acres of forest and mining lands from the reserved list and approved the sale to Seattle businesses of several million acres of coal-rich land in Alaska

Republican Party Splits

1. Problems within the party – Republican conservatives and progressives split over Taft's support of the political boss Joseph Cannon, Speaker of the House
 - a. Under Cannon the House often ignored or weakened progressive bills
 - b. By the elections of 1910 the Republican party was in shambles, allowing the Democrats to control the House for the first time in 18 years
2. Bull Moose Party (Progressive Party)
 - a. Roosevelt returned to the country in 1910 and was disgraced with what Taft had done
 - b. He decided to run for president in 1912, but the Republicans quickly nominated Taft
 - c. Roosevelt and his supporters stormed out and formed the Bull Moose Party

Election of 1912

1. Republicans – Taft (Conservatism)

2. Bull Moose – Roosevelt (Progressivism)
3. Democrats – Woodrow Wilson, a reform governor from New Jersey
 - a. New Freedom – Wilson’s progressive platform that called for even stronger antitrust legislation, banking reform, and reduced tariffs and believed all monopolies to be bad
4. Socialist Party – Eugene V. Debs, called for an end to capitalism
5. Wilson won with only 42% of the popular vote, but 75% of the vote went to the reform candidates

Section 5 Wilson’s New Freedom

Wilson’s Background

1. Spent his youth in the South during the Civil War and Reconstruction
2. Was a lawyer for a short time, before becoming president of Princeton University
3. Served as governor of New Jersey before being elected president

Progressivism Under Wilson

1. Planned to attack the triple wall of privilege: trusts, tariffs, and high finance
2. Didn’t think government should get bigger, he thought business should be made smaller

3. Clayton Antitrust Act – enacted in 1914, that made certain monopolistic business practices illegal and protected the rights of labor unions and farm organizations
4. Federal Trade Act of 1914 – established the five member “watchdog” agency called the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
 - a. FTC – designed to investigate and stop unfair business practices
5. A New Tax System – Wilson believed that high tariff rates created monopolies by reducing competition
 - a. In 1913 Wilson established a new precedent by delivery the State of the Union message in person instead of having a clerk read it
 - b. Underwood Tariff of 1913 – substantially lowered tariff rates for the first time since the Civil War
6. Federal Income Tax
 - a. After lowering tariff rates, the government had to replace that source of income
 - b. 16th Amendment – ratified in 1913, legalized a graduated federal income tax, which provided revenue by taxing individual earnings and corporate profits
 - c. By 1917 the government was receiving more money from the income tax than it ever did from tariffs
7. Federal Reserve System

- a. Nation needed a way to quickly adjust money in circulation and a way to make credit more available
- b. Federal Reserve Act of 1913 – established the Federal Reserve System
 - i. Federal Reserve System – national banking system that controls the U.S. money supply and the availability of credit in the country
 - ii. Divided the country into 12 financial districts, each with a federal reserve bank
- c. One of the most enduring achievements of the Wilson administration

Voting Rights for Women

- 1. Local Suffrage Battles – growing numbers of young, college educated women helped breathe new life into the woman suffrage movement
- 2. Carrie Chapman Catt – became president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) after the retirement of Susan B. Anthony
- 3. In 1915 Catt developed a plan:
 - a. Painstaking Organization
 - b. Close ties between local, state, and national workers
 - c. Establishing a wide base of support
 - d. Cautious lobbying
 - e. Gracious, ladylike behavior

4. Lucy Burns and Alice Paul learned bold tactics from the British suffrage movement and instituted them in the U.S. for their own suffrage groups
5. 19th Amendment – ratified in 1920, granted the women the right to vote, 72 years later

Limits of Progressivism

1. Civil Rights

- a. Wilson placed segregationists in charge of federal agencies, expanding racial segregation in the federal government, the military, and D.C.
- b. He opposed federal anti-lynching laws
- c. Wilson had won the support of the NAACP during the election of 1912 by promising to treat blacks equally and speak out against lynching

Twilight of Progressivism – due to the outbreak of WWI in 1914, distracted Americans and their legislators allowed reform efforts to stall