Chapter 21: Urban America and the Progressive Era, 1900–1917

Chapter Review

I. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES The Henry Street Settlement House: Women Settlement House Workers Create a Community of Reform

Lillian Wald, was a 25-year-old nurse at New York Hospital who worked at the Henry Street Settlement in the Lower East Side. Settlement houses provided lodging, training, and social services to the urban poor; designed, in settlement-house pioneer Jane Addams’s words, “to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of urban life.” Leaders of the movement, including Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, and Florence Kelley, emerged as influential political figures during the progressive era. The settlement house movement embodied the impulses toward social justice and civic engagement that were hallmarks of the progressive movement. As progressive activism spread from reform communities like settlement houses, to city halls and statehouses, and finally to the national stage of the White House and Congress, Americans experimented with new approaches to urgent problems.

II. THE ORIGINS OF PROGRESSIVISM

Progressives came from diverse backgrounds and had divergent aims, but all shared a belief that the problems of the urban industrial age and the corruption of politics had to be addressed. Many looked to state and national government to take action, while others formed reforming organizations. Divided by racism and competing views of America, the progressives nonetheless shaped American politics from the 1890s to the 1910s.

a. Unifying Themes

Progressives shared three main beliefs: that industrial capitalism and urban growth had to be curbed; that group, and not individual aims and actions should direct society; and that citizens had to take an active role to promote reform. Progressivism drew inspiration from evangelical Protestantism as expressed in the Social Gospel as well as a confidence in natural and social science to identify and solve problems. These ideals of social justice and social control were often in tension, but progressivism left a legacy that continues to influence American reform movements.

b. New Journalism: Muckraking

Inspired by Jacob Riis’s book, How the Other Half Lives, progressives embraced journalism to educate and influence the public. Samuel McClure’s McClure’s Magazine, established in 1893, set the model for “muckraking” journalism (a disparaging label bestowed by Theodore Roosevelt in response to David Graham Phillips’ Cosmopolitan article, “The Treason of the Senate” attacking political corruption) with investigations of
urban corruption and the Standard Oil monopoly. Upton Sinclair’s novel, *The Jungle*, exposed filth and exploitation of the meatpacking industry, and Ida Wells’s antilynching campaign led to a sensational 1895 pamphlet, *The Red Record*, denouncing sexual exploitation of black women. The muckrakers showed how new technology could be applied to politics by mobilizing public opinion on a national scale.


c. Intellectual Trends Promoting Reform

Progressives were inspired by the work of the new social sciences—international in scope—of economics, sociology, and psychology, believing that their methodologies could provide information from which plans for improvement could be drawn up. John Dewey’s studies of education, Lester Ward’s sociological studies, John Commons’s work on industrial relations and organization, and progressive legal thinking from Stephen J. Field and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., all influenced the movement. Louis Brandeis’s famous sociological brief in *Muller v. Oregon* (1908) showed the potential for influencing law and politics by progressive means.


d. The Female Dominion

Settlement workers—mostly middle-class educated women—found they could not transform their neighborhoods without confronting social problems of chronic poverty, overcrowded tenement houses, child labor, industrial accidents, and public health. Settlement work provided these women with an attractive alternative. Addams often spoke of the “subjective necessity” of settlement houses. Lillian Wald attracted a dedicated group of nurses, educators, and reformers to live at the Henry Street Settlement. Social reformer Florence Kelley helped direct the support of the settlement house movement behind groundbreaking state and federal labor legislation. Arriving at Hull House in 1891, Kelley found what she described as a “colony of efficient and intelligent women.” New female-dominated occupations, such as social work, public health, nursing, and home economics, allowed women to combine professional aspirations with the older traditions of female moral reform, especially those centered on child welfare. The traditional “home” at the center of women’s sphere had become the larger community.

**MHL documents; Jane Addams, The Spirit of Youth and City Streets (1909); Twenty Years at Hull House (1910) at www.myhistorylab.com**

**III. PROGRESSIVE POLITICS IN CITIES AND STATES**

Progressive reformers focused much of their zeal and energy into local political battles. In cities and states across the nation, progressive politicians became a powerful force, often
balancing the practical need for partisan support with nonpartisan appeals to the larger citizenry.

a. The Urban Machine

Urban—often Democratic—political machines dominated many cities and their ethnic enclaves, trading votes for favors and controlling city finances, often in blatantly corrupt ways. From vote-buying, bribery, and graft, many machine politicians moved into gambling and prostitution. Despite their corrupt way, machine politicians like Tammany Hall’s “Big Tim” Sullivan were popular and admired by constituents on whom he bestowed Christmas dinners paid for from graft. Some progressive reformers arose from the machine system, including Robert Wagner and Al Smith, promoting social welfare laws in alliance with middle-class WASP progressives.

**MHL document:** *George W. Plunkitt, “Honest Graft” (1905)* at [www.myhistorylab.com](http://www.myhistorylab.com)

b. Political Progressives and Urban Reform

Political progressivism originated in the cities whose neighborhoods rarely enjoyed street cleaning, and where playgrounds were nonexistent. The “good government” movement, led by the National Municipal League, fought to make city management a nonpartisan, nonpolitical, process, applying corporate administrative techniques to cities. Reformers revised city charters in favor of stronger mayoral power and expanded use of appointed administrators and career civil servants. Business and professional elites became the biggest boosters of structural reforms in urban government and some, such as Cleveland businessman and mayor Thomas L. Johnson, moved into government. The city commission, proved very effective in rebuilding Galveston after the 1900 hurricane. By 1917, nearly 500 cities, including Houston, Oakland, Kansas City, Denver, and Buffalo, had adopted the commission form of government. Another approach, the city manager plan, gained popularity in small and midsized cities. In this system, a city council appointed a professional, nonpartisan city manager to handle the day-to-day operations of the community.

c. Statehouse Progressives

On the state level, progressives focused upon two major reform themes that sometimes co-existed uneasily: making politics more open through procedural reforms such as primary elections and the secret ballot, and direct election of state senators, while turning to un-elected experts to administer reform commissions. Robert La Follette in Wisconsin, Theodore Roosevelt in New York, and Hiram Johnson in California were all examples of successful progressive governors who promoted reform and regulation in the public interest. Southern progressivism took on a unique tone in the Jim Crow era as reform was for white people only, with blacks excluded from voting and offered few of the benefits of progressivism. Ironically, by weakening the influence of political parties, the
progressive reforms led to sharp declines in voter turnout. Government may have become more effective, but it was also less democratic.

IV. SOCIAL CONTROL AND ITS LIMITS

Many middle- and upper-class Protestant progressives feared that immigrants and large cities threatened the stability of American democracy, worrying that alien cultural practices were disrupting traditional American morality. Edward A. Ross’s *Social Control* (1901) argued that society needed an “ethical elite” of citizens “who have at heart the general welfare and know what kinds of conduct will promote this welfare.” Progressives often believed they had a mission to frame laws and with a social mission, leading to regulation of drinking and prostitution along with schools and leisure activities.

a. The Prohibition Movement

The WCTU appealed especially to women angered by men who used alcohol and then abused their wives and children. By 1911, the WCTU, with a quarter-million members, was the largest women’s organization in American history. Other temperance groups had a narrower focus. The Anti-Saloon League, founded in 1893, began by organizing local-option campaigns in which rural counties and small towns banned liquor within their geographical limits. The league was a one-issue pressure group that played effectively on antiurban and anti-immigrant prejudice. League lobbyists hammered away at the close connections among saloon culture, liquor dealers, brewers, and big city political machines.

The battle to ban alcohol revealed deep ethnic and cultural divides within America’s urban communities. Opponents of alcohol were generally “pietists,” who viewed the world from a position of moral absolutism. These included native-born, middle-class Protestants associated with evangelical churches, along with some old-stock Protestant immigrant denominations.

b. The Social Evil

Antipornstitution campaigns epitomized the diverse makeup and mixed motives of so much progressive reform. Male business and civic leaders joined forces with feminists, social workers, and clergy to eradicate “commercialized vice.” Between 1908 and 1914, exposés of the “white slave traffic” became a national sensation, alleging an international conspiracy to seduce and sell girls into prostitution. In 1910, Congress permitted the deportation of foreign-born prostitutes or any foreigner convicted of procuring or employing them. Reformers doubted any woman would freely choose to be a prostitute, since it violated their notions of female purity and sexuality. But for wage-earning women, prostitution was a rational choice in a world of limited opportunities. The anti-vice crusades succeeded in closing down many urban red-light districts. Rather than eliminating prostitution, reform efforts transformed the organization of the sex trade, leaving sex workers vulnerable to abuse by policemen and pimps.
c. The Redemption of Leisure

For large numbers of working-class adults and children, leisure meant time and money spent at vaudeville and burlesque theaters, amusement parks, dance halls, and motion picture houses. These competed with playgrounds municipal parks, libraries, museums, YMCAs, and school recreation centers promoted by progressives. By 1908, movies had become the most popular form of cheap entertainment in America, leading reformers to seek regulation of the medium. In 1909, New York City movie producers and exhibitors joined with the reform-minded People’s Institute to establish the voluntary National Board of Censorship (NBC). A revolving group of civic activists reviewed new movies, passing them, suggesting changes, or condemning them.

d. Standardizing Education

Progressive educators looked to the public school primarily as an agent of “Americanization.” Children began school earlier and stayed there longer. Kindergartens spread rapidly in large cities. By 1918, every state had some form of compulsory school attendance. High schools also multiplied, extending the school’s influence beyond the traditional grammar school curriculum. High schools reflected a growing belief that schools should be comprehensive, multifunctional institutions, a trend supported by the 1917 federal Smith Hughes Act providing funds for vocational education.

V. CHALLENGES TO PROGRESSIVISM

The dominant white middle-class progressive leadership was challenged by industrial workers seeking to unionize. Although often arising from ethnic communities and demanding reforms foreign to the elites, industrial workers played a growing role in politics with their demands for social justice.

a. The New Global Immigration

Early twentieth-century immigration brought 14.5 million people to the United States, mainly from southern and eastern Europe, unskilled workers driven from their farms and towns by economic forces or Jews fleeing racism. Many came to join family and friends already in America, and groups like the Polish peoples of Pittsburgh stuck together in tight-knit communities. Other groups—French Canadians, Mexicans, Barbadians and other Caribbean people, and Japanese on the West Coast, added to the flood and formed communities such as the Issei and Nisei in California.
b. Urban Ghettos

In large cities, immigrants settled in densely packed ghettos. Workers in the urban garment trades toiled for low wages and suffered layoffs, unemployment, and poor health. But conditions in the small, labor-intensive shops of the clothing industry differed significantly from those in the large-scale, capital intensive industries like steel.

New York City had become the center of both Jewish immigration and America’s huge ready-to-wear clothing industry. The garment industry was highly seasonal. Often forced to work in cramped, dirty, and badly lit rooms, garment workers strained under a system in which time equaled money. Striking garment workers in 1909 overcame violence to win union rights, and the March 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire which killed 146 workers horrified the public and led to state laws regulating the garment trade’s hours and working conditions.

c. Company Towns

Immigrant industrial workers and their families often established their communities in a company town, where a single large corporation was dominant. In Gary, non-English-speaking immigrant steelworkers suffered twice the accident rate of English-speaking employees, who could better understand safety instructions and warnings. Working-class women felt the burdens of housework more heavily than their middle-class sisters. The daily drudgery endured by working-class women far outlasted the “man-killing” shift worked by the husband. The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CFI) employed half of the 8,000 coal miners in the state. In mining towns such as Ludlow and Trinidad, the CFI dominated the lives of miners and their families. In September 1913, the United Mine Workers went on strike for improved safety, higher wages, and union recognition. Thousands of miners’ families moved out of company housing and into makeshift tent colonies provided by the union. The coal companies then brought in private mine guards who killed 14, including 11 children, in the Ludlow Massacre, shocking the public and arousing protests against company policies.

d. Competing Visions of Unions: The AFL and the IWW

Gompers’s AFL grew by recruiting skilled workers in craft unions, reaching a membership of 1.7 million by 1904. Each group looked to its own interests, weakening the AFL’s influence, and business leaders counterattacked by forming trade associations like the National Association of Manufacturers and promoting “open shop” laws. More radical workers gravitated to the International Workers of the World, born out of the Western Federation of Miners which had faced brutal repression by owners and state
authorities. Big Bill Hayward, a former miner turned socialist union leader, not only recruited workers of all trades and nationalities to the IWWs “one big union,” but promoted notorious protests like the “Bread and Roses” textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912. The openly socialist and revolutionary rhetoric of the IWW led the government to crush the movement when the United States entered WWI.

**MHL document: Samuel Gompers, The American Labor Movement (1914) at www.myhistorylab.com**

e. Rebels in Bohemia

During the 1910s, a community of Greenwich “Village bohemians,” especially the women among them, challenged Victorian sexual morality, marriage, and sex roles; they advocated birth control, and experimented with homosexuality. Other American cities, notably Chicago at the turn of the century, had supported bohemian communities. But the Village scene was unique, if fleeting, and found expression in Max Eastman’s radical magazine, *The Masses* and events like John Reed’s pageant in support of the Patterson Strike in 1913. The Village became a model of radical progressive ideas and a magnet for disaffected Americans for decades to come.

**VI. WOMEN’S MOVEMENTS AND BLACK ACTIVISM**

Women and African American activists were often at odds with mainstream progressive reformers. Progressive era women supported the settlement house movement, prohibition, suffrage, and birth control and took an active role in new women’s associations that combined self-help and social mission. These organizations gave women a place in public life, increased their influence in civic affairs, and nurtured a new generation of female leaders. In fighting racial discrimination, African Americans had a more difficult task, but progressive-era black leaders would have a long-range impact.

a. The New Woman

Women’s organizations attracted growing numbers of educated, middle-class women in the early twentieth century while more middle-class women were graduating from high school and college, reaching 20 percent of (still small) college enrollments by 1910. In 1890, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs brought together 200 local clubs representing 20,000 women. The movement combined an earlier focus on self-improvement and intellectual pursuits with newer benevolent efforts on behalf of working women and children, sponsoring art lectures, typing, stenography, and bookkeeping classes for young women. Women’s clubs created new female-centered communities, bridging class lines between middle-class homemakers and working-class women by promoting food safety and wage and hours laws.

**MHL document: Helen M. Todd, “Getting Out the Vote” (1911) at www.myhistorylab.com**
b. Birth Control

Margaret Sanger’s “birth control” campaign sought to provide contraceptive information and devices for women. Sanger, a 30-year-old nurse and housewife living with her husband and three children in a New York City suburb convinced her husband in 1910 to move to the city, where she began publishing the Woman Rebel. When postal officials confiscated the paper for violating obscenity laws, Sanger left for Europe to learn more about contraception. Sanger’s journal celebrated female autonomy, the right to sexual expression and control over one’s body, advancing sexual freedom for middle-class women, as well as responding to the misery of poor working-class women who bore numerous children. Sanger returned to the United States in October 1915 after the obscenity charges were dropped and embarked on a national speaking tour. In 1916, she again defied the law by opening a birth control clinic in a working-class neighborhood in Brooklyn and her efforts led to clinics opening in many cities and towns.

MHL document: Margaret Sanger, Woman and the New Race (1920) at www.myhistorylab.com

c. Racism and Accommodation

While most blacks remained in the rural South in 1900, even urban blacks were relegated to menial jobs. A small African American middle class of entrepreneurs and professionals mainly provided services and products to the black community. Racial Darwinism justified discrimination against “degenerate” African Americans, while a deeply racist popular culture made hateful stereotypes of black people a normal feature of political debate and everyday life in an attempt to justify their paternalistic attitudes and policies.

In this repressive climate, Booker T. Washington was an influential black leader. He founded Alabama’s Tuskegee Institute in 1881 in order to provide industrial and moral education. With the support of prominent whites like Carnegie, Washington founded the National Negro Business League in order to advance black business development in black communities. Despite his public stance of conciliation Washington worked behind the scenes to challenge Jim Crow in court.

MHL document: Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery (1901) at www.myhistorylab.com

d. Racial Justice, the NAACP, and Black Women’s Activism

W.E.B. Du Bois challenged Washington, embracing African American culture as a source of collective black strength and something worth preserving. Du Bois criticized Washington for accepting “the alleged inferiority of the Negro.” To oppose Washington’s conciliatory views, in 1905 Du Bois joined the Niagara Movement, leading to the founding of the NAACP. Du Bois, the only black officer of the original NAACP, founded and edited the Crisis, the association’s influential monthly journal. The
disfranchisement of black voters in the South severely curtailed their political influence, but African American women challenged white supremacy by forming the Women’s Convention of the National Baptist Convention in 1900, offering African American women a new public space to pursue reform work and “racial uplift.” The National Association of Colored Women Clubs, by 1914, boasted 50,000 members in 1,000 clubs.


MHL audio: The Progress of Colored Women by Mary Church Terrell at www.myhistorylab.com

VII. NATIONAL PROGRESSIVISM

Progressivism started at the local and state levels and moved to Washington with La Follette, Johnson, Roosevelt, and Wilson, influencing both national parties and reshaping the political landscape.

a. Theodore Roosevelt and Presidential Activism

Roosevelt was converted to progressivism by his friend Jacob Riis, the muckraking journalist, who took him on tours of the city’s tenement districts. In 1897, Roosevelt became Assistant Secretary of the Navy and won national fame leading the Rough Riders in Cuba. Elected governor of New York in 1898 and vice president in 1900, Roosevelt was a colorful shrewd and creative politician, preaching the virtues of “the strenuous life,” and urging educated and wealthy Americans to serve, guide, and inspire those less fortunate. Roosevelt made key contributions to national progressivism after becoming president in 1901 by pushing for efficient, expert government to solve social problems. Unlike most nineteenth-century Republicans, who had largely ignored economic and social inequalities, Roosevelt frankly acknowledged them, as in his intervention in the 1902 coal strike on behalf of the miners.

MHL document: Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life” (1900) at www.myhistorylab.com

b. Trust-Busting and Regulation

Beginning with a suit against Northern Securities, Roosevelt the “trustbuster” filed 43 cases under the Sherman Antitrust Act against business monopolies. Roosevelt viewed these suits as necessary to publicize the issue and assert the federal government’s ultimate authority over big business. Easily reelected in 1904, Roosevelt pushed the Hepburn Act strengthening ICC railroad regulations through Congress. After publication of Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle, in 1906 The Pure Food and Drug Act established the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Meat Inspection Act reigned in large meatpackers such as
Swift and Armour). Ironically, drug companies and meatpackers used stricter federal regulation to drive out smaller companies that could not meet tougher standards and eliminate competitors. Progressive-era expansion of the nation-state had its champions among—and benefits for—big business as well as American consumers.

c. The Birth of Environmentalism

Inspired by his friend and head of the Forest Service Gifford Pinchot, Roosevelt embraced a moderate environmental policy, balancing preservation and commercial interests on national lands. Roosevelt did not go as far as John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club and opponent of the Hetch Hetchy dam project, in promoting environmentalism, but he supported the 1902 Newlands Act and the creation of a Reclamation Bureau to manage water resources. Along with the National Park Service, these government agencies did more to support agricultural and urban interests than strict environmentalism and created a federal presence in the critical issue of western water resources.


d. The Election of 1912: A Four-Way Race

Keeping his promise to retire in 1908, Roosevelt bequeathed the presidency on William Howard Taft, who continued progressive reform but alienated Roosevelt’s supporters with fights over the tariff, antitrust cases and conservation policies. By 1910, Roosevelt was openly campaigning for the Republican nomination, but when Taft secured re-nomination Roosevelt, broke away to run on the Progressive Party’s ticket with a “New Nationalism” platform that called for further reforms. The Democrats chose Woodrow Wilson, who had been elected New Jersey governor in 1901 by opposing the state Democratic machine. Wilson declared he and the Democrats were the true progressives and contrasted his New Freedom campaign with Roosevelt’s New Nationalism. Inspired by Louis Brandeis, Wilson favored a variety of progressive reforms for workers, farmers, and consumers. Socialist party nominee Eugene V. Debs offered a more radical choice to voters, pushing Roosevelt and Wilson farther left. In the end, the divisions in the Republican Party gave the election to Wilson, who won 6.3 million votes to Roosevelt’s 4.1 million and swept the electoral college. While Taft finished a dismal third, Debs won 900,000 votes, 6 percent of the total, the strongest Socialist showing in American history.


MHL audio: The Speech That Sent Debs to Jail at www.myhistorylab.com
Woodrow Wilson’s First Term

With the help of a Democratic-controlled Congress, Wilson pushed through a significant battery of reform proposals, beginning with the 1913 Underwood-Simmons Act, lowering the tariff and imposing an income tax authorized by the newly ratified Sixteenth Amendment. The Federal Reserve Act restructured the nation’s banking and currency system, creating 12 Federal Reserve Banks regulated by a central board in Washington, giving central direction to banking and monetary policy and diminishing the power of large private banks. Along with a strengthened Clayton Antitrust Act, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), established in 1914, gave the government the same sort of regulatory control over corporations that the ICC had over railroads—illustrating Wilson’s preference for business regulation over trust-busting. A Southerner, Wilson sanctioned the spread of racial segregation in federal offices, but did support aid to farmers, advances in workman’s compensation, and child labor laws.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From the Henry Street Settlement House in 1895 to state and federal legislation, by 1916, the progressive movement played a powerful role in American politics and society. The movement was weakened by internal divisions and infighting, and marred by blindness to the issue of racism. While politics became more democratic in form, voter turnout dropped and public and business interest groups stepped up lobbying to influence government. Undermined by World War I, the movement nonetheless left a lasting legacy

Learning Objectives:

1. What were the social and intellectual roots of progressive reform?
2. How did tensions between social justice and social control divide progressives?
3. How did the impact of new immigration from southern and eastern Europe transform American cities?
4. What new forms of activism emerged among the working-class women, and African Americans?
5. How did progressivism become a central force in national politics?

Discussion Suggestions and Possible Answers

1. Discuss the tensions within progressivism between the ideals of social justice and the urge for social control. What concrete achievements are associated with each wing of the movement? What were the driving forces behind them?

Answer: Proponents of social justice could point to a variety of reforms that improved the lives of lower-class Americans. Settlement houses, the ten-hour day, limitations on child labor as well as political improvements that sought to open the political process occurred
during the progressive era. Social control, however, also concerned progressive reformers who worried that the hordes of immigrants and the rapid rise of cities threatened America’s democratic traditions. Prohibition and antiprostitution campaigns were the most prominent of these efforts.

2. Describe the different manifestations of progressivism at the local, state, and national levels. To what extent did progressives redefine the role of the state in American politics?

**Answer:** At the local level, progressives emphasized greater administrative control and “good government” to provide increasingly essential public services such as street cleaning. At the state level, progressives focused on replacing the nomination of candidates with the direct primary. In addition, the railroads were frequently targeted by reformers in order to lower passenger and shipping rates. Nationally, progressives like presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson brought reforms to the nation. Roosevelt won a deserved reputation as a “trustbuster” for regulating monopolies and trusts that flouted the authority of the federal government. New Agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration sought to regulate drugs and approve basic food standards. Wilson also introduced the first National Income Tax while regulating more industries and reforming the banking system.

3. How did workers use their own values and communities to restrain the power of large corporations during the progressive era?

**Answer:** Workers challenged big business by organizing new unions under the auspices of the AFL and the IWW. Strikes by workers proved to be more successful than some previous campaigns as wages improved in some industries. Moreover, workers increasingly organized to demonstrate their political power at the local and state level.

4. How did the era’s new immigration reshape America’s cities and workplaces? What connections can you draw between the new immigrant experience and progressive era politics?

**Answer:** Immigrant communities used ethnicity in order to gain employment in factories, mills, and mines. The backbreaking work of industry became the preserve of recent immigrants. In addition, the number of immigrants from Mexico and Asia jumped dramatically, although many, like those from Japan, were barred from seeking citizenship because of their color. Progressive reformers sought to improve the often horrid living conditions in urban ghettos that immigrants endured. At the same time, they worried about the culture immigrants brought with them, particularly with regard to religion (Roman Catholicism and Judaism) and alcohol use.

5. Analyze the progressive era from the perspective of African Americans. What political and social developments were most crucial, and what legacies did they leave?

**Answer:** African Americans were often ignored by progressive era reforms. A racist popular culture and the continued exclusion of blacks from voting limited their opportunities. However, during the progressive era, new black organizations, particularly the NAACP and
its influential leader W. E. B. DuBois, promoted racial uplift and initiated new ways of challenging white supremacy.

6. How do the goals, methods, and language of progressives still find voice in contemporary America?

**Answer:** Progressive-type reforms can still be seen today, especially in grassroots reform efforts to promote social uplift. These efforts, however, still suffer from differences over the proper role and scope of government regulation, the ability of big business to shape reform efforts, and the limits of public focus on such issues. Still, calls to improve public education, improve basic housing and the debate over health care can all be traced to the progressive era.

**Lecture Outline**

American Communities: The Henry Street Settlement House: Women Settlement House Workers Create a Community of Reform

Origins of Progressivism
- Unifying Themes
  - New Journalism: Muckraking
  - Intellectual Trends
  - The Female Dominion

Progressive Politics in Cities and States
- The Urban Machine
- Progressives and Urban Reform
- Statehouse Progressives

Social Control and Its Limits
- The Prohibition Movement
- The Social Evil
- The Redemption of Leisure
- Standardizing Education

Challenges to Progressivism
- The New Global Immigration
- Urban Ghettos
- Company Towns
- Competing Visions of Unionism: AFL and IWW
- Rebels in Bohemia

Women’s Movements and Black Activism
- The New Woman
- Birth Control
- Racism and Accommodation
Racial Justice, the NAACP, and Black Women’s Activism

National Progressivism
  - Theodore Roosevelt and Presidential Activism
  - Trust-Busting and Regulation
  - The Birth of Environmentalism
  - Election of 1912: A Four-Way Race
  - Woodrow Wilson’s First Term

Resources (Web, Films/Video)

Web
The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans as Told By Themselves:
www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social_history/social_history.cfm is a series of collected interviews originally published in 1906 with the underclass and working class citizens of the United States.

Triangle Factory Fire: www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/ provides original documents, secondary essays, and images on the tragic fire that killed scores of workers.

Films/Video
Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America (37 minutes). Mother Jones Foundation, 2007. The only documentary that focuses on the life of Mother Jones as she worked for the rights of American miners and the working class. The film includes the only known footage of Mother Jones ever recorded.

TR and His Times, hosted by Bill Moyers. (58 minutes, color). 1982. Explores Roosevelt’s life and how he affected his own age.


My History Lab Connections

Reinforce what you learned in this chapter by studying the many documents, images, maps, review tools, and videos available at www.myhistorylab.com.

Read and Review

Read the Documents
George W. Plunkitt, “Honest Graft” (1905)
Report of the Vice Commission, Louisville, Kentucky (1915)
Lee Chew, “Life of a Chinese Immigrant” (1903)
Letters to the Jewish Daily Forward (1906–1907)
Samuel Gompers, The American Labor Movement (1914)
Helen M. Todd, “Getting Out the Vote” (1911)
Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life” (1900)
Theodore Roosevelt, “The New Nationalism” (1910)
Woodrow Wilson, “The New Freedom” (1913)

Research and Explore

Read the Documents
Exploring America: Hetch Hetchy
The Struggle for Women Suffrage

History Bookshelf
Ida B. Wells-Barnett, The Red Record (1895)
Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery (1901)
W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk (1903)
Upton Sinclair, The Jungle (1906)
Jane Addams, The Spirit of Youth and City Streets (1909)
Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House (1910)
Margaret Sanger, Woman and the New Race (1920)
Gifford Pinchot, The Fight for Conservation (1910)

Read the Biographies
John Muir
Margaret Sanger

Hear the audio
The Crisis Magazine by W.E.B. Du Bois
The Progress of Colored Women by Mary Church Terrell
The Speech That Sent Debs to Jail

Critical Thinking Exercises

The idea of “muckraking” continues to be popular with students. Many Americans like to watch television shows that purport to expose injustices and corruption. Students could present a comparison of progressive era muckraking with today’s equivalent. Many libraries have microfilm copies of McClure’s or other early twentieth-century muckraking journals. Students could compare these with magazines such as Mother Jones or TV programs such as 60 Minutes.