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American History 2

Unit 3: The Progressive Era (1890 - 1914)

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UNIT 3: THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (1890- 1914)

A: Explain the conditions that led to the rise of Progressivism.

THE RISE OF PROGRESSIVISM

As the 1800s came to a close, the United States entered what is known as the **Progressive Period**. Both government officials and citizens called for reforms in business, politics and society as a whole. As a result, many political, social and economic reforms came about during this period. Entering the Progressive Period, only a handful of people enjoyed wealth and prosperity while immigrants and poor laborers continued to live and work under harsh conditions.

- 5 Meanwhile, the country continued to be riddled (plagued) with government corruption at all levels. **Urban slums** consisting of **tenements** (overcrowded apartments that housed several families of immigrants or poor laborers) arose in the cities. Overcrowded and impoverished (poor), these slums often had open sewers that attracted rats and other disease-spreading pests. The air was usually dark and polluted with soot from coal-fired steam engines and boilers. Conditions like these led many in the U.S. to demand progressive changes (social, economic, and political reforms).

1. Describe the Progressive Period
2. What were some of the problems leading many US citizens to demand progressive reforms (changes)?

- 10 One event that greatly increased the public outcry for reform was the **Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire** of 1911. On March 25 of that year, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York City. Many of the exit doors to the factory were locked to prevent employees from stealing. The fire killed 146 people and led to increased demands for safer working conditions. Sadly, some eighty years later, a similar tragedy would happen in Hamlet, North Carolina at the Imperial chicken processing plant. In September 1991, a fire broke out at the plant and killed 25 people. As in
- 15 the Triangle Shirtwaist case, many of the exits were locked for the purpose of protecting the plant against theft and vandalism. It was also learned that the Hamlet plant had not been properly inspected prior to the accident. The Hamlet tragedy demonstrated that even after nearly a century, progress still remains in the battle for safe factory working conditions.

3. What tragedy led many Americans to demand safer working conditions in sweatshops and factories?

ACTIVISTS AND REFORMERS OF THE PROGRESSIVE PERIOD

- A number of leading intellectuals and writers came on the scene during the Progressive Period. Many of these writers
- 20 wrote stories exposing abuse in government and big business. President Theodore Roosevelt labeled these journalists the **muckrakers**. Among the muckrakers were a number of respected writers. One of these was **Frank Norris**. Norris wrote *the Octopus* in 1901. This fictional book exposed monopolistic railroad practices in California. In *Northern Securities v. U.S.* (1904), the holding company controlling railroads in the Northwest was broken up. **Lincoln Steffens** exposed political corruption in St. Louis and other cities in his book *The Shame of Cities*. As a result of Steffens' book,
- 25 cities began to use city commissions and city managers. **Ida Tarbell** revealed the abuses of the **Standard Oil** trust. Her articles led to the breakup of the monopoly in *Standard Oil v. US* (1911). Perhaps the most famous muckraker was **Upton Sinclair**. Greatly influenced by Norris, Sinclair published a novel called *The Jungle* in 1906. The book horrified readers as it uncovered the truth about the US meat packing industry. Its impact helped lead to the creation of a federal meat inspection program.

4. Who were muckrakers and what did they do?
5. Make a chart of the major muckrakers of the Progressive Period: explain what they exposed and what changes they helped bring about.

- 30 In addition to the muckrakers, there were other notable reformers as well. **Jacob Riis** wrote books that drew attention to the horrible living conditions in city tenements. **Jane Addams** opened **Hull House** in Chicago, which served as a center from which poor immigrants and workers could get much-needed help. It also served as a launching pad for investigations into economic, political and social conditions in the city. Hull House helped to lay a foundation for future reforms and inspired other **settlement houses** across the country.
- 35 During the Progressive Period, momentum continued to grow for the **Temperance Movement**. This was a movement that originally wanted to limit, and eventually advocated (supported) eliminating, alcohol. One of its most colorful figures was **Carrie Nation**. Already into her mid-50s by the turn of the century, Nation made a habit of entering saloons and smashing bottles of liquor with a hatchet while her Supporters prayed and sang hymns. Although most were not as radical as Nation, the temperance movement continued to gain strength. In 1919, Congress ratified the **18th Amendment** to the
- 40 Constitution. It prohibited (to stop or outlaw) the making, selling or transporting of any alcoholic beverage in the United States. Commonly referred to as "**Prohibition**," this amendment later proved to be a failure and was repealed (i.e. the 21st Amendment overturned the 18th Amendment).
6. List some other notable reformers and their contribution to the Progressive Movement.
 7. Which amendment prohibited (outlawed) the making and selling of alcoholic beverages?
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B: Analyze the various political changes during the Progressive Period.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

- In 1901, Theodore Roosevelt became the youngest man ever inaugurated President of the United States. He proved to be a progressive president who pursued a number of reforms. The first evidence of this came during the **Anthracite Coal Mine Strike** of 1902. Over 150,000 miners walked off their jobs demanding higher pay, shorter work days and official recognition of their union. When mine owners refused to budge, Roosevelt called both sides to the White House
- 5 and threatened to send in armed troops if a settlement could not be reached. As a result, the mine owners agreed to **arbitration** (a process in which parties to a dispute submit their differences to the judgment of an impartial third party). When it was over, the miners had received a wage increase and a shorter workday and Roosevelt was seen as a national hero for making sure that the nation got coal. He was also perceived as having sided with the strikers rather than management — a huge switch from past government positions.
8. Which president sided with the strikers rather than with management (bosses)?
 9. How was the Anthracite Coal Mine Strike resolved?
- 10 Although Roosevelt was not opposed to big business, he did believe that some regulations (controls) were necessary. He was especially concerned about **trusts** and the **monopolies** they created. The *United States v. EC Knight Co.* ruling in 1895 had gone against the government and stated that certain monopolies could not be broken up. Roosevelt felt that monopolies of any kind were harmful, and he was determined to take them on. Claiming that it violated the **Sherman Antitrust Act**, Roosevelt brought suit against the Northern Securities Company and its railroad monopoly in
- 15 Pacific Northwest. In 1904, the Supreme Court ruled in **Northern Securities v. U.S.** that the company's existence did violate federal law and therefore must be broken up. Roosevelt was praised as a reformer and he later went after a number of other large trusts, thereby receiving the name of "Trust-Buster".
10. What Supreme Court case proved that President Theodore Roosevelt was a Progressive who wanted to regulate and reform big business?

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, WOODROW WILSON AND THE ELECTION OF 1912

Holding to his 1904 campaign promise not to run for re-election in 1908, Theodore Roosevelt did not seek another term in the White House. Instead, he handpicked his good friend, William Howard Taft, to run in his place. Backed by the popular president, Taft won. Although he was not perceived to be the reformer Roosevelt was, Taft also championed a number of progressive causes. One of his most notable progressive moves was signing the **Mann-Elkins Act** (1910). This act expanded the power of the Interstate Commerce Commission in regulating railroads to regulating telephone and telegraph rates. Taft's administration also brought more antitrust cases that even Roosevelt's did. One such case that came before the Supreme Court was against the American Tobacco Company. In North Carolina, James "Buck" Duke (Duke University is named after the Duke family) had built the tobacco company started by his father into a powerful business that controlled nine-tenths of the country's cigarette production. In 1911, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in **American Tobacco v. U.S.** that the Dukes had established an illegal monopoly under the Sherman Antitrust Act and ordered that the company be broken up. Upon hearing of the Court's decision, another tobacco giant, R.J. Reynolds, was quoted as saying, "Now I'll give ole Buck Duke hell!"

11. What Progressive President won the 1908 election?
12. Explain the Mann-Elkins Act.
13. What law led to the break up of James Duke's American Tobacco Company?

Despite his best efforts, Taft could never gain the full support of Progressives within the Republican Party. The divide between the two widened in 1909 with passage of the **Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act**. Initially intended to lower tariffs and help consumers, the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act was so modified by Congress that it actually raised tariffs when it was finally signed into law. This outraged Progressives, including Theodore Roosevelt. As a result, the Republican Party split in 1912. Taft won the Republican nomination, while Progressives formed a new party and nominated Roosevelt.

Nicknamed the **"Bull Moose Party,"** the **Progressive Party's** platform reminded many of the Populist movement of the 1890's. The Progressives wanted improved working conditions, more government regulation of business, women's suffrage, and an end to child labor. In addition, the Progressives also wanted the direct election of public officials by the people. Large numbers of women flocked to the party and, in some states, even ran for office as Progressive candidates. When the election was over, both Roosevelt and Taft came up short. By splitting the Republican vote between them, they allowed **Democrat Woodrow Wilson** to win the **election of 1912**. In 1913, Woodrow Wilson became the 28th president of the United States.

14. What was the name of Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party?
15. Describe the Progressive Party's platform.
16. Who won the presidential election in 1912?

Wilson ran for president as a candidate who opposed both big business and big government. His goal as president was to enforce antitrust laws without threatening free economic competition. In 1913, he supported Congress in passing the **Federal Reserve Act**. This act established a Federal Reserve to oversee banking in the United States. The Federal Reserve gave the federal government greater control over the circulation of money and helped prevent bank failures. Wilson also signed the **Clayton Antitrust Act** in 1914. This act served to make strikes, peaceful picketing, and boycotts legal. It also meant that employers could no longer use antitrust laws to put down strikes or break up labor unions.

17. What was the purpose of the Federal Reserve?
18. What was the purpose of the Clayton Antitrust Act?

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS DURING THE PROGRESSIVE PERIOD

During the Progressive Period, calls for reform resulted in several amendments to the US Constitution:

- **16th Amendment (1913).** Congress now had the power to collect taxes on the incomes of businesses and individuals. This amendment increased the federal government's revenue and eliminated the need to tax according to the proportions of state populations.
- 55 • **17th Amendment (1913).** This law established that US senators would be elected directly by the people of a state, rather than by state legislatures.
- **18th Amendment (1919).** The government prohibited the making, selling or transporting of alcoholic beverages. This amendment was later repealed (overturned).
- **19th Amendment (1920).** Gave women the right to vote.

REFORMS IN STATE GOVERNMENT

60 As changes were going on at the federal level, Progressives were making their presence known within state and local politics, as well. One of the most famous figures known for reforming state government was **Robert La Follette**. Known as "Fighting Bob," La Follette was governor of Wisconsin from 1901 to 1906 and gained national attention as a reformer. In 1903, his state adopted the **direct primary**. This meant that the people would now choose the candidates for public office, rather than having them selected by party bosses. Within ten years of La Follette's reform, almost
65 every state had a similar law. Referred to by many as the "Wisconsin idea," La Follette's program included a **merit system** for state civil service and instituted state regulations and taxes on railroads. Because of men like La Follette, states began adopting reforms such as the **referendum** (electing public officials by popular vote, rather than by party bosses or state legislatures), the **initiative** (allowing for citizens of the state to force a vote on a particular issue), the **recall** (holding special elections to remove corrupt officials from office before their term has expired), and the **secret**
70 **(Australian) ballot** (allowing individuals to vote secretly, thereby removing the fear of reprisal if they vote against certain candidates).

19. Which amendment gave Congress the power to collect taxes?
20. Which amendment gave the people of a state the power to elect their US Senators?
21. Which amendment gave women the right to vote?
22. Which amendment prohibited the making, selling or transporting of alcoholic beverages?
23. Explain the "Wisconsin idea" used by Governor Robert La Follette.
24. The Progressive movement reformed state governments with the initiative, referendum, recall, and secret ballot. Explain each.

REFORMS IN CITY GOVERNMENT

Political machines and corrupt bosses like William Tweed had left many calling for reforms in city governments as well as state and the federal government. City governments also had to adapt to the modern needs of its citizens. For these reasons, some cities began experimenting with new models of government during the Progressive Period. One
75 model involved having a **commission** run the city rather than a mayor or individual leader. Cities hired experts in different fields to run a single aspect of city government. For example, the sanitation commissioner would be in charge of garbage and sewage removal. Another arrangement was to have the city hire a **city manager**. The city manager would be hired rather than elected, and was answerable to a commission, or city council, elected by the people. By the early 1920s, roughly 300 cities had city managers. Meanwhile, city councils came to be used in many places to hold
80 elected leaders, such as mayors, accountable as well.

25. What two models of city governments replaced corrupt political machines and bosses like William Tweed?

C: Evaluate the effects of racial segregation on different regions and segments of the United States' society.

DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

Following the Civil War, African-Americans still faced racism and discrimination, especially in the South. One of the primary means used to suppress (keep down) blacks was **disenfranchisement**. Disenfranchisement means to deny a certain group of people the right to vote. Since African-Americans had been granted citizenship under the 14th Amendment and guaranteed their right to vote (males) under the 15th, some states came up with creative ways to

5 keep them from participating in elections. Since blacks tended to be less educated, **literacy tests** were often enacted as a voting requirement. Under this restriction, a person had to prove they could read before they could vote. **Poll taxes** required citizens of a state to pay a special tax in order to vote. Since most blacks were too poor to pay, these taxes were another effective means for keeping African-Americans from voting. In order to protect poor and illiterate whites from being restricted by such measures, states would often implement **grandfather clauses**. These clauses

10 stated that anyone who had voted, or whose ancestors had voted, in past elections was exempt (let off the hook) from any new voting requirements. Since these conditions only applied to whites, grandfather clauses allowed nearly all whites to vote while disqualifying most blacks.

26. Define disenfranchisement.

27. What three methods were commonly used by some states to disenfranchise African-Americans?

VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION

When laws were not effective in keeping African-Americans from voting or exercising their civil rights, some whites turned to violence as a means of intimidation. In the South, the **Ku Klux Klan** used violence and **lynching** (mob

15 killings) to keep blacks from pursuing equality with whites. African-Americans who were lynched were often kidnapped, tortured and then hanged. Often their bodies were badly mutilated (beaten) in order to further intimidate others in the black community. Although lynching mostly happened in the South, African-Americans were also lynched in northern cities as well.

28. What methods did the Ku Klux Klan use to prevent African-Americans from voting?

SEGREGATION

Following the end of Reconstruction, states began to pass **Jim Crow laws**. These were laws that established **racial**

20 **segregation** (separation based on race) in restaurants, hospitals, schools, public transportation, etc. There are two kinds of segregation: De jure and de facto. **De jure segregation** is segregation based on **law**. In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld de jure segregation in the case of **Plessy v. Ferguson**. The case involved a 30-year-old man named Homer Plessy. Plessy, who was one-eighth African American, was jailed for sitting in a "whites only" railway car. Under Louisiana law at the time, Plessy was guilty of a crime. He sued, claiming the law was unconstitutional. After

25 considering the case, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was lawful as long as the separate facilities and services were equal. The lone dissenter (one who disagrees with the decision), Justice John Harlan, disagreed and stated that segregation violated the spirit of the Constitution. The case set the precedent (example) that segregation was legal so long as separate facilities held to the standard of "**separate but equal**." In reality, however, the facilities for whites were usually far superior to those of blacks.

29. What were Jim Crow Laws?

30. Describe the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court case.

31. What was the result of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case?

De facto segregation is segregation that is not officially instituted by law, but rather evolves due to economic or social factors. During World War I, de facto segregation became more evident in northern cities. This was in large part due to the "**Great Migration**" that saw thousands of African-Americans leave the South in search of industrial jobs created by the war. As a result, urban neighborhoods became even more divided due to poverty, race, and cultural differences.

32. What is the difference between De jure and De facto segregation?

33. During World War I, what caused de facto segregation in Northern cities?

SOME NOTABLE AFRICAN-AMERICANS OF THE PROGRESSIVE PERIOD

- 30 **Booker T. Washington:** During this period in US history, there were a number of notable African-Americans who emerged. One of these was a former slave named Booker T. Washington. Washington founded the **Tuskegee Institute** in Alabama. Tuskegee served to train African-Americans in a trade so that they could achieve economic freedom and escape the oppression often suffered by uneducated blacks. Washington taught his students that if blacks excelled in teaching, agriculture and blue-collar fields (trades requiring manual labor), they would eventually be
- 35 treated as equal citizens. His school became an important center for technical education in the South.

Washington's dedication despite the threats and many obstacles he faced, inspired African-Americans everywhere. At the same time, however, some blacks found his philosophies controversial. Washington, for instance, saw no problem with segregation. In a famous speech given in Atlanta in 1895, Washington stated, "In all things that are purely social we (whites and blacks) can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual

40 progress."

34. Who was Booker T. Washington?

35. What was the goal of the Tuskegee Institute?

36. What was Washington's philosophy on education and segregation?

W.E.B. Du Bois: Another African-American leader of the day was W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois was the first black Ph.D. graduate from Harvard University and adamantly (difficult to change) disagreed with Booker T. Washington. He was offended by the ideas expressed in Washington's Atlanta speech and viewed Washington as someone who had sold out to try and please the white community. For this reason, he labeled the speech the "**Atlanta Compromise**."

- 45 Instead of accepting segregation and "settling" for achieving in blue-collar fields, Du Bois argued that blacks should pursue occupations in the humanities and in white-collar (managerial or professional) fields. Du Bois, unlike Washington, believed that blacks must be politically, legally and socially active in order to obtain true equality. Du Bois helped to organize a group of black intellectuals known as the **Niagara Movement**. Their goal was to outline an agenda for African-American progress in the United States. In 1905, these leaders met on the Canadian side of
- 50 Niagara Falls after being denied hotel accommodations in the US. In 1909, Du Bois was instrumental in founding the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. The organization devoted itself to the progress of the African-American community by using the legal system (courts). It also founded an official magazine called ***The Crisis***, which featured journalism, editorials calling for social reform, and even poetry. Today, the NAACP continues to be a prominent political voice for the African-American community in the United States.

37. Who was W. E. B. Du Bois?

38. Why did Du Bois call Washington's Atlanta speech the "Atlanta Compromise?"

39. What was Du Bois' philosophy on education and segregation?

40. Describe the two groups/organizations that Du Bois help found (established).

41. Frederick Douglass founded the "North Star" anti-slavery newspaper to help end slavery. What newspaper, calling for social reform, was founded by Du Bois?

Ida Wells-Barnett: A fearless advocate of **civil rights** (those rights guaranteed to citizens under the U.S. Constitution), Ida Wells-Barnett was one of the most important African-American women of her day. She was especially noted for her campaign against segregation on railway cars prior to the Plessy decision, and her courageous fight against lynching in the South. As an advocate for women's rights, she became known for her unwillingness to stand at the back of women's suffrage parades simply because she was African-American. She also helped W.E.B. Du Bois form both the Niagara Movement and the NAACP.

42. Who was Ida Wells-Barnett and what issues did she fight against?

55 **Marcus Garvey:** A Jamaican by birth, Marcus Garvey came to be an important African-American figure in the United States during the Progressive Period. Garvey inspired a great sense of "black pride" among African-Americans and amassed a following of more than 500,000 people in his organization called the **United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)**. He was perhaps best known for his "**Back to Africa movement**", in which he advocated (proposed) blacks leaving the United States to establish a homeland in Africa. Although his vision of a "black
60 homeland" never became a reality, Garvey helped arouse a sense of cultural pride that many in the African-American community had not felt before.

43. Who was Marcus Garvey? What was he best known for?

NATIVE AMERICANS AND CITIZENSHIP

In addition to blacks, Native Americans also suffered from discrimination and prejudice. By 1871, the United States no longer recognized Native Americans as members of distinctive tribes or nations. Yet, at the same time, they were not granted the rights of U.S. citizenship either. Finally, in 1924, Congress passed the **Snyder Act**, which granted full
65 citizenship to Native Americans. This act also has been called the Native American Suffrage Act because, with citizenship, Native Americans were given the right to vote.

44. What law gave full citizenship to Native Americans?

D: Examine the impact of technological changes on economic, social, and cultural life in the United States.

Progressivism rose out of the same time period as big business and industrialization. Therefore, it was a time that saw many technological advances in US society. A number of these advances helped influence the progressive spirit and served to greatly transform US culture. **Electricity** meant that factories could operate more efficiently and for longer hours. Production increased as factories stayed open later and used electrically powered machines. The **electric**
5 **sewing machine** greatly transformed the market for pre-made clothes. Before electricity, garments had to be made on sewing machines operated by a foot pump. The work was slow and tiring. With the electric sewing machine, more could be produced quicker and with less physical energy. At home, electricity brought the invention of the **refrigerator**, allowing food to be kept longer without spoiling. **Electric trolleys** made it possible for people to travel from one part of the city to another in a reasonable amount of time. This created a market for mass transit and helped give rise to the
10 development of suburbs. It also helped give birth to a profitable entertainment industry, allowing people to attend events in the evening.

45. Why was electricity important in the areas of business, transportation, and the home and entertainment industries?

SKYSCRAPERS

15 As the number of people living in cities continued to increase, land to accommodate them became less available. Fortunately, in the late 1850s, the **Bessemer process** made it easier and more affordable to produce large amounts of steel. This availability of steel, combined with the need to fit more buildings and people into less space, led to the birth of **skyscrapers**. These buildings were so named because they were so high that they seemed to touch the sky itself.

46. How did the Bessemer process lead to the birth of skyscrapers?

AUTOMOBILES AND AIRPLANES

20 Although he was not the first to invent the automobile, **Henry Ford** was the first to perfect and successfully market it. In 1907, Ford sold 30,000 of his first, mass-produced car — the **Model T**. What truly set Ford apart was his vision for mass production; he decided to produce enough automobiles that he could afford to sell them at greatly reduced prices. He wanted "ordinary people" to be able to afford his cars. To achieve this goal, Ford relied on the **assembly line**. Assembly lines had existed before; but Ford's was innovative because it had the employees stay in one spot
25 while the assembly line moved the parts. Up until that time, parts remained stationary while employees moved from station to station. Ford also saw his **workers as consumers**. In other words, he wanted those who made his cars to also be able to buy them. For this reason, Ford paid his workers an unheard of **\$5 per day** wage. From 1907 until 1926, Ford built half the automobiles in the world (16,750,000 cars)

While Ford revolutionized the auto industry, the **airline industry** was coming into being as well. Born in 1903 when
30 brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully conducted the first flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, airplanes were soon used for military service and to carry the U.S. mail. In 1926, the nation saw birth of **commercial air travel** that carried passengers for the purposes of business and/or leisure cross country and abroad faster than ever before.

47. How did Henry Ford revolutionize (dramatically change) the auto industry?

48. The contribution of what two brothers led to the birth of today's commercial air travel?

BIRTH OF A MASS CULTURE

Many of the technological advances happening at the turn of the century served to contribute to the creation of a **mass culture**. Before the 1900s, values and priorities tended to be defined regionally. As the inventions of the late 1800s
35 and early twentieth century made communication easier and exposed more people to more things, US culture began to be defined more by national trends. The introduction of **mail order catalogs** meant that consumers could purchase products from stores in faraway cities. As a result, people in different parts of the country could wear the same fashions and buy the same products. The invention of the **movie camera** also played a huge role. The first motion picture, *The Great Train Robbery*, was released in 1903. Soon after, almost every city in the United States had a
40 movie theater. People all over the country watched as their favorite movie actors drove the latest cars, wore the latest clothes, and danced the newest dances. As a result, the United States began to develop a national culture.

Meanwhile, certain companies contributed to the transformation as well. **Kodak™** introduced cameras that could be owned and operated by average consumers. For the first time, people other than professional photographers could regularly take photos of individuals and events. Initially introduced as a medicine (it originally contained cocaine),
45 **Coca Cola™** became well known, introducing the concept of a bottled soft drink to the US public as it launched one of the country's first nationwide advertising campaigns. Such innovative practices also helped develop the new mass culture of the United States.

49. What technologies led to the creation of a mass culture or national trends?