

US History Progressive Politicians

Learning Target:

I can explain the goals of progressivism and its attempt to change America for the better.

1. The Origins of Progressivism

Goals of Progressivism –

1. Protecting Social Welfare
2. Promoting Moral Improvement
3. Creating Economic Reform

Social Welfare:

- Social welfare reformers wanted to soften the harsh realities of industrialization
- YMCA – Opened libraries, sponsored classes, built pools and handball courts
- The Salvation Army – Fed poor, cared for children, and helped immigrants

Promoting Moral Improvement:

- Reformers who believed morality was more important than workplace reformers
- Prohibition most common cause – outlawing alcohol
- Woman’s Christian Temperance Union spearheaded the campaign

Creating Economic Reform

- Severe economic panic in 1893 pushed some to question capitalism and go to socialism
- Eugene Debs organized the American Socialist Party in 1901
- Most progressives distanced themselves from socialism but agreed with many criticisms
- Big business used government corruption to limit competition
- Muckrakers – journalists who wrote about the corruption in business and public life

Progressive Election Reform –

The Progressive Goal –

- Break the power of the political machine bosses by reforming the election process
- “Give the government back to the people!” – Rallying cry of the Progressives

Four Steps To Election Reform –

1. Direct Primary Election -
 - A nominating election in which voters choose the candidates who later run in a general election (Previously voters elected delegates to choose candidates for general election)
2. Seventeenth Amendment -
 - Changed the method of electing US senators from being elected by state legislators to being elected by the people (Took power away from the machines)
3. Ballot Reform -
 - Ballot went from public to secret so that intimidation could not be placed on voters

4. A. Initiative –

-Gave voters to power in initiate or introduce legislation by having 5-15% of the state's population sign a petition; if this happens the legislation must be put on the ballot for public approval

B. Referendum –

-Similar to the initiative only now the public could vote on whether or not to approve a law when a petition was signed

C. Recall –

-Enables voters to remove a public official from office with a special election