

1. Women

Leaders: As far back as the Revolutionary War, American women had been fighting for equality in this country. The most famous of these ground breaking women was Susan B. Anthony. Anthony travelled all over the country in support of the many Women's Rights causes. Along with her best friend, speechwriter, and organizer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anthony became world famous in the fight for equality. Another woman, Alice Paul, was also gaining many followers at this time. Paul, who had a Master's Degree in Sociology, a Ph.D. in Economics, and also a Law Degree, was known more for her aggressive, radical protests than her academic record.



Elizabeth Cady Stanton
(seated) and Susan B.
Anthony

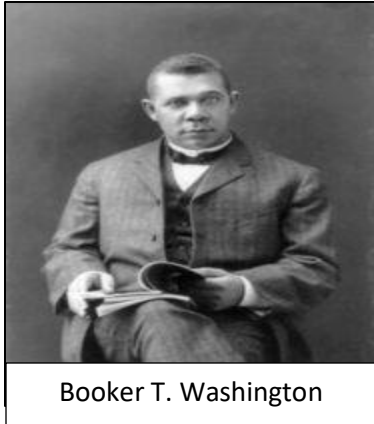
Issues: By far the biggest issue facing the women of the time was their lack of voting rights. The Suffrage Movement faced much opposition throughout the country. Many men feared that given the right to vote, women may outlaw things like alcohol or guns. Others felt that women weren't smart enough to make good decisions about candidates and issues. Even some women were known to oppose suffrage because they felt it would hurt families. Another issue women of the time protested was alcohol. Women's groups across the country campaigned for a ban on alcohol with the hope that problems like abuse, crime and disease would disappear without booze as the cause.



Alice Paul

Methods: Women of the time used many methods to achieve equality. Ultimately, however, everyone knew that to gain true equality, women had to convince the government to pass laws guaranteeing their rights. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example, concentrated on giving speeches and organizing marches to bring attention to the problems women faced and pressure the government into passing these laws. Anthony and Stanton were also known to form organizations to protest and boycott unfair treatment. There were many women, however, who were more aggressive. Alice Paul was known to do things like lie down on the White House steps, get arrested, and even go on Hunger Strikes to get the President to listen to her. Carrie Nation even went as far as entering saloons and taverns and destroying them with a hatchet while quoting the bible!

2. Minorities

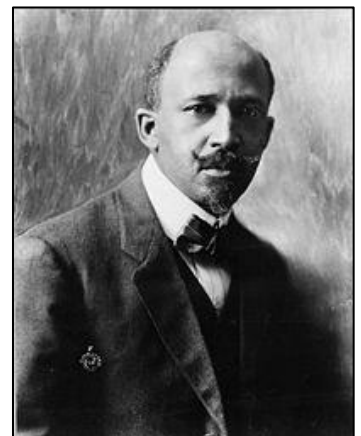


Booker T. Washington

Leaders: Two main minority leaders emerged after the Civil War to fight for the rights of African Americans. First, Booker T. Washington who, as a slave, taught himself to read and write became internationally famous as he travelled around the country encouraging African Americans to get an education and a job to prove their worth. W.E.B. DuBois was the other main African American leader of the time. DuBois, the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University felt blacks should demand equality immediately and took a very aggressive approach to the Civil Rights Movement.

Issues: Like the women of the time Southern blacks especially were being denied the right to vote. Many Southern communities required blacks to pay poll taxes and pass literacy tests before they were allowed to participate in the elections. In most of these same communities blacks also had to deal with Jim Crow Laws. These were laws that segregated every part of society and didn't allow African Americans equal opportunities or protection anywhere in society. Lastly, African Americans were dealing with the violence and terror of the Ku Klux Klan. During the Progressive Era, nearly 5,000 African Americans were murdered in the South for no reason at all.

Methods: There were two very different methods being used by minorities during the Progressive Era. First, followers of Booker T. Washington took a passive approach to fighting for their rights. Washington, one of the founders of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama (an all-black college), felt that getting an education or learning a trade was essential for African Americans. Once they were able to prove they were capable of working and helping society; then they could begin to demand equality. W.E.B. DuBois, on the other hand, felt that African Americans must demand equality now. He helped found the NAACP which hired lawyers to go to court and fight for equality. DuBois also pressured government leaders to vote for laws that would end segregation and voting restrictions. Unfortunately, the differing viewpoints actually hurt African Americans. Often times black leaders ended up fighting with each other instead of working together to end the injustices they faced.



W.E.B. DuBois