

History and Anthropology

Essay 1

There are many examples in American history when people were not treated equally. To address the grievances, the subjugated communities started to demand equal rights at the start of the 20th century. The biggest social evil in American society was the institution of slavery. It had its roots in colonial America. Europeans were the first who introduced slavery to America for their personal gains. The slavery emerged as an established institution and the founding fathers could not abolish it even after independence. The Northern states had abolished slavery in 1804 while the Southern states were not willing. North and South fought the Civil War to abolish slavery and after the recognition of the Thirteenth Amendment, it was abolished once and for all. However, states did not abide by rules and started to implement different segregation laws in form of Jim Crow. They segregated American Americans systematically and till the start of the 20th century, the situation became worse. To eliminate the grievances different civil rights movements started during the progressive era thus paving the way for equal rights for all Americans.

The United States of America faced immense economic progress during the progressive era that ultimately led to the roaring twenties. Unfortunately, the prosperity was not equally divided women, Hispanics, and African-Americans were often underpaid as compared to whites. They fought for recognition and equal rights. Women did not have the right to vote that started the women's suffrage – according to some historians it started in the 19th century but it was at the peak in the 20th century. Elizabeth Cady Stanton established the National American Women Suffrage Association – its core objective was to demand voting rights for women (Welt). Some states and already allowed women to vote including Utah and Idaho – however, states in the east

and south were not willing. Over time movements like National Woman's Party had adopted a radical approach i.e. hunger strikes. After the start of WWI, their activities slowed down but they worked in war efforts and proved their patriotism. The movements emerged successful and women got voting rights after the 19th Amendment on 18th August 1920.

The start of the 20th century brought immense economic prosperity that started the influx of immigrants from around the world. Mainly Europeans, Asians, and Hispanics migrated to the US in the hope of a better life and equal economic opportunities. Ironically, the industries exploited them and paid them minimum wages. The influx of immigrants brought the problem of urbanization, the cities were simply insufficient to accommodate the large population (Allen). In 1860, the American population was only 40 million while in 1920 it rose to 100 million. Immigrants started different movements to ensure equal wages including reforms in the housing sector. Though in the long run, such movements did not get success it lowered the working hours for labor. The working conditions of labor were reformed as demanded by labor unions.

The overall conditions for labor were not favorable for immigrants but the situation for Africans was not good either. To maintain their identity and equal rights they started an organized effort and formed different associations. The most important were the National Association of Colored Women, Niagara Movement, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National Urban League. The purpose of these movements was to ensure the upbringing of African American women and to develop a religious, social welfare, and economic system for all Africans. They also started African American Newspapers during the Progressive Era and highlighted the horrors of political cooption, urban plight, and lynching. They emphasized racial laws like Jim Crow – the irony was other American newspapers were ignoring such basic rights. NAACP started 'The Crisis' a monthly publication and 'Opportunity'

by the National Urban League. This two publication became pivotal in enlightening the African Americans. In the long run, it contributed to the start of the Civil Rights Movement after five decades under the dynamic leadership of Martin Luther Junior.

Essay 2

When it comes to the history of women's rights, America, like every other country in this world is responsible for gross discrimination. The history of women in America is littered with patriarchal values that women have fought to overturn ever since the colonial era. Yet, this struggle came to climax in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as there was a significant shift in the roles the defined women. Much of this change may be due to the fact that women learned to live a different life in the World Wars. **Whatever the case may be, there can be no doubt about the fact that the role of women in society shifted significantly from 1890 to 1930 in particular and this essay will focus on the three ways in which the role of women shifted in this time period.**

First and foremost, the biggest shift in women's roles came with the suffrage movement. This movement has been a great part of the history of the United States but it became a point of great contention in this particular era. However, the plight of women was not easily heard, in fact "...men, they often ignored the plight of women, and thus most refused to support women's suffrage. Many were also silent on the plight of African Americans, Native Americans, and other oppressed minority groups" (The American Yawp). Nevertheless, the women formed social clubs and went of protests to demand the right to cast a vote and have a say in the future of their country. These clubs or organizations were significant and a few of them were even biracial. Nonetheless, even the organizations that were not biracial managed to fight for women's rights while segregated black clubs fought against racism while demanding equal rights.

Secondly, another way in which the role of women shifted in this era was the mobilization of women during the World Wars. During World War I, the women participated in the war effort with almost as much zeal and zest as the men. As most of the men were drafted and sent to the front, the women who remained behind were used for support. This support consisted of material support and that of the psychological kind. All fifty states of the country organized committees that consisted of women who had been motivated by movements such as the Progressive Movement. A great many women were registered as volunteers in many services and this managed to increase the production of food while managing the wasteful cooking practices that were in practice earlier. Additionally, women also helped in various social services and boosted the morale of both black and white soldiers. They were also able to contribute to the arena of public health, especially during the Spanish Flu, and encouraged black people to participate alongside them.

Lastly, one of the most successful changes in the social standing of women came in the 1920s with the first wave of feminism. The World Wars had defined that women could work just as well as men could and the 1920s were spent in pursuit of the ideology that women could manage both their household and their respective jobs. Before the 19th amendment that came at the end of the First Great War, an amendment that allowed women to have voting rights, no one believed that women had the capacity to both work, and maintain the household. However, this notion was shattered by the wars and the involvement of Black women in the business sector. Moreover, the changes brought on by the World Wars assured that women could enter into sectors that used to be deemed inappropriate for them. These sectors include industries such as manufacturing, chemical, automobile, iron, steel, etc.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the Progressive Era brought on a great many changes in the lives of women all over the country. The most important of these changes was the suffrage movement which saw women protesting for voting rights. The mobilization of women in the Great Wars also shifted their roles as they were able to contribute to society, which was previously considered unthinkable. Furthermore, the first wave of feminism in the 1920s ensured that women were able to work in industries that had once been deemed inappropriate for them. Moreover, it is important to note that all these movements had a significant amount of black representation and hence black women contributed just as much to get women equal rights. Hence, the importance of this time period in the history of women in the United States cannot be ignored.

Works Cited

The American Yawp. *The Progressive Era* / *THE AMERICAN YAWP*. 2020,

<http://www.americanyawp.com/text/20-the-progressive-era/>.

Allen, Ann Taylor. "Woman Suffrage and Progressive Reform in Louisville, 1908–1920." *Ohio Valley History*, vol. 20, no. 1, The Filson Historical Society and Cincinnati Museum Center, 2020, pp. 54–78.

Welt, Aaron. "Policing the Jewish Quarter: Progressive Law Enforcement and Jewish Vigilantism in the Age of Mass Migration, 1900–1920." *American Jewish History*, vol. 104, no. 1, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020, pp. 115–42.