Interested in learning more about the Progressive Era? TPS-TN will be offering a one-day workshop September 17th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST at the East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville (see Upcoming Events for registration information). Dr. Bruce Wheeler from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, will join us to discuss how this period changed America and especially Tennessee. All participants will receive lunch and a $50 stipend. This workshop is designed for educators who have attended a previous TPS-TN workshop or presentation.

Not able to join us on September 17th? We will be offering a webcast exploring the Progressive Era on October 27th. Be sure to see next month’s newsletter for viewing information, or see our Webcasts page (information at bottom).

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

"Help!" [between 1914 and 1918]

What role did women play on the war front during World War I?

THEME: PROGRESSIVE ERA

This month’s newsletter explores the Progressive Era in the United States. From 1890 to 1920, Americans saw much of their world changing in profound ways. The economy became dominated by corporations instead of small business owners. Advances in technology and transportation such as the automobile, telephone, electric sewing machines, irons and washing machines changed how people went about everyday tasks. Organizations and individuals worked to promote reforms and improvements to address societal ills. Women, who played a key role in the reform movements, became more involved in the public sphere.

The Library of Congress Web site contains a wealth of resources to explore this fascinating period in your class.
**Lesson Idea—Ida B. Wells-Barnett**

Born a slave in Mississippi in 1862, Ida B. Wells-Barnett worked tirelessly to fight injustice throughout her life and is a great example of a Progressive Era reformer. Beginning as an educator in Memphis, Wells-Barnett lost her teaching position for speaking out against the inequalities she saw in segregated schools. She became a journalist and wrote extensively about lynching and the need for a federal anti-lynching law.

Begin by asking students to read this article about Wells-Barnett from the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. Discuss the article as a class. What reforms did Wells-Barnett work to institute? What organizations was she involved with?

As a class, discuss the problems of mob violence and lynching. For background information, click here. Ask students to define lynching. Who were the primary victims of lynching? Why was racial violence on the rise during this period? Assign students an excerpt of Wells’ *Red Book* (pages 96-99). What courses of action did Wells-Barnett recommend to address the problem of lynching? Working in groups, have students write a public service announcement using one of Wells-Barnett’s suggestions. Allow time for students to present their work to the class.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet curriculum standards for 5th grade Social Studies (Standard 5), high school U.S. History (Era 7), African American History (Standard 5), and English I-IV (Standards 2 and 5).

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**Lesson Idea—Progressive Presidents**

Presidents Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909), William Howard Taft (1909-1913) and Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) are considered to be Progressive presidents. But what makes each president *progressive*?

Have students break into three groups, and assign each a president to research. To begin, students should do some background research on their presidents. Have them start their research with the presidential biographies from the White House Web site. As the students are conducting their background research, have them note the major issues that each president faced during his presidency, his stance on the major issues of the day, and his signature accomplishments. Then they should create a list of key search terms for their president.

Once students have completed their background research, direct them to begin to look for primary sources related to their presidents on the Library of Congress Web site. Direct students to the American Memory collection and the Chronicling America newspaper collection. They will also want to explore the Prints and Photographs Online Catalog and the National Jukebox, which may have some great sound recordings of their presidents.

After students have had ample time to search (preferably one class period at least), ask them to write a short essay (as a group or individually) stating what makes their president progressive. Students should incorporate the primary sources they found into their essays. Then have students present their essays and primary sources to the class. Discuss as a class what makes each president progressive. How are they all similar? How are they different?

This lesson can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for A.P. and high school U.S. History (Era 7, Standard 4: Governance and Civics and 5: History).
Lesson Idea—Women’s Suffrage & The Progressive Movement

Women were among the Progressive Movement’s most influential reformers. Women such as Chicago’s Jane Addams dedicated themselves to improving the lives of newly arrived immigrants and other residents of America’s growing cities. Across the United States, both black and white women worked for such improvements as sturdier and better-ventilated housing, cleaner streets, healthier food, more sanitary workplaces and laws to limit the hours worked by children.

This municipal activism infused new life into the women’s suffrage movement. One of the primary arguments made by many suffragists was that women needed the vote to further the cause of “municipal housekeeping.” As mothers, they argued, women would bring urban reforms to the forefront. Passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote was one of the great achievements of the Progressive Era.

Have students read at least two of the following selections that link motherhood and suffrage: Women in the House (pp.72-73), The Importance of Women’s Influence in All Religious and Benevolent Societies, and Jane Addams on Suffrage. Then ask students to create a convincing poster on the theme “Why Mothers Need the Vote.” To further this lesson idea, ask students the following questions: “Can you think of any negative consequences that might have resulted from focusing on motherhood in the promotion of women’s suffrage?” and “Are there any issues today that activists might promote by using the theme of motherhood?”

This idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for high school U.S. History (Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America, 1890-1930) and U.S. Government (Standard 6: Individuals, Groups, and Interactions).

Featured Feature—American Memory Timeline

The American Memory Timeline combines a student-friendly overview of American history with the primary sources that help to build that history. It is not a timeline in the traditional sense, with a list of dates and the important events that occurred on each date. Rather, it is a presentation that divides American history into different eras, orders these eras chronologically, from “Settlement, Beginnings to 1763” to “Postwar United States, 1945-1968,” and offers a narrative overview of each era along with topics of further interest that students can delve into. (*Read the section on the Progressive Era here.)*

Each of these topics is accompanied by a small selection of primary sources—mainly documents, but also some photographs, maps, song lyrics, etc. The documents are transcribed in HTML format, meaning you can read them directly off the screen, and are also linked to their bibliographic pages within American Memory so that you can choose to view and download page images if you wish.

The Timeline is a particularly good source for providing first-hand narrative accounts of what people thought and experienced during these different eras in history. It saves you the time of searching American Life Histories and other collections looking for relevant interviews yourself. It also tries to present sources that demonstrate more than one point of view, and poses questions before each source that you can use to stimulate class discussion.

Each era’s section includes a link to state curriculum standards that are met.
Tennessee Centennial Exposition, Nashville, Tennessee [1897]

This bird’s eye view of Centennial City, built in Nashville to celebrate Tennessee’s 100th anniversary, shows a carefully thought-out design. Use the Zoom View for detail. What features stand out? How is Centennial City like a real city? How is it different? How might it have served as a model for urban reformers? Check out this link for more.

Dining room at the Hermitage, Nashville, Tenn. / H.O. Fuller, view and commercial photographer, Nashville, Tenn. [1907]

Theodore Roosevelt traveled across the U.S. during and after his presidency. Why would he wish to visit the Hermitage? What did he have in common with Andrew Jackson (whose portrait is looking over his shoulder)? This photo can be used as a source for the lesson idea on Progressive presidents (p. 2).

Young boy on warping machine Elk Cotton Mills, Location: Fayetteville, Tennessee, [1910]

Photographer Lewis Hine traveled throughout the United States (including much of Tennessee) taking pictures of child workers as part of a campaign to end child labor. How old do you think the boy is in this image? What does he appear to be doing? Why would reformers want to end child labor?

Let everyone help to save the famous Hetch-Hetchy Valley and stop the commercial destruction which threatens our national parks, [1911?]

Click on the image above to read the entire essay, which also addresses the debate of how to use the National Parks. Would you vote to dam the Hetch Hetchy Valley after reading this essay?