Who Were the Progressives?

Readings Selected and Introduced by

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Selections by

Richard Hofstadter
Elizabeth Sanders
Robert H. Wiebe
Richard L. McCormick
Shelton Stromquist
James J. Connolly
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Progressive Era  3

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1. Do we find the roots of Progressivism in the cities
or on the farms?  27

Richard Hofstadter
From The Status Revolution and Progressive
Leaders  27

"The ferment of the Progressive era was urban, middle-class,
and nationwide."

Elizabeth Sanders
Agrarian Politics and Parties after 1896  43

"[M]ost of the national legislative fruits of the Progressive Era
had their unmistakable origins in the agrarian movements of
the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s."
2. How much influence did middle-class businessmen have on the Progressive agenda? 77

Robert H. Wiebe

*Progressivism Arrives* 77

“The heart of progressivism was the ambition of the new middle class to fulfill its destiny through bureaucratic means.”

Richard L. McCormick

*The Discovery That Business Corrupts Politics: A Reappraisal of the Origins of Progressivism* 103

“Actually, progressive reform was not characterized by remarkable rationality or foresight; nor were the ‘organizers’ always at the forefront of the movement.”

3. How do class and ethnicity complicate our conception of the Progressives? 141

Shelton Stromquist

*The Crucible of Class: Cleveland Politics and the Origins of Municipal Reform in the Progressive Era* 141

“It is my argument that progressive reform at the municipal level congealed in a crucible of class polarization and conflict.”

James J. Connolly

*From The Dimensions of Progressivism* 169

“[M]any ethnic leaders found in Progressivism and its assault on city politics a formula with which to pursue their own ends.”

4. How did gender affect Progressivism, and which women became Progressives? 193

Maureen A. Flanagan

*Gender and Urban Political Reform: The City Club and the Woman’s City Club of Chicago in the Progressive Era* 193

“Most works on Progressive Era politics and reform concentrate on men, ignoring women’s roles, viewing them only as partners with their husbands or assigning them to the periphery of charity and church work.”
Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore

Diplomatic Women  221

“Black women fought back after disfranchisement by adapting progressive programs to their own purposes, even while they chose tactics that left them invisible in the political process.”

Suggestions for Further Reading  261