THE PROGRESSIVE ERA--
WHAT WAS IT?

NOBODY KNEW THEY WERE LIVING
IN A THING CALLED THE PROGRESSIVE AGE.
YOU KNOW, IT'S A CONSTRUCT OF A STORY.
I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN TRYING TO PUT A DIFFERENT FACE ON THE PERIOD--
TRYING TO GET A SENSE OF AMERICA THAT IS DEFINING ITSELF IN A DIFFERENT WAY.
AFRICAN AMERICANS,
MEXICO AMERICANS
TO SOME EXTENT, NATIVE AMERICANS--
UNDERSTAND THE STRATEGIES THAT THEY EVOLVED WHICH ENABLED THEM TO PERSIST AND TO TRANSCEND SOME REALLY AWFUL KINDS OF EXPERIENCES.

TRADITIONALLY, SCHOLARS SPEAK OF PROGRESSIVISM AS THE VARIOUS MIDDLE-CLASS REFORM EFFORTS TO ALLEVIATE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE WRENCHING CHANGES THE UNITED STATES EXPERIENCED AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

URBANIZATION, IMMIGRATION, INDUSTRIALIZATION LED TO MUCH DISLOCATION AND SUFFERING.
CHILD LABOR LAWS, WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE, BANKING REFORM
SETTLEMENT HOUSES FOR URBAN WOMEN IN NEED
AND IMPROVED FOOD SAFETY ARE AREAS OF TRADITIONAL PROGRESSIVE CONCERN.
I WANT TO OFFER A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON PROGRESSIVISM.
AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY
AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOLAR AND ACTIVIST, W.E.B. DuBois FORECASTED THAT... BUILDING UPON THAT INSIGHT, I WANT TO ARGUE THAT THE PROGRESSIVE SPIRIT...
Can be clearly seen in the group-based struggles of peoples of color to realize their hopes and dreams notwithstanding often overwhelming obstacles. A fundamental aspect of progressivism, therefore, was the continuing freedom struggles of peoples of color.

After Reconstruction, the place of blacks in America was a separate and severely restricted world. Lynching emerged as a weapon in the arsenal aimed at keeping blacks in their place. Legal and extra-legal violence went hand in hand with systems of economic repression. A kind of neoslavery developed, including sharecropping, which kept landless blacks economically shackled.

At the turn of the century, southern whites devised elaborate systems of racial segregation known as "Jim Crow." American apartheid extended from schools, churches and courthouses to water fountains, restaurants, hotels, department stores and parks. Blacks increasingly turned inward as a community and mobilized for the long haul. Fiery Ida B. Wells, nonetheless, led an impressive international campaign against lynching.

Wells labored tirelessly on behalf of federal action against lynching. It is important to bear in mind that segregation affected all peoples of color in varying degrees, including Indians on reservations.

The logic was clear—"To make the false notion of white superiority..."
APPEAR NATURAL AND RIGHT.
INDIANS, LIKE BLACKS EXPERIENCED THE WHITENING OF AMERICA.
RATHER THAN VANISHING, AS MANY AT THE TIME AND SINCE CLAIMED THEY WOULD, INDIANS SURVIVED.
THE OLD WAYS, RATHER THAN VANISHING PERSISTED IN THE FACE OF GENOCIDE AND AMERICANIZATION.
RESERVATIONS DID NOT LEAD TO THE DETRIBALIZATION OF INDIANS.
INSTEAD, IN SPITE OF THE GROWING AMERICAN THEFT OF INDIAN LANDS RESERVATIONS PRESERVED AND OFTEN EXTENDED TRIBAL IDENTITIES.
THIS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT SOUGHT TO ASSIMILATE INDIANS OUT OF THEIR INDIANNESS WHITENING THEM INTO GOOD AMERICANS.
THIS POLICY REMOVED INDIAN CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES AND RESERVATIONS, THEIR HOMES AND ISOLATED THEM IN OFF-RESERVATION SCHOOLS LIKE THE CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL IN PENNSYLVANIA.
THESE SCHOOLS WREAKED HAVOC ON THE CHILDREN, THEIR FAMILIES THEIR TRIBES AND RESERVATION LIFE.
ALL ASPECTS OF INDIAN CULTURE WERE ATTACKED.
THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THESE INDIANS UNDERWENT A DRAMATIC TRANSFORMATION.
THE TRAGEDY OF THE INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL EXPERIENCE CAN BE SEEN IN THE PHILOSOPHY GUIDING THE EXPERIMENT.
BY 1900, THERE WERE OVER 21,000 INDIAN CHILDREN
IN THESE SCHOOLS.

THE VICTORIAN-INSPIRED

WERE ILL-SUITED

FOR A RETURN

to reservation life.

MOREOVER, EXTREME

ANTI-INDIAN RACISM

SEVERELY LIMITED

OFF-RESERVATION OPPORTUNITIES.

HOMESICKNESS, DISEASE

AND ALIENATION WERE RAMPANT.

THESE FACTORS COMBINED

IN VARYING DEGREES

TO MAKE

THE BOARDING SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

TRAUMATIC FOR MANY

INDIAN CHILDREN.

RESISTANCE WAS COMMON.

MANY WHO SURVIVED WERE OFTEN

torn between the two worlds.

AN IMPRESSIVE NUMBER

FINESSED THE TENSION

BETWEEN THESE WORLDS.

SOME USED THEIR NEWFOUND

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

TO CHAMPION INDIAN RIGHTS.

IRONICALLY, MANY OF THE

PIONEERING "RED PROGRESSIVES"

WHO LED THE EARLY

INDIAN-DIRECTED EFFORTS

TO ALLEVIATE

THEIR PEOPLES' OPPRESSION

WERE BOARDING SCHOOL VETERANS.

SUSAN AND SUSETTE LaFLESCHE,

SISTERS FROM THE OMAHA TRIBE

LECTURED WIDELY,

AND EVEN LOBBIED CONGRESS

ON BEHALF OF INDIAN RIGHTS.

SUSAN WAS THE FIRST WESTERN-

TRAINED WOMAN INDIAN DOCTOR.

SUSETTE ARGUED FOR INDIANS

BECOMING FULL CITIZENS

UNDER THE UNITED STATES

CONSTITUTION.

FRANCIS, THEIR BROTHER,

WAS A PIONEERING ANTHROPOLOGIST.

DAKOTA SIOUX CHARLES ALEXANDER

EASTMAN WAS A "RED PROGRESSIVE"

AND A FOUNDING MEMBER OF

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN INDIANS

A PIONEERING NATIVE-RIGHTS ORGANIZATION.
THIS WAS THE FIRST INDIAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION CREATED AND RUN BY INDIANS FOR INDIANS.
LIKE SO MANY OF HIS "RED PROGRESSIVE" COLLEAGUES EASTMAN ENDEavored TO REPRESENT THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS.
HE MAINTAINED...
EASTMAN'S SENSE OF TWONESS SHOWED A TENSION BETWEEN INDIANNESS AND AMERICANNESS.
THIS TENSION REVEALED AN AMBIGUOUS AMERICANISM COMMON AMONG OUTSIDERS TO THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM.
ASYAN AMERICAN IS A BROAD CATEGORY ENCOMPASSING A WIDE VARIETY OF DIFFERENT PEOPLES INCLUDING CHINESE, JAPANESE KOREANS, ASIAN INDIANS AND FILIPINOS.
SOJOURNERS SOUGHT TO MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO SUSTAIN A HOMELAND CONNECTION EVENTUALLY PLANNING TO RETURN HOME.
SETTLERS, HOWEVER, SAW THEIR DESTINY AS MAKING IT IN AMERICA.
WHILE CHINESE EXCLUSION HAD DRastically CURTAILED CHINESE IMMIGRATION IN RESPONSE, WHITES CREATED RESTRICTIONS AIMED PRIMARILy AT THE JAPANESE.
THESE INCLUDED ALIEN LAND LAWS PROHIBITING ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR CITIZENSHIP FROM OWNING OR LEASING LAND.
NONETHLESS, MANY JAPANESE FOUND A MEASURE OF SUCCESS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, PARTICULARLY IN CALIFORNIA.
WHITES FEARED AND FOUGHT SUCCESS AMONG PEOPLES OF COLOR PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THE THREAT, IMAGINED AND REAL.
SUCH SUCCESS REPRESENTED TO WHITE COMPETITORS.
indeed, THAT SUCCESS BLATantly CONTRADICTED THE VERY IDEA
OF WHITE SUPREMACY.

156 01:08:56:28 01:09:00:06 NONETHELESS, ASIAN AMERICANS STRUGGLED AGAINST THE ODDS
157 01:09:00:08 01:09:03:03 TO FORGE VIABLE COMMUNITIES.
158 01:09:03:05 01:09:05:23 THAT THESE COMMUNITIES WERE MOSTLY MALE
159 01:09:05:25 01:09:08:22 COMPLICATED THE TASK OF FINDING MARRIAGE PARTNERS
160 01:09:08:24 01:09:11:20 AND SUSTAINING FAMILIES.
161 01:09:11:22 01:09:13:09 BY THE EARLY 1900s
162 01:09:13:11 01:09:15:29 LAWS PREVENTED THE IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES
163 01:09:16:01 01:09:20:01 OF THE WIVES OF CHINESE MALE IMMIGRANTS.
164 01:09:20:03 01:09:23:23 ONE MALE CHINESE MIGRANT WROTE TO HIS WIFE BACK IN CHINA:
165 01:09:51:09 01:09:54:01 EARLY ON APRIL 18, 1906
166 01:09:54:03 01:09:58:22 A POWERFUL EARTHQUAKE DEVASTATED SAN FRANCISCO.
167 01:09:58:24 01:10:02:17 FIRES CAUSED BY THE EARTHQUAKE DESTROYED MUNICIPAL RECORDS.
168 01:10:02:19 01:10:05:26 AS A RESULT, WITHOUT RECORDS TO PROVE OTHERWISE
169 01:10:05:28 01:10:08:02 MANY CHINESE MEN BORN IN CHINA NOW CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN BORN IN THIS COUNTRY.
170 01:10:08:04 01:10:11:04 AS SUCH, THEY WERE ENTITLED TO BRING THEIR WIVES
171 01:10:11:06 01:10:13:26 TO THE UNITED STATES.
172 01:10:13:28 01:10:15:23 IN SHORT ORDER, THE NUMBERS OF CHINESE WOMEN IN SAN FRANCISCO INCREASED DRAMATICALLY.
173 01:10:15:25 01:10:19:12 LIKE ASIAN IMMIGRANTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AN EXPANDING CAPITALIST LABOR MARKET.
174 01:10:19:14 01:10:20:21 INCREASED DRAMATICALLY. LIKE ASIAN IMMIGRANTS OFTEN PARTICIPATED IN A CIRCULAR, OR BACK-AND-FORTH MIGRATORY PATTERN ACROSS THE BORDER.
175 01:10:20:23 01:10:25:07 IN ADDITION, MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS MADE THE BORDER A LESS FORMIDABLE BARRIER.
176 01:10:25:11 01:10:28:01 MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS SOUGHT ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN THE SOUTH AND THE WEST.
177 01:10:28:03 01:10:30:00 AND IMPROVED LIVES IN THE LATE 1920s.
178 01:10:30:02 01:10:31:29 WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AN EXPANDING INCREASINGLY INTERNATIONAL CAPITALIST LABOR MARKET.
179 01:10:32:01 01:10:36:16 LIKE ASIANS, MEXICANS WERE ALSO TYPICALLY SOJOURNERS AND SETTLERS.
180 01:10:36:18 01:10:40:02 IN ADDITION, MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS MADE THE BORDER A LESS FORMIDABLE BARRIER.
181 01:10:40:04 01:10:41:28 BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES.
182 01:10:42:00 01:10:43:29 LONG-TERM MEXICAN SETTLEMENT AND LONG-TERM MEXICAN HERITAGE.
183 01:10:44:01 01:10:47:07 IN THE SOUTHWEST AND THE WEST MADE THE BORDER A LESS FORMIDABLE BARRIER.
LOOKING BACK ON HIS RECENT LIFE

ZEFERINO RAMIREZ was justifiably proud.

He had come north seeking work during the Mexican Revolution.

In Los Angeles, he encountered job discrimination but he persevered.

He even brought his wife and children to Belvedere, an unincorporated Mexican community in East Los Angeles.

After working very hard including several years as a highway laborer and time as a mortician's assistant, he was able to open his own business, a mortuary.

He was one of the first Mexican businessmen in his community.

Most Mexicans in the United States and their descendants were not so lucky.

They often found themselves caught up in physically taxing and low-paying work in mining, railroad construction and low-paying migratory and seasonal work in agriculture.

Migrant families often found it more of a challenge to maintain themselves than settled families.

Mexican identities already combined native, Spanish and African peoples.

Growing Americanization further enriched these mixed identities.

Mexican-American communities reflected creative blendings.

Adaptive families, new social networks and Spanish-language newspapers illustrated these mixings of Mexican and American worlds.

Mexican Americans organized formally to improve their status in spite of increasing opposition.

Mexican aliens, unlike Asian
ALIENS, COULD BE NATURALIZED.

Furthermore, there was some strength in numbers.

In 1920, over a quarter of San Antonio’s population of 161,000 were Mexicans.

Los Angeles’s Mexican population was even larger.

Farm workers, miners and railroad workers organized to alleviate a range of injustices.

These included a dual wage system that paid Mexicans less than Euro-Americans for the same job.

On the formal civil rights front, the League of United Latin American Citizens, or LULAC, emerged in the 1920s.

Since emancipation, Southern blacks had moved about in the search of improved life chances.

The depression of the 1890s intensified that search, increasing migration within and outside the South.

By the turn of the century, most still remained poor, Southern-based.

The most prominent African-American leader in this period was Booker T. Washington.

He counseled accommodation and a de-emphasis on politics and agitation.

As the founder of Tuskegee Institute, he emphasized vocational and domestic training as key to uplifting the black masses.

Another critical plank in his uplift philosophy was economic nationalism.

This meant advocating black community development through the support of black business enterprise.

There was much to recommend in this program, especially in light of the raging anti-black racism.
AT THE TIME.
OTHERS, NOTABLY W.E.B. DuBOIS
HOWEVER, FAVORED A MORE
AGGRESSIVE POLITICAL STANCE
A MORE MILITANT
PROTEST APPROACH
AND GREATER EMPHASIS
ON A WIDER VARIETY
OF EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS
FOR BLACKS.
DuBOIS, AND A GROUP OF WHITE
AND BLACK PROGRESSIVES
JOINED IN 1909 TO CREATE
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE.
The N.A.A.C.P. EVENTUALLY BECAME
THE MOST IMPORTANT
CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATION
IN THE 20th CENTURY.
A FLOOD OF AFRICAN AMERICANS
MOVED NORTHWARD
IN SEARCH OF OPPORTUNITIES
OPENED UP
BY WARTIME LABOR NEEDS.
THIS GREAT MIGRATION MUST
ALSO BE SEEN AS A PROTEST
AGAINST RACIAL OPPRESSION,
NOTABLY SOUTHERN JIM CROW.
MORE THAN HALF A MILLION BLACKS
WERE PART OF THE GREAT MIGRATION
FROM THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH.
AS A RESULT,
NORTHERN COMMUNITIES
LIKE HARLEM IN NEW YORK CITY
AND CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE
GREW RAPIDLY.
LIKE THE GREAT MIGRATION
WORLD WAR I WAS A TURNING POINT
FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS.
The Democratic Promise
Of The War
Was Not Lost
On Peoples Of Color.
MANY STRONGLY SUPPORTED
The War Effort.
MANY MEN OF COLOR SERVED NOBLY.
UNFORTUNATELY FOR PEOPLE
Of Color
THE DEMOCRATIC PROMISE
WAS A SHAM.
WARTIME SERVICE
AND WARTIME PATRIOTISM
DID NOT STRENGTHEN
THEIR CITIZENSHIP CLAIMS.
VETERANS OF COLOR RETURNED
TO AN EQUALLY HOSTILE, IF NOT WORSE, RACIAL REGIME.

ON FAR TOO MANY OCCasions, RETURNING VETERANS OF COLOR MET VIOLENCE AND DEATH AT THE HANDS OF WHITES.

INDEED, DURING WHAT CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE "RED SUMMER" OF 1919 THERE WAS A GRUESOME SERIES OF ANTI-BLACK RACE RIOTS.

HUNDREDS LOST THEIR LIVES.

BLACKS REVEAL THE AMBIVALENT AMERICANISM I DISCUSSED EARLIER.

WHILE SHARING IN THE HOPE AMERICA REPRESENTED THEY Fought AGAINST THE OPPRESSION THEY CONFRONTED.

AT THIS TIME, DuBOIS SPOKE OF THE NEGRO AMERICAN'S "TWONESS--" THE TENSION BETWEEN ONE'S NEGRONESS AND ONE'S AMERICANNESS.

HE EXPLAINED... AS THE HISTORIES OF NATIVE AMERICANS, MEXICAN AMERICANS AND ASIAN AMERICANS ILLUSTRATE THIS AMBIVALENT AMERICANISM IS A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE.

"THE PROBLEM OF THE 20th CENTURY IS THE PROBLEM OF THE COLOR LINE."

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

IN THE SOUTH IN THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY.

UNBELIEVABLE THINGS.

I MEAN, PEOPLE WERE NOT JUST HANGED.

THEM WERE BURNED AND ROASTED ALIVE, IN FRONT OF LARGE CROWDS.

PEOPLE WOULD PACK PICNIC LUNCHES AND GO TO SEE THESE HARRROWING SPECTACLES.
I THINK ONE OF THE WAYS TO THINK ABOUT THIS IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHITE SUPREMACY DURING THIS PERIOD WAS SORT OF AT ITS HEIGHT. THERE'S THIS SCIENTIFIC CAMPAIGN TO THINK ABOUT AND REPRESENT BLACK PEOPLE AS NOT ONLY CULTURALLY INFERIOR, BUT BIOLOGICALLY INFERIOR. IN OTHER WORDS, SEPARATE THEM OUT FROM THE LARGER BODY POLITIC.

AND WHEN YOU GET THIS SORT OF MASSIVE CAMPAIGN TO DEHUMANIZE AND BRUTALIZE BLACK PEOPLE THIS SORT OF HORROR OF LYNCHING IS PART OF A WHOLE STRATEGY TO CREATE A VIEW OF BLACK PEOPLE-- THAT THEY ARE BEASTS. YOU HAVE TO LYNCH BECAUSE BLACK MEN AND BLACK WOMEN ARE NOT LIKE US AND IF YOU WANT TO BRING THEM UNDER CONTROL YOU HAVE TO USE THESE VERY, VERY HORRIFIC AND VIOLENT AND BARBARIC METHODS.

YET PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH-- BLACK PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH... LIKE IDA WELLS, SHE FOUGHT BACK. IDA WELLS FOUGHT BACK WITH EVERY WEAPON SHE HAD AND GOT BURNED OUT OF HER PRESS FOR DOING SO IN MEMPHIS.

BUT WHAT IDA WELLS POINTED OUT WITH HER ANTI-LYNCHING CRUSADE WAS THAT VERY OFTEN, THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SINGLED OUT FOR LYNCHING WERE THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ACTING MOST HUMAN.

HERE'S BOOKER T. WASHINGTON-- WHAT'S HE SAYING ABOUT LYNCHING?
TWO BOOKER T. WASHINGTONS.

343 01:18:34:08 01:18:37:27 THERE'S THE BOOKER T. WASHINGTON WHO IS THE PUBLIC SPOKESPERSON WHO WAS TRYING TO BRIDGE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WHITES AND BLACKS. AND THAT BOOKER T. WASHINGTON WANTS TO MOLLIFY--

347 01:18:47:03 01:18:51:04 HE WANTS TO SOFTEN WHITE OPPOSITION TO BLACK PROGRESS. SO, HE DOES NOT COME OUT AND VIGOROUSLY CONDEMN--

349 01:18:54:20 01:18:56:18 HE SOFTLY CONDEMNS. HE, YOU KNOW, COMES AT IT FROM A VERY, VERY POLITICAL ANGLE.

351 01:19:01:14 01:19:04:11 HE IS NOT, SORT OF, THE THUNDEROUS OPPOSITION THAT YOU SEE WITH IDA B. WELLS OR W.E.B. DuBOIS OR SOME OF THE OTHER, MORE AGGRESSIVE KINDS OF LEADERS BECAUSE HE FIGURES HE HAS TO WORK BEHIND THE SCENES WITH WHITE POWER BROKERS TO TRY TO GET CONCESSIONS FOR BLACK PEOPLE. SO, HE'S SORT OF A POLITICIAN IN THAT SENSE.

357 01:19:23:10 01:19:27:15 BUT I THINK THE PRIVATE BOOKER T. WASHINGTON IS HORRIFIED AND HAVING TO ESTABLISH THAT KIND OF DOUBLENESS THAT YOU JUST TALKED ABOUT AND HOW RISKY IT WAS FOR WASHINGTON EVEN TO GIVE THE KIND OF... OF OPPOSITION THAT HE DID. I'LL TAKE A LITTLE BIT HERE.

367 01:19:47:27 01:19:50:27 AND TO SAY, "ALL RIGHT, I'LL TRY TO GET THE CONCESSIONS THERE." THAT TAKES A TOLL EVERY SINGLE DAY.

369 01:19:52:26 01:19:55:01 NOW, THIS IS THE PROGRESSIVE ERA. THERE ARE BROAD-GAUGED REFORMS--

371 01:19:57:02 01:20:01:04 THERE'S AGITATION ALL OVER THE PLACE.

373 01:20:01:06 01:20:04:17 WHAT ARE ROOSEVELT PROGRESSIVES...
AND WILSON PROGRESSIVES--

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING AND DOING ABOUT... ABOUT THIS ISSUE?

I THINK MOST OF THEM COME OFF VERY POORLY

AND THAT'S A GENEROUS...

WILSON PROGRESSIVES ARE SOUTHERN PROGRESSIVES, FOR THE MOST PART

I THINK WOODROW WILSON IS THE ONE WHO...

WILSON'S RECORD IN THE WHITE HOUSE IS HORRENDOUS.

Scharff: "...SEGREGATES WASHINGTON, D.C."

ABSOLUTELY HORRENDOUS.

NO, I THINK THERE IS, FROM THE TOP DOWN

SORT OF A MENTALITY, WHICH IS, FOR LACK OF A BETTER TERM

REALLY COMMITTED TO A NOTION OF WHITE SUPREMACY.

THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF WAYS IN WHICH, AS I SUGGESTED EARLIER

THAT MANY PEOPLE SEE THIS AS THE WORST PERIOD

NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF LYNCHINGS.

THERE ARE RACE RIOTS...

THAT'S THE CRUEL IRONY OF THIS.

YOU KNOW, YOU HAVE THIS PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT...

WITH ALL THIS AGITATION GOING ON

AND IT SEEMS THAT UNDER THE SURFACE

THERE'S A SUBSET OF AGITATORS

YOU KNOW, WHO HAVE TO DO IT ON THEIR OWN.

AND WHAT I THINK, WHEN WE HIGHLIGHT THESE MOMENTS

OF INTENSE LOCAL, COMMUNITY-BASED STRUGGLES

WE'RE... WE'RE... WE HAVE A LENS ONTO THE ORDINARY, LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MOST PEOPLE

AND, FROM MY VIEW, THIS IS AN IMPORTANT WAY

TO THINK ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY.

IT'S VERY MUCH THE STRUGGLES OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

WHO ARE OFTEN MARGINALIZED.

YOU KNOW, BECAUSE THAT SAYS AS MUCH ABOUT AMERICA
AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO AMERICA AS AN OUTSIDER

BECAUSE THE ONLY WAY YOU KNOW WHO AN AMERICAN IS IN SOME WAYS, IS BY WHO YOU EXCLUDE.

Yeah, I mean, THE BIG STRUGGLE HERE...

YOU KNOW, THE AMERICAN DREAM IS NOT COMING TO AMERICA. IT’S MAKING IT IN AMERICA AGAINST AWFUL ODDS, SOMETIMES.

THOSE ARE HEROIC STORIES.

WELL, ONE OF THE AMAZING THINGS THAT’S HAPPENING DURING THE PROGRESSIVE ERA IS THAT THESE LOCAL STRUGGLES ARE BEGINNING TO BE LINKED UP AND THEY'RE BEGINNING TO BE LINKED UP BY NEW SYSTEMS OF COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION AND ALSO BY NEW POLITICAL ORGANIZING TECHNIQUES SO THAT YOU GET SOMEONE LIKE CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT WHO INVENTS THIS WINNING PLAN FOR WOMAN’S SUFFRAGE WHICH WAS ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE, FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Miller: EXPLAIN WHO SHE IS.

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT, WHO BECAME THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL AMERICAN WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION-- SHE WAS AN ILLINOIS SUFFRAGIST.

SHE'D GROWN UP IN IOWA, A RELATIVELY PRIVILEGED WOMAN.

SOMEBODY, WHO IN ORDER TO CAMPAIGN FOR SUFFRAGE HAD IT WRITTEN INTO HER MARRIAGE CONTRACT WITH HER HUSBAND THAT SHE HAD TO HAVE A CERTAIN NUMBER OF DAYS EVERY YEAR THAT SHE'D BE ALLOWED
TO CAMPAIGN FOR SUFFRAGE.

AND... AND, WHAT SHE DID WAS TO ORGANIZE THE SUFFRAGE FORCES--

LOCAL SUFFRAGE FORCES IN EACH STATE--

LIKE A POLITICAL MACHINE.

AND SO WHAT THEY DID, IN SOME WAYS

WAS TO USE THE KIND OF POLITICAL ORGANIZING TECHNIQUES THAT YOU FIND AMONG YOUR ROOSEVELT PROGRESSIVES AND WILSON PROGRESSIVES BUT TO TURN THEM TO... TO ENDS THAT, I THINK, PROBABLY WOODROW WILSON DIDN'T ANTICIPATE AND WHEN HE WAS CONFRONTED WITH THEM WAS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH.

WELL, MOST... I THINK MOST NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE POLITICIANS WERE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH STREET DEMONSTRATIONS. AND THIS IS REALLY INTERESTING BECAUSE IT'S... IT'S PROTESTS THAT INVOLVES RISK-TAKING.

THERE'S RISK-TAKING RIGHT ACROSS THE BOARD HUGE RISK-TAKING, YOU KNOW.

WASHINGTON WAS TAKING RISKS ALL THE TIME.

ONE STEP OUT OF LINE, AND HE'S DONE.

THEY'LL SHUT DOWN HIS OPERATION, YOU KNOW.

WOMEN WERE TAKING RISKS.

MARGARET SANGER WAS TAKING RISKS IN NEW YORK WITH HER BIRTH CONTROL CLINICS-- UM, GETTING THROWN INTO JAIL.

AND, WALDO, YOU WROTE ABOUT A GUY WHO...

A BEAUTIFUL BOOK ABOUT A GUY WHO WAS TAKING RISKS ALL HIS LIFE, FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

WHERE IS HE AT THE END OF THE 19th CENTURY OF THESES ISSUES ARE STARTING TO BREAK?

FREDERICK DOUGLASS DIES IN 1895.

THAT'S THE VERY YEAR THAT BOOKER T. WASHINGTON BECOMES THE PREEMINENT
AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEADER.

He gives this speech in Atlanta which elevates him to this mantle of national leadership.

Whereas Frederick Douglass had been a very protest-oriented, aggressive leader as I've suggested earlier, Booker T. Washington was more of a conciliator, more of a compromiser.

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Whereas Frederick Douglass had been a very protest-oriented, aggressive leader as I've suggested earlier, Booker T. Washington was more of a conciliator, more of a compromiser.

And I think there is this tension that existed among African-American leaders at the turn of the century among those like Booker T. Washington as opposed to those like W.E.B DuBois and Ida B. Wells who offered a more aggressive posture which called back to the tradition that Frederick Douglass represented.

But I think you're talking about risk-taking.

The creation of the N.A.A.C.P... Yeah.

In 1909, brings together a whole series of white liberals and radicals.

In 1909, brings together a whole series of white liberals and radicals.

Who are very, very much taking a risk.

In terms of, you know, trying to come together.

With African Americans to think about --

What can we do to, you know, try to alleviate the horrors of lynching and disfranchisement, and all of that?

And I think that kind of effort also needs to be recognized and understood.

Why aren't we hearing more about people like this?

Oh, my God.

(all laughing)

Well, I think...

I think, you know.

HISTORY IS WRITTEN BY THE VICTORS.

HISTORY IS WRITTEN BY THOSE WHO HAVE A VISION OF AMERICA.
As sort of a progressive narrative, you highlight the good and the sunny, where the underside, where the less than positive, are seen as not necessary to, sort of, a mainstream narrative. And I think not only is that unbalanced, but it’s untrue. And I think what we’re trying to do as historians on the cusp of the new millennium is to try to think about ways to represent history that’s more inclusive.