

The Progressive Era**Section 2****Women in Public Life****Terms and Names**

NACW National Association of Colored Women; founded in 1896 to improve living and working conditions for African-American women

suffrage The right to vote; a major goal of women reformers

Susan B. Anthony Leader of the woman suffrage movement, who helped to define the movement's goals and beliefs and to lead its actions

NAWSA National American Woman Suffrage Association; founded in 1890 to help women win the right to vote

Before You Read

In the last section, you read about the progressive movement. In this section, you will learn about the new, active roles women were taking in the workplace and in politics.

As You Read

Use a diagram to take notes about working women in the late 1800s.

WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE

(Pages 519–520)

What jobs did women do?

Before the Civil War, most married women worked at home. They cared for their families and did not have paid jobs. By the end of the 19th century, however, many women had to work outside the home in order to earn money.

Farm women continued to work as they always had. They did the cooking, cleaning, sewing, and child rearing. They helped with the crops and animals.

As better-paying opportunities in towns and cities became available, more women began working outside the home. By 1900, one in five American women held jobs; 25 percent of them worked in manufacturing. About half of the women working in manufacturing were employed in the garment trades. They typically held the least skilled positions and were paid

only half as much as men. Women also began filling new jobs in offices, stores, and classrooms. Women went to new business schools to learn to become stenographers and typists. These jobs required a high school education. Women without a formal education took jobs as domestic workers, cleaning, and taking care of children of other families. Almost two million African-American workers—forced by economic necessity—worked on farms and in cities as domestic workers, laundresses, scrubwomen, and maids. Unmarried immigrant women did domestic labor, took in piecework, or cared for boarders at home.

1. What are three jobs that women without a formal education often held?

Section 2, *continued*

WOMEN LEAD REFORM

(Pages 520–522)

What reforms did women want?

Dangerous conditions, long hours, and low wages caused working women to fight for reforms. The Triangle Shirtwaist fire in New York City in 1911 killed 146 young workers, mostly women, and spurred the cause for reform.

Women who became active in public life attended college. New women’s colleges such as Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley opened. By the late 19th century, marriage was no longer a woman’s only alternative.

In 1896, African-American women founded the National Association of Colored Women (**NACW**).

This organization created nurseries, reading rooms, and kindergartens.

Women’s crusade for **suffrage**, or the right to vote, began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. The women’s movement split over whether or not to

support the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments which granted the vote to African-American men, but not to women of any race. **Susan B. Anthony** led the opposition. By 1890, suffragists had united in the National American Woman Suffrage Association (**NAWSA**).

Women tried three approaches to win the vote: (1) they tried to convince state legislatures; (2) they went to court to clarify whether the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment meant women should be allowed to vote, and (3) they pushed for a national constitutional amendment. This was voted down several times.

2. What are three ways in which women tried to win the vote?

Section 2, *continued*

As you read this section, take notes to answer the questions.

1. What types of jobs were women in each group likely to hold?			
Lower Class	Middle and Upper Class	African American	Immigrant

2. How did educational opportunities for middle- and upper-class women change?
3. How did these new opportunities affect the lives of middle- and upper-class women?

4. What three strategies were adopted by the suffragists to win the vote?		
a.	b.	c.

5. What results did each strategy produce?		
a.	b.	c.