

Women of the Progressive Movement

Directions: Summarize the biography of each woman in your notebook and discuss the important contributions in her respective field.

Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) By Gloria Steinem <http://www.time.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/sanger2.html> **TIME** Monday, Apr. 13, 1998

The movement she started will grow to be, a hundred years from now, the most influential of all time," predicted futurist and historian H.G. Wells in 1931. "When the history of our civilization is written, it will be a biological history, and Margaret Sanger will be its heroine." Though this prophecy of nearly 70 years ago credited one woman with the power that actually came from a wide and deep movement of women, no one person deserves it more...

Born into an Irish working-class family, Margaret witnessed her mother's slow death, worn out after 18 pregnancies and 11 live births. While working as a practical nurse and midwife in the poorest neighborhoods of New York City in the years before World War I, she saw women deprived of their health, sexuality and ability to care for children already born. Contraceptive information was so suppressed by clergy-influenced, physician-accepted laws that it was a criminal offense to send it through the mail. Yet the educated had access to such information and could use subterfuge [illegal strategies] to buy "French" products, which were really condoms and other barrier methods, and "feminine hygiene" products which were really spermicides.

It was this injustice that inspired Sanger to defy church and state. In a series of articles called "What Every Girl Should Know," then in her own newspaper The Woman Rebel and finally through neighborhood clinics that dispensed woman-controlled forms of birth control (a phrase she coined), Sanger put information and power into the hands of women.

While in Europe for a year to avoid severe criminal penalties, partly due to her political radicalism, partly for violating postal obscenity laws, she learned more about contraception, the politics of sexuality and the commonality of women's experience. Her case was dismissed after her return to the States. Sanger continued to push legal and social boundaries by initiating sex counseling, founding the American Birth Control League (which became, in 1942, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America) and organizing the first international population conference. Eventually her work would extend as far as Japan and India, where organizations she helped start still flourish.

Sanger was past 80 when she saw the first marketing of a contraceptive pill, which she had helped develop. But legal change was slow. It took until 1965, a year before her death, for the Supreme Court to strike down a Connecticut law that prohibited the use of contraception, even by married couples. Extended to unmarried couples only in 1972, this constitutionally guaranteed right to privacy would become as important to women's equality as the vote. In 1973 the right to privacy was extended to the abortion decision of a woman and her physician, thus making abortion a safe and legal alternative – unlike the \$5 illegal butcheries of Sanger's day.

Jane Addams (1860-1935) http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/_learn/_aboutjane/aboutjane.html

Born in Cedarville, Illinois, on September 6, 1860, and graduated from Rockford Female Seminary in 1881, Jane Addams founded, with Ellen Gates Starr, the world famous social settlement Hull-House on Chicago's Near West Side in 1889. From Hull-House, where she lived and worked until her death in 1935, Jane Addams built her reputation as the country's most prominent woman through her writing, settlement work, and international efforts for peace...

In the 1890s, Hull-House was located in the midst of a densely populated urban neighborhood peopled by Italian, Irish, German, Greek, Bohemian, and Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants. During the 1920s, African Americans and Mexicans began to put down roots in the neighborhood and joined the clubs and activities at Hull-House. Jane Addams and the Hull-House residents provided kindergarten and day care facilities for the children of working mothers; an employment bureau; an art gallery; libraries; English and citizenship classes; and theater, music and art classes. As the complex expanded to include thirteen buildings, Hull-House supported more clubs and activities such as a Labor Museum, the Jane Club for single working girls, meeting places for trade union groups, and a wide array of cultural events. The residents of Hull-House formed an impressive group... [and] forged a powerful reform movement. Among the projects that they helped launch were the Immigrants' Protective League, the Juvenile Protective Association, the first juvenile court in the nation, and a Juvenile Psychopathic Clinic (later called the Institute for Juvenile Research). Through their efforts, the Illinois Legislature enacted protective legislation for women and children in 1893. With the creation of the Federal Children's Bureau in 1912 and the passage of a federal child labor law in 1916, the Hull-House reformers saw their efforts expanded to the national level.

Jane Addams wrote prolifically on topics related to Hull-House activities, producing eleven books and numerous articles as well as maintaining an active speaking schedule nationwide and throughout the world. She played an important role in many local and national organizations. A founder of the Chicago Federation of Settlements in 1894, she also helped to establish the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers in 1911. She was a leader in the Consumers League and served as the first woman president of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (later the National Conference of Social Work). She was chair of the Labor Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, vice-president of the Campfire Girls, and a member of the executive boards of the National Playground Association and the National Child Labor Committee. In addition, she actively supported the campaign for woman suffrage and the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1909) and the American Civil Liberties Union (1920).

In the early years of the twentieth century Jane Addams became involved in the peace movement. During the First World War, she and other women from belligerent and neutral nations met at the International Congress of Women at the Hague in 1915, attempting to stop the war. She maintained her pacifist stance after the United States entered the war in 1917, working to found the Women's Peace Party (WILPF), which became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919. She was the WILPF's first president. As a result of her work, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.

Jane Addams died in Chicago on May 21, 1935. She was buried in Cedarville, her childhood home town.

Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_people_wells.html By: Richard Wormser

The oldest of eight children, Ida B. Wells was born in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Her parents, who were very active in the Republican Party during Reconstruction, died in a yellow fever epidemic in the late 1870s. Wells attended Rust College and then became a teacher in Memphis, Tennessee. Shortly after she arrived, Wells was involved in an altercation with a white conductor while riding the railroad. She had purchased a first-class ticket, and was seated in the ladies car when the conductor ordered her to sit in the Jim Crow (i.e. black) section, which did not offer first-class accommodations. She refused and when the conductor tried to remove her, she "fastened her teeth on the back of his hand." Wells was ejected from the train, and she sued. She won her case in a lower court, but the decision was reversed in an appeals court.

While living in Memphis, Wells became a co-owner and editor of a local black newspaper called THE FREE SPEECH AND HEADLIGHT. Writing her editorials under the pseudonym "Iola," she condemned violence against blacks, disfranchisement, poor schools, and the failure of black people to fight for their rights. She was fired from her teaching job and became a full-time journalist. In 1892, Tom Moss, a respected black store owner and friend of Barnett, was lynched, along with two of his friends, after defending his store against an attack by whites. Wells, outraged, attacked the evils of lynching in her newspaper; she also encouraged the black residents of Memphis to leave town. When Wells was out of town, her newspaper was destroyed by a mob and she was warned not to return to Memphis because her life was in danger. Wells took her anti-lynching campaign to England and was well received.

Wells wrote many pamphlets exposing white violence and lynching and defending black victims. In 1895 she married Ferdinand Barnett, a prominent Chicago attorney. The following year she helped organize the National Association of Colored Women. She was opposed to the policy of accommodation advocated by Booker T. Washington and had personal, if not ideological, difficulties with W.E.B. Du Bois. In 1909, she helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wells-Barnett continued her fight for black civil and political rights and an end to lynching until shortly before she died.

Carrie Chapman Catt (1859-1947) <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/cattbio.html>

Key coordinator of the suffrage movement and skillful political strategist, Carrie (Lane) Chapman Catt revitalized the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and played a leading role in its successful campaign to win voting rights for women.

Carrie Lane was born in Wisconsin in 1859. At the age of seven, her family moved to Iowa, where Lane began preparatory schooling. In 1880, she graduated from Iowa State College at the top of her class, having worked her way through school by washing dishes, working in the school library, and teaching. After college, she worked as a law clerk, a school teacher, and a principal in Mason City, Iowa. In 1883, at the age of twenty-four, she became one of the first women to be appointed superintendent of schools.

In February 1885, Lane married Leo Chapman, editor and publisher of the *Mason City Republican*, who died of typhoid fever the following year in San Francisco, California, where he had gone seeking new employment. Arriving a few days after her husband's death, the young widow decided to remain in San Francisco, where she eked out a living as the city's first female newspaper reporter. In 1887, Chapman returned to Charles City, Iowa, and joined the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association for whom she worked as a professional writer and lecturer. After a short period of time, she became the group's recording secretary. From 1890 to 1892, she served as the Iowa association's state organizer. In June 1890, Chapman married George Catt, a fellow Iowa State alumnus she had met during her stay in San Francisco who encouraged her suffrage activity. During this time, Catt also began work nationally for the National American Woman Suffrage Association, speaking in 1890 at its Washington, D.C., convention. In the following months, Catt's work, and her writing and speaking engagements established her reputation as a leading suffragist. In 1892, she was asked by Susan B. Anthony to address Congress on the proposed suffrage amendment. In 1900, she succeeded Anthony as NAWSA president. From then on, her time was spent primarily in speechmaking, planning campaigns, organizing women, and gaining political experience.

In 1902, Catt helped to organize the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), which eventually incorporated sympathetic associations in thirty-two nations. In 1904, she resigned her NAWSA presidency in order to care for her ailing husband. Grief-stricken over the dual deaths of George Catt (October 1905) and Susan B. Anthony (February 1906), Catt was encouraged by her doctor and her friends to travel abroad. As a result, she spent much of the following nine years as IWSA president promoting equal-suffrage rights worldwide.

In 1915, Catt returned to the United States to resume the leadership of NAWSA, which had become badly divided under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw. In 1916, at a NAWSA convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Catt unveiled her "Winning Plan" to campaign simultaneously for suffrage on both the state and federal levels, and to compromise for partial suffrage in the states resisting change. Under Catt's dynamic leadership, NAWSA won the backing of the House and Senate, as well as state support for the amendment's ratification. In 1917, New York passed a state woman suffrage referendum, and by 1918, President Woodrow Wilson was finally converted to the cause. On August 26, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment officially became part of the United States Constitution.

Stepping down from the presidency of NAWSA after its victory, Catt continued her work for equal suffrage, founding the new League of Women Voters, and serving as its honorary president for the rest of her life. In 1923, she published *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement*. In her later years, Catt's interests broadened to include the causes of world peace and child labor. She founded the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War, serving as its chairperson until 1932, and honorary chair thereafter. She also actively supported the League of Nations. Honored and praised by countless institutions for her half-century of public service, Carrie Chapman Catt died of heart failure in New Rochelle, New York, on March 9, 1947.