

ISSUES OF THE GILDED AGE

Biography

After the Civil War, Congress ratified the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, ending slavery and guaranteeing African Americans equal protection under the law and voting rights for males. Unfortunately, the reality for African Americans fell far short of this ideal. As violence and discrimination against African Americans grew, many African Americans began to organize and demand change. ♦ *As you read these biographies, think about what each person hoped to achieve. Refer to the subsection entitled "African Americans Oppose Injustices" in Section 1 of your textbook for further information. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

African American Leaders

Booker T. Washington was born into slavery in Franklin County, Virginia, in 1856. At the end of the Civil War, he went to work in salt and coal mines, attending school when he



Booker T. Washington
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could. He worked throughout his early life to become educated. As an adult, he became an educator himself and turned the Tuskegee Institute into an acclaimed school for vocational and industrial education. The school focused on teaching

African Americans specific trades such as farming, carpentry, and printing. Washington also became a famous public speaker. He urged African Americans to set aside political demands and focus on making economic gains. Washington's position earned him the trust and support of many white businessmen and politicians, including President Theodore Roosevelt, but it angered many of his fellow African American citizens.

Among those who opposed Washington's compromising approach was W.E.B. Du Bois. Unlike Washington, Du Bois was born

in the North after the end of the Civil War and received an excellent education, graduating from high school at the age of 16. He won a scholarship to Fisk University in



W.E.B. Du Bois
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Tennessee, where he first witnessed the poverty, violence, and discrimination that many African Americans experienced in the South. What Du Bois observed led him to commit his life to education and activism. Critical of Wash-

ington's focus on vocational education and disregard for political rights, Du Bois began writing and speaking out against racist practices. He urged African Americans to organize and demand full recognition of their rights as citizens. In 1905, he formed the Niagara Movement to work for civil rights, and four years later, he helped start the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Over the course of his life, Du Bois wrote 20 books and hundreds of articles on history, politics, and other matters.

Questions to Think About

1. Which leader was born into slavery? Which was born in the North after the end of the Civil War?
2. What kind of education did Washington emphasize?
3. **Compare and Contrast** What goals do you think the two leaders had in common? In what ways did they pursue their goals differently?