



American Progressive History: An Experiment in Modernization (Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion)

Ernst Breisach

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American Progressive History is the first book to relate the story of Progressive history through all its transformations from its emergence in the early 1900s to its demise in the 1940s.

Focusing his account on the work of the movement's most important representatives—including Charles Beard, James Harvey Robinson, and Carl Becker—Ernst Breisach demonstrates that Progressive history is distinguished by its unique combination of beliefs in the objective reality of historical facts and its faith in the inevitability of the progress of the human race. And though he discusses at length Frederick Jackson Turner's contributions to the creation of a modern American historiography, Breisach sets him apart from the scholars who shaped Progressive history.

While Progressive history is usually treated in isolation from simultaneous movements in European historiography, Breisach shows how it was formulated in the face of the same cultural pressures confronting European historians. Indeed, it becomes clear that until the 1930s the Progressive historians' confidence in the validity of historical investigation and the progress of civilization shielded American historians from the skepticism and cultural pessimism which characterized many of their European contemporaries.

Breisach's exceptionally broad and subtle analysis reveals American Progressive history to be an important and innovative experiment in the international quest for a New History, as well as a coherent school of thought in its own right.

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