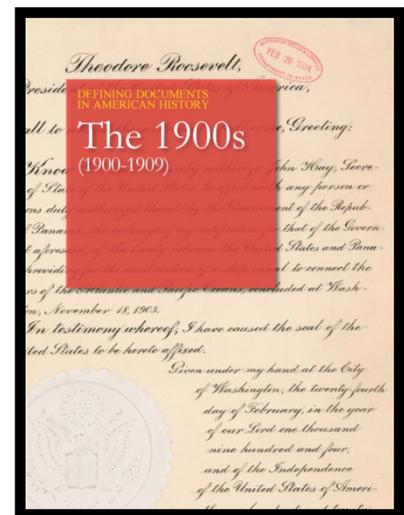


Defining Documents in American History: The 1900s (1900-1909)

Reviews

“This single-volume edition edited by Michael Shally-Jensen is one of the 22 titles that currently make up the Defining Documents in American History Series. The book is crafted like other volumes in larger series. As the title states, **the focus is on the opening decade of the 1900s**. The work offers up an **in-depth analysis of a wide range of 30 historical documents and the historical events that shaped American history at the dawn of the twentieth century**. The documents cover a diverse range of topics such as Politics and Reform, Foreign Challenges, African American Debates, Native American Life, and Religion and Philosophy. Each of these topics serves as chapter in the book and is **presented in such a manner that allows students and educators to neatly isolate and focus on one particular area**. As broad as the topics are, so too are the genres of documents, including journals, letters, speeches, government legislature, and court opinions. The wide array of documents exposes the issues which would come to define the social, political, and cultural themes important not only in the early part of the 1900s but throughout the century.

Continued on page. 2



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2 University Plaza, Suite 310, Hackensack, NJ 07601
(800) 221-1592 FAX (201) 968-0511
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The **format of the work is straightforward and easy to understand**. Shally-Jensen provides the user with prologue before each topic area to set the stage. Individual entries provide the following information: subject title, date of the document, and genre of the document. Then the entry offers up a Summary Overview of the time of the document's creation as well as the Defining Moment, which explains to the reader the exact reason or cause for which the document being viewed came to be created. The entry also offers up an author biography. Then comes the document; the text of the document is re-created in full and formatted in a gray text box. This allows the reader to distinguish the document from the analysis that goes along with it. At the end of the text box, a glossary can be found to aid the researcher in understanding particular terms that may be unique to the time period. Next the reader will find **a substantial Document Analysis, which helps the reader fully grasp the importance of the selected text as it relates to American history**. This is followed by the Essential Themes section of the entry. It is within this area that the themes (often complex in nature) **are presented so the reader can understand the underlying meaning of both the document, this moment in time, and how it relates to the large picture of American history**. Last but definitely not any less important to the researcher is the Bibliography followed by the Further Readings section, which provides a starting point from which to begin more in-depth research. The book also offers appendixes and a chronological list of events, useful to anyone who wants to see how any particular documents fits into the overall 1900-1910 timeline. There is also a section that offers the researcher a list of electronic resources. This is especially useful for researchers born in the time of Google and the digital age. The websites offered have been evaluated for their credibility and value. Like any research tool, a substantial bibliography and well-crafted index round out the volume. **The overall craftsmanship is clearly a mark of Salem Press and the work they publish.**

This work is **a valuable asset** to any collection not only for the documents but also for the presentation. It instructs readers in how to analyze a primary document-**a valuable tool applicable to any level of research.**"

-ARBA