the award of a divorce. Eighteen increased residency requirements, and six restricted the grounds for divorce. Washington, D.C., and New York State permitted divorce only for adultery. In 1895, South Carolina banned divorce altogether.

A complementary movement arose to make divorce laws uniform throughout the United States. In 1903 an Inter-Church Conference on Marriage and Divorce brought together representatives from 25 religious denominations to bolster the ideal of lifetime marriage. Two years later, when representatives from this conference appealed to President Theodore Roosevelt for help, he deplored “the loosening of the marital tie among the old native American families” and remarked as well on their declining birth rate. “If the race commits suicide,” he warned, referring to native-born white Americans, the nation will cease to make progress. In 1906 a National Divorce Congress proposed model uniform divorce laws, but few states adopted them.

The debates that raged over divorce in the early 1900s divided people into two factions. One argued that marriage was a sacrament that should last for life, with couples resorting to divorce only in extreme cases. Others, including feminists, insisted that an abused spouse had the right to be free and that divorce should become easier instead of harder to get. In addition, they argued that good divorce laws protected dependents. Today, one in every two American marriages ends in divorce. Americans still debate the meaning of divorce, especially for children, but they appear to have fully resigned themselves to the trend that began in the Progressive Era.

FURTHER READING

DuBois, William Edward Burghardt (W. E. B.)

- Education: attended Fisk College, 1883–88; Harvard University, A.B., 1890, M.A., 1891; doctoral studies, University of Berlin, 1890s; Harvard University, Ph.D., 1895
- Accomplishments: cofounder, Niagara Movement (1906) and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1909); convener, Pan African Congress (1921, 1923); editor in chief, The Crisis magazine (1910–34); author, Suppression of the African Slave Trade (1896), The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study (1899), The Souls of Black Folk (1903), Black Reconstruction (1935), Dusk of Dawn (1940), Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois (1968), and others; awarded World Peace Council Prize (1932) and the Soviet Lenin Peace Prize (1959)
- Died: Aug. 27, 1963, Accra, Ghana

W. E. B. DUBOIS, cofounder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was the foremost black intellectual of his generation and a leader for many decades in the African American struggle for civil rights. In his landmark 1903 book The Souls of Black Folk, he wrote, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line,” a reference to political inequality based on race. DuBois devoted his long career to combating inequality through scholarship and political activism.

SEE ALSO
Family life; Law; Marriage
DuBois distinguished himself as a student from an early age and worked in his teens as a correspondent for several newspapers. He studied at Fisk College (later Fisk University) in Nashville, Tennessee, and at the University of Berlin in Germany, and he became the first black scholar to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard, writing his dissertation on the history of the African slave trade. He taught Latin and Greek at Wilberforce University in Ohio, sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, and history and economics at Atlanta University.

DuBois also conducted extensive research on aspects of black life in the United States and published numerous social science studies on education, business, crime, and other subjects of importance to the black community. He hoped that careful scholarship—combining historical, economic, anthropological, and sociological analysis—would help to dispel racist stereotypes and move American society toward full inclusion of black citizens. But he grew increasingly frustrated with the white majority’s stubborn determination to keep African Americans in a subordinate position. In time, he concluded that political action to demand civil rights would be more effective than scholarly attempts to reason racial prejudice out of existence.

DuBois militant stance put him at odds with Booker T. Washington, widely regarded as the most influential black leader of the early 20th century, who favored a less confrontational response to white racism. Washington urged African Americans not to antagonize the white establishment by agitating for equality but to tolerate segregation and to build an economically stable and socially respectable black community by pursuing vocational education in farming and other trades. DuBois rejected that approach, which he regarded as an acceptance of second-class citizenship. Instead, he urged black Americans to campaign actively to win the full range of political rights and social privileges enjoyed by their white fellow citizens. He advocated strongly for black access to higher education, believing that college could prepare the most gifted members of each generation—what he called the “Talented Tenth” of the black population—to provide leadership and uplift for the entire race.

In 1905, DuBois took a leading role in the foundation of the Niagara Movement, a civil rights organization committed to aggressive campaigning against lynching, segregation, and denial of black voting rights. The group survived for only a few years, but paved the way for the more successful NAACP, of which DuBois was also a founding member. He served for many years as director of research and publicity and was editor of the organization’s monthly magazine, _The Crisis_. The NAACP succeeded in winning a number of court cases through the next two decades. These established the rights of African Americans to enter certain universities and receive commissions as U.S. army officers. They also won a Supreme Court ruling that prohibited states from segregating African Americans into residential districts. The NAACP failed to make significant headway against lynching and other aspects of racism in the South.
As he life progressed, DuBois grew increasingly disillusioned with his native country and came to see the civil rights movement in the United States as part of a larger international struggle against many varieties of social and economic oppression. In his 90s, he joined the Communist Party and renounced his American citizenship. He moved to the African nation of Ghana at the invitation of that country’s president, Kwame Nkruma, who had asked him to direct the production of the Encyclopedia Africana. DuBois died in Ghana in 1963.

SEE ALSO
African Americans; Civil rights; Colleges and universities; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Race relations; Reform movements; Washington, Booker T.

FURTHER READING

Edison, Thomas Alva

- Born: Feb. 11, 1847, Milan, Ohio
- Education: home tutoring, public schools
- Accomplishments: inventor of the phonograph, incandescent electric light bulb, and motion picture projector; awarded 1,093 patents; awarded Congressional Medal of Honor (1928)
- Died: Oct. 18, 1931, Orange, N.J.

AS A YOUNG MAN, Thomas Alva Edison showed an aptitude for business, electricity, and the telegraph. These three fields would shape his life as an entrepreneurial inventor, that is, someone who focused on practical inventions that would make money. Edison spent his early career operating telegraphs in various midwestern cities. Despite partial deafness, he not only excelled in telegraphy but designed many technical advances for the field. He was one of several innovators who developed telegraphs that could receive and send multiple messages simultaneously. He also discovered a way to improve stock tickers, the machines that transmit gold and stock prices to brokers’ offices. By 1869, he had become a full-time inventor. In 1870, he set up shop in Newark, New Jersey, and six years later moved to Menlo Park, some 15 miles south.

Working with a diverse team of physicists, chemists, and mechanics, Edison often focused on more than one project at a time, an approach that led to his 1877 invention of the phonograph, or record player. This invention emerged from his experiments with an “automatic telegraph,” which used a stylus to transcribe the dots and dashes of an incoming message onto a rolled strip of paper, and a “carbon telephone,” which exploited the special properties of compressed carbon to pick up sound waves from a vibrating diaphragm and convert them into electrical signals. By combining a diaphragm that transmitted