

Jane Addams

1931

“The good we seek for ourselves is uncertain until it is secure for all of us”

Jane Addams spent her life trying to help the poor. She is best known for establishing Hull House. This was a **settlement house** in Chicago, Illinois. A settlement house was a way to help the poor in the late 19th century. Many poor people had no place to live. They could not find work. The home was a method for serving the poor in urban areas. People lived among the poor and helped them directly.



Jane Addams was born in Cedarville, Illinois on September 8, 1860. Her father was a State Legislator. She was one of eight children. Her mother died when she was only three. Jane was born with a curved spine. She felt self-conscious of this as she was growing up. She graduated from Rockford

- Attended Medical School
- Founded Hull House
- Chairman of Women’s Peace Party
- Worked with President Hoover
- Humanitarian
- Suffragist

Female Seminary in 1881. Jane then began studying medicine. The death of her father and her own health problems made it difficult for Jane to continue with her studies. Jane left school. She traveled in Europe with her college roommate, Ellen Starr. They visited a settlement house, Toynbee Hall, in London. This influenced Jane’s life. Jane’s goal was to open a similar settlement house in the United States.

In 1889 Jane and Ellen searched for a house in a low-income area in Chicago. The house they found, built by Charles Hull in 1856. It was called Hull House. The house had been a factory and a used furniture store. It also was a home for the elderly poor. The two friends moved in and began to create a community center. This served the people living in the neighborhood.

Jane saw huge differences between the rich and poor. She was troubled by the wealth of the upper classes and the hardship and poverty of the lower classes. Jane Addams and Ellen Starr encouraged the wealthy to give money and time to their settlement house. Volunteers provided childcare. They took care of the sick and counseled people. In two years Hull House was helping over 2000 people per week. Kindergarten classes were taught in the morning. Club meetings for students met after school. There were night school classes for adults.

Hull House grew. They added an art gallery and a public kitchen. There was a coffee house. There was a gym with a swimming pool. There was a boarding house for girls. There was also an employment agency and a library. There was a bookbindery, drama group, and a labor museum.

In 1910 she received an honorary degree from Yale University. This was for her works in helping with the lives of the poor. Jane had a strong interest in improving the rights of women. She was an early **feminist**. She believed that women's voices should be heard. They should have the right to vote. She believed that women should have dreams. She wanted women to have the power to achieve those dreams. Addams worked for Chicago municipal suffrage. She became first vice-president of the National American Women Suffrage Association in 1911. She campaigned for Theodore Roosevelt 1912.

Jane accomplished a great deal in her lifetime. Some people disliked her because of her radical ideas. She believed so strongly in peace. This was seen as abnormal during World War I. In 1915, Addams organized the Woman's Peace Party. She started the International Woman's Conference. The IWC met in The Hague. Addams was chosen to head a group to find an end to the war. They met the leaders in neutral countries. They also met with those at war to discuss **mediation**. In 1919 she was elected president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She was its president until her death. She was considered a **pacifist**. She was accused of being a socialist. She was also called an **anarchist** and a communist.

She was outspoken against America's entry into the war. The press did not like her position. She continued working against war. She was named **humanitarian** assistant to President Herbert Hoover. She organized relief supplies of food to women and children of enemy nations.

In 1926 she suffered a heart attack. She never fully recovered. She was the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. She shared her prize with Nicolas Murray Butler. The prize was awarded for her work with the poor and women. She was also given the prize for her opposition to violence and war. She was hospitalized on December 10, 1931. This was the day she received her Nobel Peace Prize. She was unable to give an acceptance speech. She died in 1935 and her funeral was held at Hull House.

Suggested Classroom Activities

Vocabulary

- 1. Settlement house**
- 2. Inequality**
- 3. Feminist**
- 4. Pacifist**
- 5. Anarchist**
- 6. Humanitarian**
- 7. Mediation**

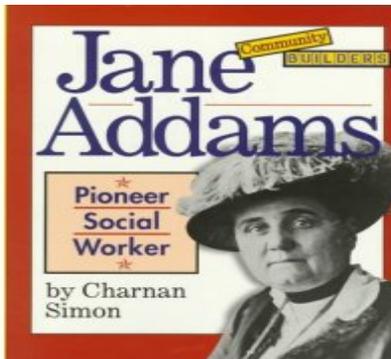
Discussion Questions

1. How did Jane Addams hope to help the poor with a settlement house?
2. What organizations did Addams help to found?
3. Why was Addams considered controversial in terms of World War I?
4. Why was Jane Addams considered a feminist?
5. How did Jane Addams work towards world peace?
6. Do you think Jane Addams would be considered a controversial figure today? Why or why not?
7. Jane Addams has been called a socialist, a feminist, an anarchist, and a humanitarian. How you describe her?

Read Together:

**Jane Addams: Pioneer Social Worker (Community Builders)
(Paperback)**

By Carnan Simon



Activities

Jane Addams was an early feminist. What other women worked with Addams and the suffrage movement?

Read about Hull House. What are some of the similarities and differences with Hull House and a community center today?

What social issues was Jane Addams dealing with at the turn of the century? How are these issues similar to issues we are dealing with today?

Technology Option: using the site:

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/Exhibits/janeaddams/hullhouse.htm>, create a power point with each picture and three facts about each.

Resources

www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/ This website is from the University of Illinois at Chicago and the focus is on the social work of Jane Addams