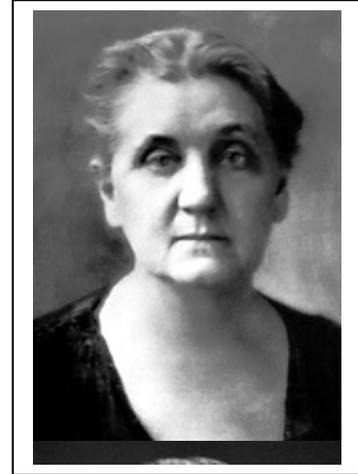


# Jane Addams

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 remembered for establishing a **settlement house** in Chicago, Illinois. It was a home for Jane to help the poor in urban areas by living side by side with them and understanding their problems.



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 and felt embarrassed by this as she was growing up. Following her graduation from Rockford Female Seminary in 1881 Jane 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 and with her college roommate, Ellen Starr, and traveled in Europe. They visited a settlement house, Toynbee Hall, in London. This influenced Jane’s life significantly. Jane’s goal was to open a similar settlement house in the United States.

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

*“the good we seek for ourselves is uncertain until is secure for all of us”*

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, was called Hull House. The house had been a factory, a used furniture store, and a home for the poor elderly run by the Little Sisters of the Poor Nuns. The two friends moved in and began to create a community center for the people living in the neighborhood.

Jane saw huge differences between the rich and poor. She was troubled by the wealth of some people and the hardship

and poverty others. Jane Addams and Ellen Starr encouraged the wealthy to contribute money and time to their settlement house. Volunteers provided childcare, 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, and there were night school classes for adults.

Hull House grew, adding an art gallery, a public kitchen, a coffee house, a gym, a swimming pool, a boarding house for girls, an employment agency, a library, a book bindery, a drama group, and a labor museum.

The help she offered in Hull House was to bring equality between people. Addams tried to educate people on things they had in common as well as the qualities that made them special. She believed that the "things that make men alike are finer and better than the things that keep them apart."

In 1910 she received the first honorary degree ever awarded a woman by Yale University for her works in improving the lives of the poor. Jane had a strong interest in improving the lives of women. She was a **feminist** long before feminism was known and accepted. She believed that women's voices should be heard and that they should have the right to vote. She believed that women should have dreams, and have the power to reach them. Addams worked for Chicago municipal suffrage and became first vice-president of the National American Women Suffrage Association in 1911. She campaigned nationwide for Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party in 1912.

Although Jane accomplished a great deal in her lifetime, some people disliked her because of her radical ideas and ways of doing things. She believed so strongly in peace that she was seen as abnormal during World War I. In 1915, Addams organized the Woman's Peace Party and the International Woman's Conference. The later organization met in The Hague where Addams was chosen to head the commission to find an end to the war. This included meeting the leaders in neutral countries as well as those at war to discuss mediation. She was expelled from the Daughters of the American Revolution, but this did not slow her down. In 1919 she was elected first president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a position she held until her death. She was the founder of the American Civil Liberties Union and the NAACP. These positions earned her even more criticism than her **pacifism**. She was accused of being a socialist, an **anarchist** and a communist.

Because she was against America's entry into the war, Addams was attacked by newspapers and organizations that supported the war. She continued working against war, and was named as a **humanitarian** assistant to President Herbert Hoover. In this job she gave relief supplies of food to women and children of enemy nations.

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

## Classroom Activities

### Jane Addams

#### Introduction/Warm Up

Use this quote to discuss or write about Jane Addams

*I am not one of those who believe - broadly speaking - that women are better than men. We have not wrecked railroads, nor corrupted legislatures, nor done many unholy things that men have done; but then we must remember that we have not had the chance.*

[From a speech on woman suffrage before the Chicago Political Equality League, 1897. Source: One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement, Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, editor. News age Press c1995, p.191.]

#### Discussion Questions

1. How did Jane Addams hope to help the poor with a settlement house? (Level 1)
2. What organizations did Addams help to found? (Level 1)
3. Why was Addams considered controversial in terms of World War I? (Level 2)
4. Why was Jane Addams considered a feminist? (Level 2)
5. How did Jane Addams work towards world peace? (Level 3)
6. Do you think Jane Addams would be considered a controversial figure today? Why or why not? (Level 3)

#### Vocabulary Terms:

1. **Settlement house**
2. **Inequality**
3. **Feminist**
4. **Pacifism**
5. **Anarchist**
6. **Humanitarian**

### Activities Jane Addams

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: (level 1-2)

<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/](http://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