

This entry is from the book *Women Building Chicago 1790-1990, A Biographical Dictionary*, edited by Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast, Indiana University Press, 2001.

The Chicago Women's History Center holds the copyright to this book. The excerpt is for personal and/or academic use. Please do not reproduce any part of it without permission from CWHC.

To properly credit this entry, use the citation, below:

Citation (Chicago Manual of Style/Turabian):

Brown, Victoria Bissell. "Jane Addams," *Women Building Chicago: A Biographical Dictionary 1790-1990*, edited by Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Accessed online www.chicagowomenshistory.org/wbc-entries
[researcher inserts date of access] pdf

ADDAMS, JANE

September 6, 1860–May 21, 1935

SOCIAL REFORMER, SETTLEMENT HOUSE FOUNDER AND
HEAD RESIDENT, SOCIAL THEORIST, PEACE ACTIVIST

Jane Addams towers over Chicago history like a mythical Amazon of social reform. Rising to prominence in the years between 1889 and 1910, she became the central figure in that pantheon of reform notables who created the “progressive” response to industrial capitalism. Her stature extends beyond her prodigious civic activism. While the list of her accomplishments was long and the breadth of her concerns wide, Addams shared her activist burdens with thousands of other Americans who were similarly anxious to bring equity, dignity, and peace to industrial relations and urban life. What distinguished Addams was her singular ability as a writer and public speaker to endow the progressive movement with ideological coherence and to give the movement a humane but challenging voice. Addams became a central figure in the era’s domestic reform circles and a leader of international renown, because her compelling use of language made her the conscience of the nation, the industrial age’s secular priest. The first key to understanding Jane Addams’s reform career lies in recognizing that she was the most effective and prolific writer of her generation of reformers. The second key lies in understanding that she supported many different reforms in public policy but persistently advocated for only one thing: democracy won through peaceful means. Her writing survives as a reminder that Jane Addams was a social theorist as well as a social reformer.

Born in the fall of 1860, a few weeks before Abraham Lincoln’s election to the presidency, Jane Addams grew up amidst the rolling hills and rich wheat fields that surrounded the farming village of Cedarville, Illinois, just north of Freeport. At one

level, hers was a privileged childhood. Her father, John Huy Addams, had achieved success and esteem in the region as a miller, a banker, and an investor in the local railroad. In the decade before Jane Addams (named Laura Jane Addams) was born, John Addams had become the richest man in the county, built the largest home in Cedarville, and won election to the Illinois State Senate on the new Republican ticket. But alongside the wealth and status, there were tragedy and family complexity. When Jane Addams was two years old, her mother died from complications due to pregnancy. When she was six, an older sister died of typhoid fever. When she was eight, her father remarried, bringing the fascinating but volatile Anna Haldeman and her two sons—Harry and George—into the family circle.

As a child, “Jennie” was closely mothered by her eldest sister and her stepmother, and she doted upon her “dignified” (*Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 7) Pa. When disillusionment with Reconstruction politics caused John Addams to leave the state legislature in 1870, he had more time for community and business affairs, his demanding new wife, and Jennie, his youngest—and brightest—child. In early adolescence, Jane Addams was tutored in politics and history by an attentive, if emotionally reserved, father. John Addams believed deeply in classical liberalism’s tenets of individual rights but just as deeply in the republican merit of community stewardship by a virtuous elite. As a Republican legislator, he had advocated government sponsorship of private enterprise but had also voted for public provisions for the needy. John Addams actively supported the two Protestant churches in Cedarville but was not a “professing Christian” (Jane Addams to James Weber Linn, February 2, 1935, Jane Addams Memorial Collection). He was devoted to hard work and ethical conduct but placed more faith in this life than the next. The young Jane Addams absorbed these lessons from her father, alongside lessons from her stepmother about the social graces, the arts, and the culture that wealth can buy.

Jane Addams enrolled in Rockford Female Seminary, which was located thirty miles from her home in Cedarville, in the fall of 1877. At age seventeen, she was her father’s daughter by temperament and ideology. Her four years at seminary did little to change that. She resisted the school’s Christian evangelism and diplomatically skirted its most feminizing and domesticating influences. At the same time, Addams was the undisputed star of the campus. She excelled in the classroom, led the school’s first science club and one literary society, served as president of her class for all four years, was editor of the *Rockford Seminary Magazine* in her senior year, and was valedictorian of the class of 1881. When Rockford became a college the year following Addams’s graduation, she was among the select group of scholars who received the school’s first bachelor’s degrees.

Presaging patterns in her later life, Addams enjoyed the devotion of her peers at Rockford while maintaining a distinctive aura of privacy and personal dignity. Only to ELLEN GATES STARR, the Rockford Seminary friend with whom Addams would later found Hull-House, did she reveal her doubts about Christianity and her struggle to imagine a life’s work that could accommodate her nascent ambition to be a female steward without church affiliation.

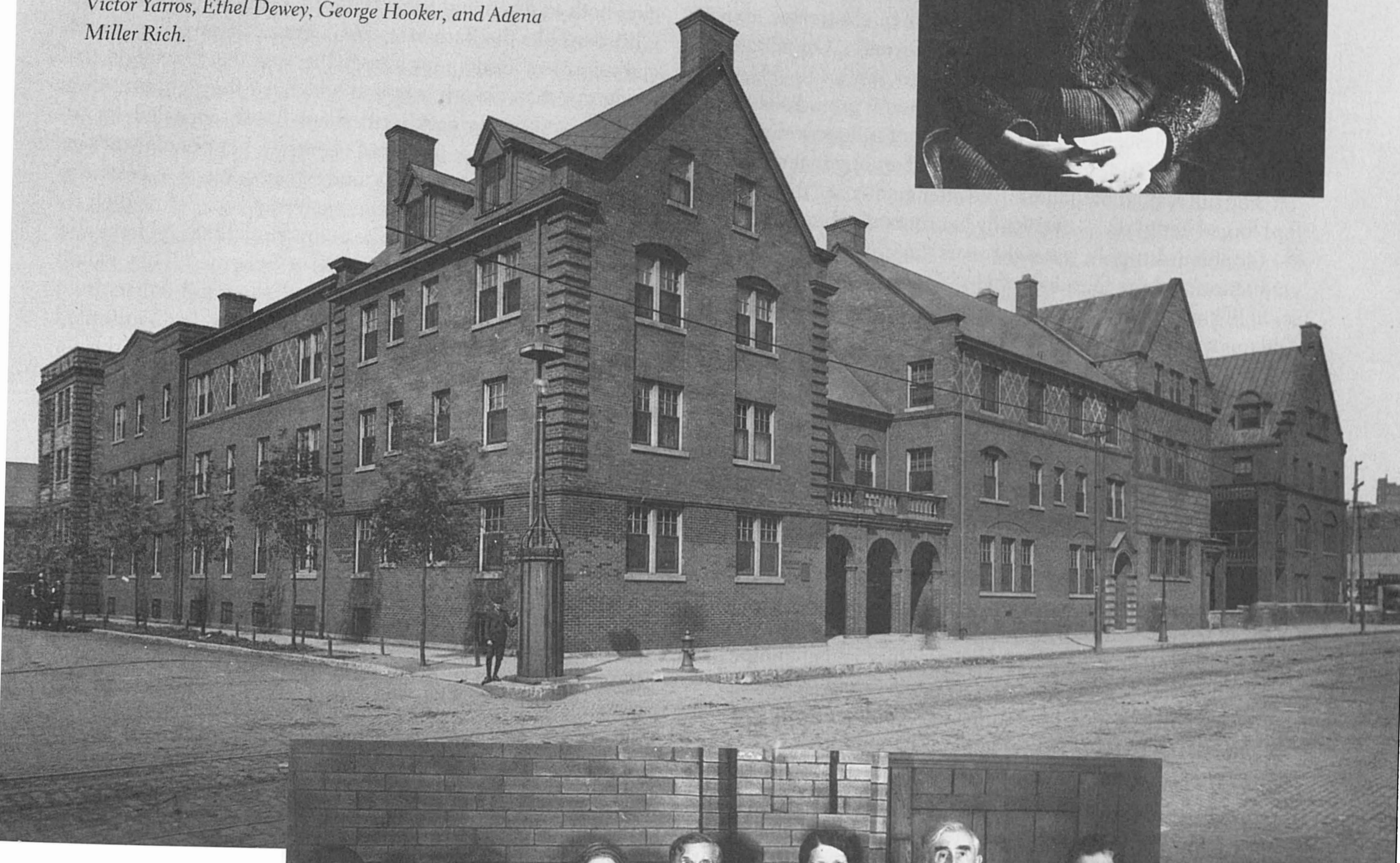
The ideology of stewardship that Jane Addams crafted for herself in college was not, however, a preview of her adult con-

FIG. 3. Jane Addams, about the time she cofounded Hull-House.



FIG. 4. Hull-House complex, 1905-10.

FIG. 5. Hull-House residents celebrate the 40th anniversary of the settlement. Seated, left to right, Dr. Alice Hamilton, Rose Marie Gyles, Jane Addams, Enella Benedict, and Edith de Nancrede. Standing, left to right, Jessie Binford, Rachelle Yarros, Esther Kohn, Victor Yarros, Ethel Dewey, George Hooker, and Adena Miller Rich.



victions about democratic process and the power of the social environment to limit or liberate human potential. As a young woman, Addams absorbed the works of John Ruskin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and, above all, Thomas Carlyle. She identified with their masculine, heroic ideals and wrote numerous essays and editorials at Rockford extolling the power of individuals “destined” for greatness. The young Jane Addams admired men who could lead through force of will, triumphing over any obstacles society placed in their path. In sharp contrast to her predecessors and successors at *Rockford Seminary Magazine*, Addams avoided all discussion of the woman question in her editorials. And when she preached to her classmates about women’s unique public role as “Bread Givers” (“Opening Address,” *Rockford Seminary Magazine*, April 1880, 110–11), she emphasized women’s strengths, not men’s prejudices. She placed her adolescent faith in the ability of unique individuals to rise above all, and she imagined herself among that elite.

The life that Jane Addams lived after graduating from Rockford forced her to revise drastically her romantic, heroic dreams of elite stewardship. In the eight years that intervened between graduation and the founding of Hull-House, events in her personal life and the realities of nineteenth-century social life gave Addams a new humility and a respect for the power of circumstance. This experience turned her away from belief in individual heroism and toward the practice of cooperative democracy.

Within weeks of her graduation from Rockford Seminary in June of 1881, Jane Addams’s father died, leaving her without her proud, doting champion. His death also forced her to cancel her ambitious plans to study at Smith College in preparation for medical school. Finally, it designated her—the family’s young, spinster daughter—as the companion to her stepmother, who was now a lonely, needy widow. In the subsequent eight years, Addams tried to combine family duty with personal ambition by moving to Philadelphia with her stepmother and attending the Women’s Medical College of Pennsylvania. That effort failed after a semester. She then tried studying French and German and art history on a tour of Europe with her stepmother between the fall of 1883 and the spring of 1885. Addams’s debility from a back ailment, combined with persistent demands from her stepmother and her siblings, and Addams’s own doubts about a career, made all of these efforts seem fruitless. In one of those “moments of deep depression” to which she would later refer in her autobiography, Addams wrote to Ellen Gates Starr from Geneva that all her activities in the three years since graduation had “gained nothing and improved nothing” (June 8, 1884, Starr Papers).

During these same years of apparently aimless wandering, however, Jane Addams was making the important observations about economic class, charity work, and women’s opportunities that would ultimately shape her life purpose. Her letters and diary entries from Europe and from two winters spent with her stepmother and stepbrother in Baltimore indicate that Addams was pondering the inequities in the lives of the rich and the lives of the poor, and she was questioning the social utility of both female higher education and of philanthropy that merely gave alms to the needy. At the same time, she noticed that her own brief involvement with charity work in Baltimore engaged and energized her in a way that medical school, aesthetic studies,

and European travel had not. Moreover, as she grew closer to Ellen Gates Starr, she was more intrigued by Starr’s wish that they “do some work together.” “I believe,” said Starr, “we should work well” (November 28, 1885, Starr Papers).

When Jane Addams went on a second tour of Europe in 1888, she was accompanied by Ellen Starr rather than her stepmother. During this trip, Addams first encountered Toynbee Hall, a new “settlement house” in the East End of London staffed by young, male graduates of Oxford University and presided over by Samuel and Henrietta Barnett. Toynbee Hall reflected all the currents of the day: the desire of the educated elite both to teach and learn from the poor; the zeal of liberal Christians like the Barnetts to uplift but not evangelize; the social reformers’ disdain for almsgiving; and the conviction that modern, urban poverty was best addressed through cross-class fellowship. The Barnetts’ settlement house appealed to Addams’s background as a steward of society, her nonconvert’s respect for Christian principles, and her now humble desire for community cooperation over heroic leadership. Before their return to the United States in the summer of 1888, Addams and Starr had devised what they called a “scheme.” They would combine Addams’s inheritance of sixty thousand dollars from her father with the Chicago contacts Starr had cultivated through her aunt ELIZA ALLEN STARR and Miss Kirkland, and they would open a social settlement in a working-class section of the Midwest’s booming industrial center.

In the subsequent decades, Addams and Starr would grow apart, although both continued to live at Hull-House. But in the early years at Hull-House, they were an effective team. Starr attended to many organizational details and deferred, as she always had, to Addams’s public charisma. When they were just launching their settlement effort in the early fall of 1889, Starr wrote to her cousin, “Everybody who comes near Miss Addams is affected by her. It is as if she simply diffused something which came from outside herself, of which she is the luminous medium” (Starr to Mary Allen, September 15, 1889, Starr Papers).

When Jane Addams appeared on the Chicago scene, the city already had a well-developed organizational infrastructure for philanthropy and social reform. That infrastructure was led as much by Chicago women as by Chicago men, for the women in the city’s leading families had, since the 1860s, taken an active role in civic affairs. The existence of an independent female network in Chicago proved invaluable to Addams’s success. From the beginning, it gave her independence from any religious affiliation. Though her settlement project drew interest from several of Chicago’s missionary-based men, Addams chose to affiliate Hull-House with the city’s secular, reform-oriented women.

Ellen Starr’s contacts and Addams’s own status as the educated daughter of a former state senator gave the two women entree into the influential Chicago Woman’s Club, where their project quickly won the endorsement of civic leaders such as ELLEN HENROTIN and MARY WILMARTH. Their own reform work prior to 1889 made these club women open to new ways of improving urban life. Jane Addams’s settlement house scheme had great appeal, because it promised a useful social role for the educated daughters and sons of the privileged as well

as useful social services for the needy. Jane Addams was made a new club member with unusual rapidity.

The welcoming community of elite, activist women who provided immediate support for Hull-House stood in stark contrast to Addams's own family, which saw her Chicago adventure as an abandonment of filial duty. When Addams wrote, in later years, of the conflict reform-minded young women faced between the "family claim" and the "social claim" ("The Subjective Necessity," 14) she drew from painful, personal experience.

Support from the activist women of Chicago helps to explain Addams's virtually instantaneous success in the fall of 1889. She and Starr found a suitable house—the decaying Hull mansion at Halsted and Polk streets—and secured a lease from its owner, HELEN CULVER. After a modicum of remodeling and furniture installation, Addams and Starr established themselves as "neighbors" to the diverse immigrants in the community. Within days of opening in September, they were offering classes and providing direct services such as child care. Within weeks they had attracted favorable newspaper coverage and a considerable number of upper- and middle-class volunteers to the enterprise.

By 1893, the thirty-three-year-old Jane Addams was describing herself, somewhat pridefully, as "the grandmother of American settlements" (Addams to Alice H. Addams, February 10, 1893, Jane Addams Memorial Collection); and, indeed, she was. In the years between 1890 and 1895, when fledgling settlements were opening around the nation, Hull-House stood as the flagship. It expanded beyond the Hull mansion to include an art gallery, coffee house, and gymnasium. Addams had learned quickly what her neighbors wanted and had responded with a rich, daily menu of meeting times for children's programs, ethnic clubs, labor organizations, women's clubs, political discussion groups, and classes in English, government, literature, and art. By 1895, these programs were attracting thousands of Chicagoans to the settlement every week.

The programs at Hull-House were popular and effective, but they alone were not what distinguished Jane Addams's settlement house from the other settlements in Chicago or elsewhere in the United States. It was Addams's published writings and her leadership style that brought to Hull-House its national prominence and its remarkable staff of residents and volunteers. In the six years between 1893 and 1899, Addams published thirty-five articles in which she set forth her conviction that members of the privileged classes gained as much as they gave by engaging in work with what she called "the industrial classes." Addams told her largely white, middle-class readers that approaching any sort of community work with an attitude of self-sacrifice was dishonest and harmful to the efforts. She argued for a spirit of mutual respect in all cross-class endeavors. Implicit in all of these articles was the assumption that cooperative work across class was imperative if the nation was to solve the social problems created by industrial capitalism.

A commitment to democratic process informed Addams's early writings, but Jane Addams was still a steward at heart and always a charismatic individual. These qualities coexisted with her democratic philosophy in shaping Addams's unique leadership style at Hull-House. Unlike most other settlements, where the head resident and the board of directors dictated the organi-

zation's agenda and activities, the Hull-House residents and volunteers had a strong voice in designing the settlement's program. Addams had founded Hull-House to provide young women and men, but especially young women, with an opportunity for creative, socially responsible work. By 1900, there were twenty to thirty residents at the settlement at any one time. Addams fulfilled her aim by encouraging each of these residents to identify a need in the community and invent a programmatic response. Her authority lay in guiding residents' initiatives in directions she thought most productive, not in making rigid, daily assignments. The result of Addams's agility at mixing an egalitarian attitude with tremendous personal influence was that Hull-House residents stayed longer than residents at other settlements, and Addams attracted a notably independent, creative staff. Within its first decade, Hull-House became a haven for educated, ambitious American women who sought a base for their operations and a community of like-minded females. FLORENCE KELLEY, JULIA LATHROP, ALICE HAMILTON, and GRACE ABBOTT were just the most prominent names on a list of women residents for whom Addams provided the space and opportunity to pursue their own interests in labor legislation, asylum reform, public health, and child welfare. These residents were joined by nonresident volunteers from the larger Chicago community, who responded to such Hull-House innovations as the Juvenile Court, the Immigrants' Protective League, and the University of Chicago Extension. Reformers such as Henry Demarest Lloyd, the Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones, and Clarence Darrow; unionists such as MARY KENNEY (see O'SULLIVAN), MARGARET DREIER ROBINS, and Abraham Bisno; and civic leaders such as ANITA McCORMICK BLAINE, Lyman Gage and Julius Rosenwald were all drawn into Addams's circle of influence. None of these individuals agreed with Jane Addams on every public issue of the day, but all of them encountered in her a person who strove to be as democratic in her organizational style and programming as in her writing.

Jane Addams's personal inheritance made it possible for her to open Hull-House on her own, but it did not allow her to sustain or expand the settlement. Throughout her career, she was engaged in constant fund-raising for one building or special project after another. Vital to the settlement's survival and growth were two wealthy Chicago women, LOUISE deKOVEN BOWEN and MARY ROZET SMITH. It was their financial generosity that made it possible for Hull-House to expand so noticeably in size and function. By 1907, it comprised thirteen buildings covering an entire square block of the city. This expansion gave Hull-House a physical and programmatic presence unequalled by any other settlement house in the nation.

The warm friendship Addams enjoyed with Louise deKoven Bowen and the loving partnership she built with Mary Rozet Smith helped Addams to create a life in which the personal and the political were comfortably integrated. Smith and Bowen were at the center of a circle of friends including Kelley, Hamilton, Julia Lathrop, and Lillian Wald of the Henry Street settlement in New York City. Over the years, these women created an extended family network that embraced various sons and daughters and nieces and nephews. Ellen Starr was a valued but less intimate member of this circle. Jane Addams's own rela-

tives—her stepmother, sisters, and stepbrothers—held themselves aloof from the settlement for a variety of personal and political reasons. One sister's death gave Addams guardianship of a niece and two nephews. Her attentions to those children and her close ties to her other nieces gave Addams some experience juggling parental duties and the demands of a public career.

The dinners Jane Addams presided over every evening in the Hull-House dining hall reflected her integration of public life and private. On any given evening, Mary Smith might be sitting across one table from the University of Chicago philosopher John Dewey, who could be seated next to an Italian socialist or a visiting member of the Russian nobility or an aspiring ballerina from Kansas. Enlivening the conversation at each table would be the Hull-House residents, young women and men from all over the country who had come to live and work under Jane Addams's guidance. Her own quiet humor tended toward the wry and self-effacing, but Addams must have enjoyed a good laugh, because her dearest friends were known as much for their biting wit as for their political savvy.

Sentimental expression was never Addams's style, but she was extravagantly attentive to friends and relatives, knitting sweaters for former residents' babies, researching used car prices for her nephew, collecting autographs of the famous for Louise deKoven Bowen's grandson, sending carefully selected gifts of clothes and books to nieces and grandnieces. Mary Smith's money allowed the two women to go on extended foreign tours and to buy a summer home near Louise deKoven Bowen's in Bar Harbor, Maine. It also made possible their lifelong contributions to the support and education of their own nieces and nephews and allowed them to help Florence Kelley, a single mother, pay for her three children's college education.

For all the good fellowship that Addams fostered between neighbors, residents, and volunteers, she never protected Hull-House from the tensions and controversies of the day. Just four years after settling into Hull-House, Addams had to cope with the devastating economic depression of 1893 and the bitter Pullman Strike of 1894. Hull-House was designed to provide programs, not direct aid; but the depression forced Addams to confront her neighbors' immediate, dire needs. And while Addams's aim was to encourage cross-class understanding, George Pullman's intransigence during the strike and his cold rebuff of her offers of mediation forced Addams to realize that capitalists would not soon embrace her vision of economic cooperation. Passage of the Illinois Factory Law in 1893, under Florence Kelley's leadership, was a great victory; but shifts in state politics soon scuttled its enforcement. And even though her Hull-House neighbors admired Addams's commitment to democratic methods, they did not join her unsuccessful campaigns in 1896 and 1898 against the ward's corrupt boss, Johnny Powers.

Defeats such as these did not weaken Addams's commitment to building a more democratic community. If anything, they strengthened her determination to make comfortable Americans understand that individuals' living conditions and working conditions were fundamental to their ability to participate in democracy. "As the very existence of the state depends on the character of its citizens," she reasoned, "it becomes possible to deduce the right of state regulation . . . [when] industrial conditions are forcing the workers below the standard of de-

century" (*Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 229). With increasing sharpness, Addams argued for a fundamental reform in Americans' concept of the role of the government. In an era of urban industrialism, citizens needed a more activist, regulatory government. Experience, combined with the political education she received from Florence Kelley, Henry Demarest Lloyd, and others, convinced Addams that legislative efforts were required if there was to be fundamental change in labor-capital relations, factory conditions, urban housing standards and services, public health, education, or recreation. A small, private, local institution like Hull-House could not enact permanent change in these matters, but it could provide the social science research and the lobbying energy necessary to produce such changes in the structure and function of American government.

In the years between 1900 and 1915, Hull-House residents continued to offer its neighbors a full range of daily programs and services; but other residents, and Jane Addams herself, were increasingly involved with state and national efforts to increase government involvement in the regulation of economic life and the provision of social services. Even though unionists were skeptical of state regulations and employers vehemently opposed them, Addams served during these years on numerous national committees whose purpose was to build citizen support for child labor laws, housing and factory regulations, protective labor legislation, vocational education, public health services, and public recreational facilities. In addition, Addams's outspoken support for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and for the National American Woman Suffrage Association served to telegraph her belief that every citizen's access to direct participation in the state was vital to national progress.

As she expanded her public purview, Addams also widened the audience for her reform message. She was in constant demand as a public speaker and was able to maintain personal contacts with reform colleagues around the nation through paid speaking tours. Most importantly, she lobbied the American people through her writing. In the first decade of the twentieth century, almost 150 articles appeared under Jane Addams's by-line. Articles, as well as reprints or excerpts or revisions of articles, appeared in all sorts of publications, from the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* to the *Ladies' Home Journal*; from the *American Journal of Sociology* to the *Machinists' Monthly*; from the *Atlantic* to the *Bulletin of the Chicago Federation of Teachers*. She was, quite consciously, spreading her message in order to create a constituency that would support legislative transformation of economic and social relations.

Jane Addams founded Hull-House out of a democratic urge to participate in mutual, cross-class education. Her experiences in the 1890s in Chicago persuaded her that such education had to be accompanied by state regulation of industrial capitalism and urban life. The philosophical result of her evolution is evident in the discussions of social theory that she published between 1900 and 1925. Two assumptions shape all of this writing. Addams assumed, first, that only a democratic process can create a stable, prosperous, healthy society; that democracy was "not merely a sentiment" but a "rule of living"; and that the "cure of the ills of Democracy is more Democracy" (*Democracy*

and *Social Ethics*, 6, 11–12). Second, she assumed that only a peaceful process could produce democracy's desirable goals: "the great task of pushing forward social justice could be enormously accelerated if primitive methods as well as primitive weapons were once and for all abolished" (*Newer Ideals of Peace*, 212). Long before she resisted American participation in World War I, Addams had read the philosophical writings of the Russian author, Leo Tolstoy. She accepted his argument for "non-resistance," which meant not combating evil in an aggressive way but steadfastly and peaceably adhering to alternate principles.

Throughout her adult life, Addams was convinced that competitive hostility in international relations, labor relations, judicial relations, and even personal relations was inherently undemocratic because it precluded the process of participatory dialogue. No matter how worthy the cause for which people might be fighting, said Addams, the pain and bitterness resulting from the fight would render meaningless any victory.

Addams set forth these principles most clearly in her first two books, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902) and *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907). In both works, Addams expressed her disdain for idealism that was "afraid of experience" and for elite stewardship that was "in reality so contemptuous" (*Newer Ideals of Peace*, 32, 49) of the masses. As she addressed concrete problems in municipal government, charitable efforts, the labor movement, the classroom, and the household, Addams deftly guided her readers to an appreciation of the living connection between the most prosaic realities of daily life and the most elevated ideals of democracy and pacifism. "The social passion of the age," she argued, was bent toward "the complete participation of the working classes in the spiritual, intellectual, and material inheritance of the human race" ("A Modern Lear," *Survey*, 136).

Addams was just as disturbed by the imbalances of power in political relations, class relations, gender relations, and racial and ethnic relations as any radical democrat of her day. But, unlike most of her allies in progressive movements between 1890 and 1918, Addams did not believe that heroic defeat of the powerful would bring peace and democracy. She argued that only peace and democracy would bring peace and democracy. In addition, she argued that permanent, lasting reform required appeals to citizens' interest in the common good, not appeals to self-interest. "We cannot hope to attain a sane social development," she wrote in *Newer Ideals of Peace*, "unless we subordinate class interests and class feeling to a broader conception of social progress" (p. 119). For Addams, this approach meant that workers had to be as generous of spirit and as peaceful in conduct as they wished employers to be.

Consistent with this position, Addams used her considerable diplomatic talents to act as an interpreter across class and cultural boundaries. The genius of the *Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909), *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910), and *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (1912) lay in Addams's ability to make vividly clear the internal logic motivating the behavior of the juvenile delinquent, the corrupt policeman, the ward boss (and the voter who supported him), the prostitute, the capitalist, the anarchist, and the cocaine addict. She asked that her readers understand the thief without condoning theft, because she believed that citizens could engage in peaceful

processes of change and achieve democratic ends once they recognized a fundamental, human similarity in diverse people's hopes, desires, and fears.

Having dismissed class warfare as a viable political strategy, Addams's work pointed toward a sanguine future that included an active, legitimate, peaceful labor movement cooperating with a capitalist class that understood its social responsibility to prevent poverty, not simply ameliorate it. Her work pointed as well toward a pluralistic society in which ethnic and racial identities informed America's international relations and gave citizens daily practice in the democratic work of negotiating across differences.

The problem Addams faced was how to get from the reality of early twentieth-century urban, industrial America to the peaceful, democratic, social ideal she envisioned. Her challenge was to create a population of healthy, educated, stable citizens when the existing state was not democratic. Addams disdained the path of social philosophers who never tested their theories in real life; "the standard of social ethics," she said, "is not attained by traveling a sequestered byway" (*Democracy and Social Ethics*, 6). But Addams's temperamental and ideological recoil from conflict sometimes limited her effectiveness as a participant in contentious democratic movements. There is a profound irony in this limitation, one that has shaped history's view of Addams: on the one hand, people applauded her insistence on mediation in all matters and admired her ability to "set a subject down, unprejudiced, and walk all around it" (Gilman, 184). Indeed, partisans often valued Addams's reputation as the ultimate honest broker because her acknowledgment alone could confer legitimacy on a cause. On the other hand, advocates caught up in the heat of battle often resented Addams's cool distance and felt her failure to champion their side as a hypocritical abandonment of her democratic principles.

Addams's disappointing tenure on the Chicago School Board between 1905 and 1909 reveals the personal and political dilemmas she faced when she tried to enact her ideals of mediation and fair-mindedness in real life. At the time of her appointment to Mayor Edward Dunne's "reform" school board, the conservative newspapers disdained Addams as a partisan of the teachers' union. At the same time, MARGARET HALEY, the union's fiery leader, expressed hope that Addams's moderate manner would produce more results than Haley's bombast. When Addams agreed to a compromise plan on teacher promotions that violated the union's basic goals, however, Haley denounced her as unprincipled. Later, when Addams declined to resign from the school board because the mayor had fired her progressive allies, she came under more bitter attack. In this situation, as in others, Addams was ill-prepared for the heat that would singe her disinterested stance. At the height of a school board crisis in 1906, Addams told another board member that she simply could not understand "where all the emotion comes from" (Addams to Anita McCormick Blaine, December 27, 1906, Jane Addams Memorial Collection). For all her talent at seeing everyone's ideological point of view, Addams was often insensitive to—or disdainful of—the depth of partisan emotion. She regarded Margaret Haley's intransigence in the same unworthy light as she viewed the newspapers' sensationalism and the school superintendent's "commercialistic ideal" (*Twenty*

Years at Hull-House, 334). To Addams, they all blocked democratic dialogue. By confessing later that she “certainly played a most inglorious part in this unnecessary conflict” (p. 335) on the school board, Addams took her share of blame but made clear her frustration at others’ unnecessary and, to her, immoral rigidity.

Typically, Addams avoided the discomfort of the school board conflict by distancing herself from organizational squabbles. Though she was a valued public speaker for the woman suffrage movement, and even served as a vice-president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1911 to 1914, Addams kept her distance from the strategic battles being waged between suffrage organizations in the years between 1900 and 1920. She made a temporary foray into partisan politics by seconding Theodore Roosevelt’s nomination for president on the Progressive Party ticket in 1912 and campaigning enthusiastically for Roosevelt; but Addams withdrew from the intraparty bickering that followed Roosevelt’s defeat. By situating herself, institutionally, within Hull-House and, ethically, within the democratic pacifism she outlined in her writings, Addams was able to serve in an advisory capacity to numerous organizations without ever becoming embroiled in their internal disputes. For years, this pattern served her political, philosophical, and emotional needs while performing a valuable, if sometimes irritating service: Addams’s mere presence on a board or executive council was supposed to remind members to put aside their petty quarrels and consider the good of the whole.

World War I marked the end of Addams’s freedom to rise above the partisan fray as the unassailable advocate of peace and reason. In wartime, pacifists are unwitting partisans, and in the years between 1914 and 1918, Addams became increasingly radical in the cause of mediation. She had belonged to peace organizations since the 1890s, had spoken out against the imperialism of the Spanish-American War, and had thoroughly grounded her social activism in pacifist principles. The war brought no change in her convictions, but it thoroughly transformed her public image. Addams sacrificed her status as a beloved female figure when she challenged the bellicose climate of the day and criticized European belligerence, American preparedness efforts, and, ultimately, American participation in the war. Her leadership in organizing and then chairing the Woman’s Peace Congress at The Hague in 1915, and her subsequent tour of European capitals to urge mediation, coincided with Americans’ increasing militance. At best, Addams’s critics regarded her as a dangerous traitor; at worst, they saw her as a silly, sentimental woman with no business interfering in the international affairs of men.

So stunning and vitriolic were the attacks on Addams during the war and in the postwar Red Scare, that it is easy to imagine her alone and isolated in the decade between 1914 and 1924. It is true that Addams lost many friends during the war and was temporarily shunned by many others. It is also true, however, that Addams still enjoyed tremendous national and international influence and was actively involved in expanding circles of friends and colleagues in the peace movement. During the war, Herbert Hoover, who was head of the United States Food Administration, recruited Addams to raise funds for his agency’s war relief work because, he said, of “people’s unbounded confi-

dence in you” (Herbert Hoover to Addams, March 2, 1918, Swarthmore College Peace Collection).

Pacifist women in the suffrage movement, for example, Lillian Wald and Crystal Eastman, also turned to Addams to lead their antiwar protest precisely because of her reputation for “dispassionate and marvelously detached impersonal judgement” (Mary C. Percy to Addams, February 19, 1918, Swarthmore College Peace Collection/Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Collection). Before the war, Addams had been less a leader of the women’s movement than an exemplar of its ideals. This nonpartisan status made her valuable for legitimizing the image of feminist pacifism. She had previously preferred mixed-sex organizations for pursuing social reform, but during the war Addams became convinced that the peace movement needed a separate women’s organization to counter “masculinist” thinking (Addams to Anita McCormick Blaine, January 17, 1917, Jane Addams Memorial Collection). The war inspired in Addams greater feelings of gender solidarity than she had ever expressed before. Though her personal circle had always been composed chiefly of women, and though her public circle continued to include valued male colleagues, the war convinced Addams that women simply cared more about life than men did. The war strengthened her resolve to see that women, as women, would have a powerful voice in all political affairs. This subtle shift in emphasis emerged in her most prominent publications of the time: *Women at The Hague* (1915), *The Long Road of Women’s Memory* (1916), “The Devil Baby at Hull-House,” *Atlantic* (October 1916), and *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922).

The organizational affiliations that Addams formed as a result of World War I, the Women’s Peace Party and, out of that, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, dominated her public activity for the rest of her life. She continued to administer Hull-House and to serve on numerous boards concerned with such domestic issues as child labor, old age pensions, and unemployment relief. She also continued to write and speak out on domestic concerns. In the decade after the war, she lent her much-sought-after endorsement to several unpopular civil liberties cases. She also chastised a conference of social workers in 1926 because the profession had stopped challenging “the construction of society itself” and had obeyed the public’s postwar “desire to conform and play safe” (“How Much Social Work Can a Community Afford?” 200). But at the center of Addams’s attention and activity was her international work for peace.

Addams chose to serve as the president of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) rather than as president of the United States section of the organization. This decision allowed her to skirt the bitter disputes that plagued the American unit of WILPF and to maintain a comfortable distance from the squabbles at the International’s office in Geneva. Her focus was on doing what she could do better than any other woman of her day: speaking, writing, fundraising, and organizing for WILPF chapters around the globe. Building on the international perspective she had developed as a result of living in an immigrant neighborhood and traveling often with Mary Rozet Smith, Addams, now a woman in her sixties, embarked on a whole new career. Her time in the 1920s was

devoted to corresponding and meeting with peace activists from many nations, lobbying for relief to Germany, Russia, Poland, and Armenia, affiliating with liberation movements in Ireland and India, and encouraging women's independent activism in Latin America, Mexico, China, and Japan.

In recognition of these endeavors, Jane Addams became the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1931, at the age of seventy-one. By that time, most people had forgotten that she had been called a "traitor," a "slacker," a leader of the "spider web" of vicious subversives during World War I and the reactionary twenties. When the Nobel Prize was announced, five hundred congratulatory telegrams poured in from friends and organizations in twenty different countries, all singing her praises as one of the spiritual forces of the age. Few knew, at the time, that she received these telegrams from a hospital bed where she was recovering from surgery on an ovarian cyst. Addams had long been plagued with kidney problems and recurrent bouts of bronchitis, but her health had not begun to deteriorate seriously until 1923, when she had a mastectomy in Tokyo, Japan. Three years later, at age sixty-six, she had suffered her first heart attack and was thereafter under strict orders, enforced by Mary Rozet Smith, to slow down. In the last decade of her life, Addams had, grudgingly, trimmed her schedule; and she spent more time away from Hull-House at the summer home she shared with Smith in Bar Harbor, Maine, or at Louise deKoven Bowen's home in Tucson, Arizona. She never retired, however. Members of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal administration actively sought her advice right up to the end, as did the residents charged with running Hull-House. So, too, devoted members of WILPF sought Addams's general guidance in the face of encroaching Nazism; and frightened members of the Jewish community sought—and received—her support. But increasingly in the 1930s, Jane Addams's attention centered on her life with Mary Rozet Smith and the lives of her nieces and nephews and their children. Her own dear friends were dying: Florence Kelley and Julia Lathrop died within weeks of one another in 1932; and, most painfully, Mary Rozet Smith, who died early in 1934, following close on the heels of Addams's second heart attack.

Addams worked virtually up to the day of her death. She sent off the manuscript of her last book, *My Friend, Julia Lathrop*, in early March of that year; traveled to Berkeley, California, to receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the University of California; and went to Washington, D.C., in mid-May for a dinner, hosted by Eleanor Roosevelt, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of WILPF and to honor Addams's career. Friends and physicians expended so much worry on Addams's weak heart and the loss of Mary Smith that it came as a great surprise when she was diagnosed with abdominal cancer on May 18, 1935; she died of the disease just three days later.

When she was a young woman, Jane Addams displayed the talent to be a fine scholar. But she wanted "to live in a really living world" (*Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 64), she said, and gambled her health, her fortune, and her family ties to do so. In an age of industrial and reform giants, Addams rose to a stature never before enjoyed by any American woman. She did it with tireless work in her neighborhood, in city, state, and national reform movements, and in the relationships she cultivated with

people from all walks of life. But woven throughout her active engagement with the real life of social reform was an artistic and scholarly thread, always observing, analyzing, pulling back for perspective, always directing her audience's eye to the larger ethical tapestry on which she was working. Just days before Addams's death, a colleague in the peace movement wrote to say, "you have been like a North Star guiding us" (Harriet Laidlaw to Addams, May 1, 1935, Swarthmore College Peace Collection). The timeless, compelling nature of her writing has made it possible for Addams to continue guiding generations of readers seeking a vision of peaceful, democratic society.

Sources. The Jane Addams Paper Project has collected, from more than six hundred different repositories, the surviving correspondence and documents related to Jane Addams's life and career. This massive collection is currently available in an eighty-two-reel microfilm edition titled *The Jane Addams Papers* (Microfilm Edition, 1985). The first twenty-six reels of the microfilm are devoted to the surviving personal and professional correspondence; the remaining reels include documents on Hull-House, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Jane Addams's various other organizational activities, as well as her clippings file and copies of her published and unpublished books, editorials, essays, and speeches. Those interested in the microfilm collection are advised to consult *The Jane Addams Papers: A Comprehensive Guide*, ed. Mary Lynn McCree Bryan (1996). The two main repositories for Jane Addams's papers are the Swarthmore College Peace Collection and the Jane Addams Memorial Collection, UIC Spec. Coll. UIC also has the papers of the Haldeman-Julius family. There are additional Addams-Haldeman Papers at the Lilly Library, Indiana Univ. Ellen Gates Starr Papers are in the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. Jane Addams published a dozen books over the course of her career. Those books are *Residents of Hull-House*, *Hull-House Maps and Papers: A Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago* [1895]; *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902); *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907); *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909); *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910); *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (1912); *Women at The Hague* (1915); *The Long Road of Women's Memory* (1916); *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922); *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1930); *The Excellent Becomes Permanent* (1932); *My Friend, Julia Lathrop* (1935). *The Jane Addams Papers: A Comprehensive Guide* includes a detailed bibliography of all of Jane Addams's published and unpublished writings. A less complete but still extensive bibliography of her writings can be found in John C. Farrell, *Beloved Lady: A History of Jane Addams's Ideas on Reform and Peace* (1967). See her early writing on woman's role in society in "Opening Address," *Rockford Seminary Magazine*, April 1880. A short list of Addams's most significant and influential articles would have to include "A New Impulse to an Old Gospel," *Forum*, November 1892; this article is more commonly known as "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," the title given to it when it was published in *Philanthropy and Social Progress*, ed. Henry C. Adams (1893). Addams republished the same article as chapter 6 of *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. Additional, significant articles are "Why the Ward Boss Rules," *Outlook*, April 2, 1898, which was an excerpt from "Ethical Survivals in Municipal Corruption," *International Journal of Ethics*, April 1898; "The College Woman and the Family Claim," *Commons*, September 1898, and "The Subtle Problems of Charity," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1899 (both reworked as chapters in *Democracy and Social Ethics*); "Trade Unions and Public Duty," *American Journal of Sociology*, January 1899; "A Function of the Social Settlement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, May 1899; "Child Labor Legislation: A Requisite for Industrial Efficiency," *Annals of the American Academy of*

Political and Social Science, May 1905; "Why Girls Go Wrong," *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1907; "Why Women Should Vote," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1910; "Charity and Social Justice," *Survey*, June 11, 1910; "Why I Seconded Roosevelt's Nomination," *Woman's Journal*, August 17, 1912; "Pragmatism in Politics," *Survey*, October 5, 1912; "The Progressive Party and the Negro," *Crisis*, November 1912; "My Experiences as a Progressive Delegate," *McClure's Magazine*, November 1912; "A Modern Lear," *Survey*, November 2, 1912; "Pen and Book as Tests of Character," *Survey*, January 4, 1913; "Need a Woman of Fifty Feel Old?" *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1914; "Larger Aspects of the Woman's Movement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1914; "The Revolt Against War," *Survey*, July 17, 1915; "The Devil Baby at Hull-House," *Atlantic*, October 1916; "How Much Social Work Can a Community Afford?" *Survey*, November 15, 1926; "Social Consequences of the Depression," *Survey*, January 1, 1932. To date, the two most reliable biographies of Jane Addams are Allen F. Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (1973), and James Weber Linn, *Jane Addams: A Biography* (1935). See, too, Victoria Bissell Brown, "Jane Addams," in *American National Biography*, ed. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (1999). For other perspectives on Addams, see Mina Jane Carson, *The Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (1990); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900* (1995); Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (1998); Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918* (1990); Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as Social Type* (1965); and John C. Farrell, *Beloved Lady: A History of Jane Addams's Ideas on Reform and Peace* (1967). Charlotte Perkins Gilman discusses Addams in *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography* (1935).

VICTORIA BISSELL BROWN

THIS SPACE IS BLANK

