

## CHAPTER 11



# The Founding of Hull-House

"It has always been difficult for the family to regard the daughter otherwise than as a family possession," Jane Addams wrote in 1898, a decade after her escape from home. "But where is the larger life of which she has dreamed so long?" The conflict between the daughter's ambitions, her desire for a "larger life," and her family's demands produced the major crisis of Jane Addams's career, a crisis that held her immobile for almost a decade. Between 1881, when she graduated from college, and 1889, when Hull-House was founded, Jane Addams was caught in a limbo of inactivity and dependence, afflicted by "nervous depression and a sense of maladjustment." The crisis was resolved only when she deserted her family—primarily her stepmother, but also her sisters, brother, and stepbrothers—and moved to Chicago with her friend Ellen Starr. A few months later, they set up a home on the second floor of a dilapidated mansion and created a new vocation.

Settlement work, which meant moving into an urban slum and providing services for the neighborhood residents, was a two-way street of mutual benefits. Obviously, it helped the urban poor, mainly the foreign-born and their children, who received the settlement's services. At the same time, it resolved the problem of the young educated woman, the college graduate, who had no purposeful way to participate in "life," no outlet in which to apply her training, and no way to escape her family's clutch. Replacing what Addams called "the family claim" with a larger, public one, settlement work fused an activist social role with what appeared to be conventional feminine tendencies. (Well-off women, after all, had always helped the poor.) But the "larger life" of which Jane Addams once dreamed in a vague and inchoate way during the 1880s had other distinctive characteristics. It was a life that melded traditional charity with intellectual challenge. It was a life in which she could assume a dominant, leadership role. Finally, it was a life that permanently excluded family demands, both the



demands of marriage and, alternatively, the demands that could be imposed on a maiden aunt for the rest of her days. In fact, the settlement itself replaced the family—with a vibrant community of friends and admirers, much like the women who had been in Jane Addams's college class, all of them embarked on a noble enterprise, a vital mission.

A sense of mission reflected Jane Addams's education and her upbringing. Born in 1860 in Cedarville, Illinois, she was the youngest child of a prominent family headed by a much-admired father. Businessman, banker, and Republican politician, John Addams was well known locally as an Illinois state senator. Jane's mother, Sarah, died when she was two, but six years later, a stepmother, Anna Haldeman, took over management of the large family—Jane had three older sisters, an older brother, and two new stepbrothers. Profoundly attached to her eminent father, Jane absorbed John Addams's high ideals and impeccable standards. She also profited from his belief in women's education. John Addams had long endorsed a nearby girls' school, the Rockford Seminary, attended by his older daughters before they got married. More ambitious than her sisters, Jane wanted to attend one of the new, prestigious eastern women's colleges, especially Smith, which opened its doors in the 1870s. But she was ultimately persuaded to put in a year at Rockford, closer to her home and family. Entering the Rockford Seminary in 1877, Jane completed a full course of study there, as her sisters had not. Moreover, she found school a completely invigorating and satisfying experience—an experience she transformed into that of the "college girl." At Rockford, nestled away in another small Illinois town, Jane saw herself as part of the first generation of college women, a cohort she soon came to represent and epitomize.

Rockford was not quite a college when Jane Addams entered, although it was to achieve collegiate status soon after her graduation. But in 1877, it was still in the indeterminate state of "seminary," much like Mount Holyoke, after which it was modeled. Mount Holyoke became an accredited college only in 1888. Rockford viewed itself as a western version of the Massachusetts school. Since its first class entered in 1849, it had built up a reputation as the leading girls' seminary of the area, patronized by families such as the Addamses. The daughters of well-off farmers, businessmen, and eminent citizens might go to school there for a few years before marriage or teaching or missionary work, to which Rockford gave special emphasis. The school's head, Anna Peck Sill, like her prototype, Mary Lyon, was determined to elicit religious conversions and to steer her students into foreign missions. This emphasis was not entirely lost on Jane Addams who, though resistant, later created her own version of mission. But she found other aspects of Rockford life even more to her liking. From 1877 to 1881, she reveled in the identity, activity, and community it provided.

Jane's class at Rockford, no more than two dozen girls, of whom seventeen graduated, viewed themselves as pioneers. The novelty of "college" life, the sense of enjoying "the highest privilege of our time," was inspirational, perhaps all the more so since Rockford was not yet formally a college. Jane's classmates felt an unusual sense of kinship and sorority, both with each other and with girls who were students at eastern schools. Adopting the class name of "breadgivers,"

they corn  
and ritua  
tors. A sp  
schedule  
dams see  
relished l  
sions abo  
edited th  
and gave

The  
Addams  
classmat  
of persor  
extremel  
Ellen Ga  
to teach  
correspo  
(she like  
attention  
in her all  
significa  
progress  
champion  
retaining  
give bre

Co  
meshed:  
college v  
Rockfor  
others."  
essays, s  
school ti  
type of t  
suppose  
suppose  
male co  
vague, t  
women  
And it v

Mi  
sisters h  
Instead,  
Smith fo  
as she le  
her heal  
for Smi



they corresponded with their counterparts at Vassar and Smith, introduced rites and rituals like those at the eastern colleges, and cultivated the spirit of innovators. A spirited participant in class events, undeterred by either the rigid school schedule or the requirement that students perform domestic chores, Jane Addams seemed to excel in all facets of Rockford life. Her grades were excellent, she relished her studies in Greek and science, and she joined in the endless discussions about religion that Rockford fostered. She also joined the literary society, edited the school magazine, contributed innumerable essays, excelled at debates, and gave public addresses at many academic ceremonies.

The Rockford experience spurred self-confidence in other ways too. Jane Addams made herself felt as a student leader, admired and sought after by both classmates and faculty. At Rockford, in fact, she began to show the amazing force of personality that would characterize the rest of her life. She developed only one extremely close friendship, with another small-town girl of intellectual bent, Ellen Gates Starr, who was slightly older. When Ellen left Rockford after a year to teach school, they continued the friendship through an intense, devoted correspondence. Jane Addams was somewhat more distant from her classmates (she liked to be called "Miss Addams"), but she retained her role as center of attention as well as an active contributor to the Rockford ethos. This ethos evoked in her all sorts of ambitions—to achieve, excel, influence, serve, and do something significant. Such ambitions were enhanced by her class's sense of contributing to progress and its ceaseless concern over women's roles. At a college debate, Jane championed woman's "potent influence in the age in which she lives," while retaining "the old idea of womanhood—the Saxon lady whose mission it was to give bread unto her household."

Could serving the family and exerting "potent influence" be successfully meshed? At Rockford, as at other early women's colleges, the experience of college was often at odds with college goals, which were themselves ambivalent. Rockford trained its students "to give oneself fully and worthily for the good of others." At the same time, it gave them a chance to study academic subjects, write essays, speak in public, and participate in a women's community. Above all, the school treated its students as valued individuals. It was not quite clear what this type of training was supposed to do, nor what the highly educated woman was supposed to do with her education. Nor was it clear in what ways she was supposed to be different from either her non-college-trained mother or from the male college student of the same generation. But if the purpose of college was vague, the experience was concrete. For Jane Addams, as for hundreds of young women in the 1870s and 1880s, the experience provided a purpose of its own. And it was an experience that she was, eventually, unready to give up.

Many of Jane's classmates at Rockford moved on to marriage, as her older sisters had done, but marriage was a possibility Jane Addams never considered. Instead, during her last days at school, she was full of alternate plans—to attend Smith for a year, to get a degree, to travel in Europe, to study medicine. As soon as she left Rockford and returned to Cedarville, however, she got sick, although her health had been good during her college years. Her illness made departure for Smith less likely. It also marked the start of a downward spiral that soon



developed its own momentum. Within a few weeks, just when Jane had started to recover, her father died, most horribly and unexpectedly, of a ruptured appendix. This changed her psychological landscape unalterably. "The greatest sorrow which can ever come to me is past," she wrote to Ellen Starr. "I will not write of myself or how purposeless and without ambition I am." "I shall never be disappointed in you," Ellen wrote back. But Jane Addams became more and more disappointed in herself.

After setting forth in the fall to enroll in the Philadelphia Women's Medical College, accompanied by her stepmother, Anna Haldeman Addams, she got sick again and dropped out of school after a month. There seemed to be something wrong with her spine, the recurrence of an illness that had plagued her childhood. Instead of becoming a doctor, Jane Addams became a patient. Her attentive family provided her with one of the best-regarded remedies of the day, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's rest cure. This was a special treatment for nervous and "invalid" young women, who, unlike their energetic mothers, were exhausted, depressed, and unable to function. The treatment involved lying in bed for months without company, activity, books, or "stimulation." Jane Addams appeared to survive this enforced passivity fairly well, just as she next survived an operation by her stepbrother, an Iowa doctor, to improve her spine. But she never returned to medical school, and her loss of identity increased. Within a year, she had embarked on a course of false starts, setbacks, sickness, and increasing despair. "Failure in every sense," she wrote in her private notebook.

As the Rockford days receded further and further into the distance, Jane Addams's sense of purposelessness and failure mounted, despite Anna Haldeman Addams's attempts to find remedies. The next attempt was a grand tour of Europe, on which Jane and her stepmother embarked in 1883 with a small party of women friends, trailing from hotel to museum to cathedral to resort. The trip was a success, but it was more of a holding action than a cure. By 1886, Jane was living at home in Baltimore, where Anna had moved to accompany her son George who studied at Johns Hopkins. Here Jane attended teas and lectures, helped Anna entertain, visited charity wards, and cast about for some significant activity. She still felt without "purpose and ambition," as she kept writing to Ellen Starr, now teaching at a fashionable girls' school in Chicago. "I am filled with shame that with all my apparent leisure I have nothing at all to do." Further education by now seemed out of the question. Missionary work, the Rockford goal, had never appealed to her. Teaching, another option, was no more attractive; she had been invited to teach at Rockford, but she gave up after a day. None of the options seemed to cater to the special qualities she had exemplified to her classmates, such as leadership. Nor did remaining in her stepmother's household, subject to what Jane later described as "the family claim."

The family claim offered two options, neither attractive. One was marriage. Anna Haldeman Addams was especially anxious that Jane marry her younger son, George, and pressed her to do so but without any luck. All of the other women in Jane's family had married and had children, except for her sister Martha, who died at seventeen. Jane's mother, Sarah, who had migrated to Illinois as soon as she was married in 1844, had had eight children, three of whom

died. Her own and died. Jane's culture, had Addams in senior, was small child years older family present the young unspoken when she surpassed

The becoming, There were and spins seemed to increased Rockford, plenty of helper and had become waited up repayment husband meant that made der Cedarville in, handled Addams between with Ellen ambition "It into the"

It no became c many pri over too and learn taught.

According poor quality convert



died. Her own death, at age forty-nine, had come just after a ninth child was born and died. Jane's forceful stepmother, Anna, an attractive widow steeped in culture, had had four children, of whom two survived to see her married to John Addams in the 1860s. Jane's oldest and favorite sister, Mary, fifteen years her senior, was married to a not-too-successful Presbyterian minister and had four small children. They lived in a series of Illinois towns. Her next sister, Alice, seven years older than Jane, had married Anna's oldest son, Harry Haldeman (this family preferred insiders to outsiders) and also had a child. But Jane Addams, the youngest child and only college graduate, chose spinsterhood. Although an unspoken choice, it was also a choice she had made early on, perhaps at Rockford, when she became the confidante of Ellen Starr, whose support and affection surpassed what any man could offer.

The rejected option of marriage—or of marrying her own stepbrother and becoming, like Alice, a double daughter—was only one part of the family claim. There were also the roles into which she had fallen, of quasi-invalid daughter and spinster aunt. The first, encouraged by attentive Anna Haldeman Addams, seemed to serve some function as ballast for other family members. The second increased as the family expanded. By the time Jane Addams graduated from Rockford, there were already several households, many nieces and nephews, and plenty of need for a female relative to be available, as Jane sometimes was, as helper and companion. Her family cared for her too, of course. In fact, since Jane had become ill, as her sister Alice later said, she thought "it was her due to be waited upon and petted . . . to be cared for and catered to." But the family needed repayment in kind. Mary was often sick, her children needed attention, and her husband was continually unhappy with his work. He changed posts often, which meant that Mary was always moving the household to another town. Anna also made demands. And Jane's older brother Weber, who lived with his family near Cedarville, had a mental breakdown in 1883, which meant that Jane had to step in, handle his affairs, and arrange for his care. Between 1881 and 1889, while Jane Addams was floundering for purpose or sunk in depression, she was alternating between her two familial roles. It was only during a second European trip, made with Ellen Starr and another friend in 1887–1888, that her undefined but multiple ambitions began to form and fuse.

"It is hard to tell just when the very simple plan which afterward developed into the Settlement began to form itself in my mind," Jane Addams wrote in 1910.

It may have been even before I went to Europe for the second time, but I gradually became convinced that it would be a good thing to rent a house in a part of the city where many primitive and actual needs are found, in which young women who had been given over too exclusively for study might restore a balance of activity along traditional lines and learn of life from life itself; where they might try out some of the things they had been taught.

According to Addams's reminiscences, she had been "irresistibly drawn to the poor quarters of each city" during her second European trip and was finally converted to a new course of action while watching a bullfight in Madrid in 1887.



In this unlikely setting, inspiration fell upon her with the shock of recognition so familiar to true believers. But Jane Addams's moment of inspiration probably occurred some months later, in the spring of 1888, in London, where she threw herself into a final binge of serious searching. During this last leg of the voyage, her quest for purpose grew so desperate that she even attended a missionary conference. She also visited Toynbee Hall, a pioneer settlement in London's East End, a notorious slum. The first mission of its type, Toynbee Hall was run by a group of young university men of radical bent, who were determined to bridge the enormous rift between social classes. Toynbee Hall was the final impetus that threw Jane's disparate motives and ambitions into shape.

That Jane Addams described her inspiration for Hull-House in terms of a conversion was not surprising. Although religious experience, in the old sense, had become as rare as the spinning wheel, the need for such an experience remained—an experience that followed a period of intense misgivings, depression, anguish, and even physical misery; an experience that imposed purpose and identity, that justified or even necessitated a radical departure. By 1888, Jane Addams had had enough of the anguish and was ready for the radical departure. After revealing her new idea to Ellen Starr and eliciting Ellen's ardent approval and support, Jane Addams's conversion experience was complete. She returned to America with

... high expectations and a certain belief that whatever perplexities and discouragement concerning the life of the poor were in store for me, I should at least know something at first hand and have the solace of daily activity. I had confidence that although life itself may contain difficulties, the period of mere passive receptivity had come to an end, and I had at last finished with the everlasting "preparation for life," however ill prepared I might be.

Such high expectations were not unfounded. The settlement idea provided a solution to two major problems, public and private, simultaneously. An American settlement, along the lines of Toynbee Hall, spanning the gulf between rich and poor, was both a timely and an attractive plan. Jane Addams was not the only one to hit on such a plan. A few years earlier, a group of Smith College graduates, also inspired by Toynbee Hall, had formed an association to start a settlement. Their venture, called the College Settlement, opened in New York about the same time that Hull-House was founded in Chicago. The need for both was manifest. During the past decade, urban populations had exploded. And in the cities, the poor and foreign-born had become far more numerous and far more visible. Middle-class Americans had, as yet, no positive way of confronting this immigrant invasion, but some sort of action was imminent. Even American clerics, often a bastion of reaction, were veering away from theological concerns and turning their attention to urban social problems. By the 1880s, the settlement's moment had arrived. The social settlement was also a timely solution to Jane Addams's problem, not least of all because the settlement effort was going to be a joint one. Although the whole project was Jane's idea, and she was to remain its driving force, she embarked on the plan with the companionship and

devoti  
thin an

C  
a natu  
growtl  
Chicag  
the Civ  
a brea  
purpo  
in 188  
foreign  
side, w  
symbo  
by nev  
"older

was n  
had le  
prope





devotion of her old friend, Ellen Starr. "Let's love each other through thick and thin and work out a salvation," she wrote to Ellen before moving to Chicago.

Chicago was both a natural choice of locale for the two Illinois women and a natural site for their new venture. The city was at an optimal period in its growth, which had been phenomenal. When Jane Addams was born in 1860, Chicago was just a small lakeport city with a little over 100,000 residents. After the Civil War, railroads, factories, stockyards, and immigrants transformed it at a breathtaking rate. During the 1880s, while Jane Addams was floundering for purpose, the city doubled in population, in part by absorbing some nearby towns in 1889. By 1890, there were over a million residents, four out of five of them foreign-born or the children of immigrants. The nineteenth ward, on the west side, where Jane Addams and Ellen Starr decided to establish a settlement house, symbolized Chicago's expansion. Once a fashionable suburb, it had been overrun by newcomers, mainly the poor and immigrants, while former residents, the "older" families, had moved up and out.

The search for the right house, on which the two women embarked in 1889, was no simple matter. Fortunately, Jane Addams had ample funds. Her father had left a large estate, and she had inherited at least \$50,000 in stocks and property. This provided a financial base on which to build. Ellen Starr had less



Even as a young woman, Jane Addams exuded an aura of authority, one that impressed her college classmates, the Chicago Woman's Club, and subsequently, the Hull-House staff. By the 1890s, she was able to describe herself, in matriarchal terms, as the "grandmother" of American settlements. (1896 portrait, Jane Addams Memorial Collection, University of Illinois Library, Chicago)



money but many connections in Chicago society. For almost a decade, she had taught at Miss Kirkland's, a fashionable girls' school, and had gained access to a number of prominent families. Using these contacts and making new ones, the two women canvassed Chicago explaining their project—to businessmen, philanthropists, ministers, missionaries, charity groups, and community leaders. Through their impressive skill at publicity and appeals, they won much approval. Their major coup was to gain the support of the Chicago Woman's Club, an elite institution that admitted just one new member a year to its very select ranks. Club members wielded considerable influence, since their families owned most of Chicago, and these wealthy women were anxious to contribute funds and assistance. Not only did the enthusiasm of the Chicago Woman's Club give the settlement idea the blessing of the city's upper class, but in 1889 the club also chose Jane Addams as its sole new member. By the end of the year, Jane Addams and Ellen Starr had rented a floor in an old building in the nineteenth ward and moved themselves in with all their possessions, including Jane's heirloom silver. The silver was significant. No temporary venture or trial run, the settlement would be a permanent home.

Once an elegant mansion, Hull-House had been built at midcentury by a wealthy real estate man and was now owned by his niece. It was in ill repair when Addams and Starr first saw it, containing, significantly, an office, a warehouse, and a saloon. The house was on South Halsted Street, at the corner of Polk Street, in the center of Chicago's nineteenth ward. Stockyards lay down the street in one direction, shipyards in another. The once suburban neighborhood, with its small wood-frame houses, each now filled with several families, provided a varied and exotic clientele. The ward was filled with immigrant colonies, surrounding Hull-House on all sides. Ten thousand Italians filled the immediate area around Halsted and Polk. To the south lived the Germans, the Russian and Polish Jews, and the Bohemians. Irish and French-Canadian colonies lay to the north. Toward the west were patches of English-speaking nonimmigrants—often "men and women of education and refinement," according to Addams, who had "come to live in a cheaper neighborhood because they lack the power of making money, because of ill health, because of an unfortunate marriage." The nineteenth ward was not only a composite of ethnic groups but also a panorama of urban ills. As a slum, in fact, the ward was almost as promising as London's East End. When Hull-House residents summed it up in 1895, they rated the area east of Halsted as the poorest in Chicago and the district south of Polk as "one of the most openly and flagrantly vicious in the civilized world."

Many of the Jewish and Italian immigrants, and their children, worked in tenement sweatshops, in basements, stables, and shanties, without water supplies or fire escapes. Health hazards abounded. Streets were dirty, lighting was poor, paving was bad, and residences were unsanitary. Religion and education were weak. The nineteenth ward had 50,000 souls, seven churches, two missions, ten parochial schools, no public schools, and most impressive of all, by Addams's count, 255 saloons. "There is no doubt that the saloon is the center of the liveliest political and social life of the ward," Jane Addams stated in 1892, and this

situation  
compet  
politica  
influen  
opened  
Italians  
formid  
array o

T  
a gathe  
a meet  
them i  
social:  
and re  
in Am  
would  
the po  
it wou  
funne  
on the  
would  
work

which  
Adda  
spray  
By th  
week  
main  
Add.  
fusio  
of fe  
from  
food  
settl  
tress  
desc  
thre  
that

Hul  
star  
had  
or s  
me  
vog



situation presented a special challenge. The saloon, a male bastion, was a major competitor to the settlement house. Even more competition was provided by the political machine (city aldermen from the ward were often saloonkeepers) with influence over the entire neighborhood. When Jane Addams and Ellen Starr opened their doors to their neighbors in September 1889, inviting the local Italians in for a cultural evening, they hardly seemed likely to take on such formidable foes. But the founder of Hull-House already had an extraordinary array of goals.

The settlement house was going to provide an alternative to the saloon as a gathering place and to the political machine as a giver of favors. It would offer a meeting place to the neighborhood residents, and recreational activities to lure them in—clubs, classes, social evenings, ethnic celebrations. It would provide social services exceeding those of the ward bosses. It would open a door to culture and refinement by exposing the immigrants of the nineteenth ward to the best in American life, to works of art, fine language, and "beautiful surroundings." It would teach American values—that is, those of the middle and upper classes—to the poor, the working people, the new arrivals, and their children. And finally, it would serve as an intermediary between social classes. The settlement would funnel middle-class efforts and funds into the ward; indeed, its success depended on the contributions and goodwill of well-off Chicagoans. At the same time, it would funnel out an understanding of the "submerged tenth" that the settlement workers were going to acquire.

Even more overwhelming than this array of goals was the rapidity with which Hull-House achieved success. Unable to function as a daughter, Jane Addams excelled as an administrator. Within only a few years, the settlement sprawled all over the Hull-House mansion with an endless gamut of activities. By the early 1890s, 1,000 people of the ward attended Hull-House programs each week, over 90 volunteers contributed their efforts, and a group of "residents," mainly young women, had established themselves in the expanding house with Addams and Starr. For the residents, the settlement was not only an innovative fusion of private life and vocation but an interesting change from familiar types of female benevolence. Earlier generations of charitable women had emerged from their own homes to "visit" the poor—armed with uplift, prayers, advice, food baskets, cast-off clothing, religious tracts, and various donations. In the settlement house, however, the visited became the visitors, and their benefactresses became the hosts. When Jane Addams, who was often called on to describe the new institution, assessed the inroads it had made by 1892, a mere three years after it had been founded, she set forth a model of settlement work that had already inspired imitators in Chicago and in other cities.

Reflecting both the needs of the ward and the talents of the residents, the Hull-House program was an amalgam of clubs, classes, and services that constantly expanded, as did the house itself; it absorbed a house next door, which had once been a saloon. The saloon was transformed into a gymnasium. The forty or so programs involved, overwhelmingly, women and children, the most numerous of the visitors. First, there was a kindergarten and a day nursery, the latest vogue of social service, which soon had an enormous waiting list. Then there was



a succession of youth clubs catering to every age and interest, from afterschool clubs for games, stories, gymnastics, sewing, or singing, to the Young Citizens club for older boys or the Hull-House Columbian Guards. Teenagers belonged to youth clubs, which provided literary evenings followed by a social hour. Local mothers learned about nutrition and household management at special classes or joined the more selective Hull-House Woman's Club, which involved "the most able women in the neighborhood" and met weekly, as did its elite model, the Chicago Woman's Club. There was an even larger men's club, but it met only once a month. Throughout the day and night, the gymnasium and the drawing room were used for club meetings and other functions, and in the evening, a new barrage of adult programs was available to those who worked during the day. The settlement organized a chorus, a concert program, a debate club, university extension classes, an art gallery, a reading room, and the Working People's Social Science Club, where, as Addams described it, political theories could be uncorked and deodorized before they exploded. From the outset, Hull-House was a bustling center of activity.

In addition to the clubs, each of which elected officers and required dues, Hull-House immediately threw its energies into a wide variety of community services, ferreting out the neighborhood's needs and rivaling the ward bosses in meeting them. The settlement, said Addams, served as an "information and interpretation bureau" for newly arrived immigrants and sometimes as a labor bureau, finding jobs for the unemployed. It channeled the services of outside professionals—ministers, priests, doctors—into the community and established a visiting nurse service. It served as a middleman between nineteenth ward denizens and city institutions—hospitals, asylums, charity groups, and county agencies. It arranged for ambulances, relief workers, and "fresh air" summers for children. It ran a public bath facility, a diet kitchen for invalids, a coffeehouse for profit, and a cooperative boardinghouse, the Jane Club, for working girls. It provided a meeting place for women's unions—bookbinders, shoemakers, shirt-makers, and cloakmakers. It worked as a pressure group on the ward's behalf, first by sending out its own corps of residents to report on poor sanitary conditions and then by campaigning for city services, even challenging the leading ward politician for authority over garbage collection. "One function of the settlement to its neighborhood," said Jane Addams in 1892, "somewhat resembled that of the big brother whose mere presence in the playground protected the little ones from bullies." No longer the protected youngest child, Jane Addams had found a far more appealing role.

If Hull-House quickly succeeded in setting an astonishing pace of activity, it also provided Jane Addams with the sense of exhilaration and community that had been missing since her days at Rockford. On a personal level, especially, the settlement was the ultimate fusion of solutions. It offered home, work, family, friends, activity, and mission, all in one. It enabled Jane Addams to establish a home for herself that insulated her forever from a lifetime of family obligations. It was a home over which she had complete control, one in which she took the place of both John Addams and Anna Haldeman Addams. It was also a home that in many ways re-created the luminous days at Rockford, full of challenge

The Found

and enth  
core, wa  
had mis:By  
six mont  
were ust  
wanted  
a sort o  
dormito  
dams at  
member  
from the  
only a fa  
was a c  
Rockfor  
settleme  
fessiona  
than preA model  
family of  
the comm  
dining ro  
Longtime  
Illinois Libra



and enthusiasm, significance and sorority. And at the center of that life, at its vital core, was a world of women not unlike the world of college—a world that Jane had missed since 1881.

By 1895 there were twenty residents, and of those who had been there over six months, fifteen were women and two were men. The young women residents were usually college graduates and typically women from well-off families, who wanted to put their culture and education to use. Most important, they formed a sort of family, much as Jane's college class had done. Residents lived in a dormitory-like arrangement and ate in a common dining room, with Jane Addams at the head of the table, dishing out soup for a growing contingent of family members. She also entertained a coterie of admirers and distinguished guests—from the University of Chicago, other settlements, eastern cities, and abroad. Not only a family, Hull-House quickly became something of a salon. But above all, it was a community dominated by educated women who, like the students at Rockford, established their own cooperative style and communal identity. Even settlement terminology, like that of the college, was distinctive; it was quasi-professional and quasi-familial. The residents, including the "head resident" (rather than president or director), addressed one another often as "dear sister." The

A model settlement, Hull-House was also a pioneer in communal living. The large family of residents, who usually lived in upstairs apartments, convened at meal time in the common dining room. This tradition continued for decades. Below, the Hull-House dining room around 1930. Jane Addams is seated at the head of the middle table. Longtime associate Alice Hamilton is to her right. (*Jane Addams Memorial Collection, University of Illinois Library, Chicago*)





head resident was often called "Lady Jane," although some of her intimates began to call her, in corporate fashion, "J.A."

As in any family, the founding members were most important. The residents who arrived in the first few years formed an inner circle, a Hull-House network, forever identified with Jane Addams and the Chicago settlement. For some of these college-educated, professional women, settlement residency was a training ground for other types of public service. But even after they moved on, Hull-House remained their base of operations. All of the inner circle, moreover, had experiences in some way akin to that of Jane Addams. Julia Lathrop, whose mother was a Rockford graduate, had gone to the school herself briefly before attending Vassar. Arriving at Hull-House the year it was founded, Lathrop remained at the settlement for twenty years and later became the first head of the federal Children's Bureau. Florence Kelley, daughter of a Republican politician, was a Cornell graduate. She joined Hull-House in 1891 and left in 1898 to become head of the National Consumers' League and prominent throughout progressive reform. Alice Hamilton, who went to medical school at the University of Michigan and Johns Hopkins, founded the field of industrial medicine and eventually taught it at Harvard. Arriving at Hull-House in 1897, she remained in the settlement for over a decade. Early in the twentieth century, finally, the inner circle was enlarged by Grace and Edith Abbott, whose mother had gone to Rockford. Both had been graduate students at the University of Chicago. Edith Abbott later taught there, while Grace Abbott became head of the Immigrants' Protective League and later followed Julia Lathrop to the Children's Bureau. By the second decade of the twentieth century, Hull-House had its own network of distinguished alumnae.

Like the inner circle, some Hull-House residents stayed on for extended terms. Others, like most settlement workers elsewhere, stayed for shorter ones. But their ranks kept expanding at an almost unbelievable pace. By the early 1900s, there were up to seventy residents. Those who left were quickly replaced by an unending supply of able young women (and some men), well-off and well educated. Financial means was almost a vital prerequisite. Residents were not only unsalaried but had to pay for their room and board. There were exceptions, of course, such as Ellen Starr, who had always been self-supporting. Starr's Hull-House work was funded by a special donation. But Ellen Starr's career was a special case in another way as well.

Her role as cofounder quickly faded into the background, since Jane Addams was clearly the pivotal personality of the settlement as well as its major fund-raiser. Moreover, once the support and approval Starr provided for Addams in the early days were replaced by those of the Hull-House community and outside admirers (and this was fairly soon, since Addams's reputation expanded with astonishing speed), Ellen Starr was replaced in her role as Addams's closest friend and favored colleague by a wealthy younger woman. In 1890, twenty-year-old Mary Rozet Smith, a graduate of Miss Kirkland's, where Ellen Starr had taught, arrived at Hull-House to supervise the kindergarten. Within five years, Mary Rozet Smith became Jane Addams's constant companion and treasured intimate. Devoted to Addams, Mary Smith lived with her for forty years, making

many donations to it  
was dreadfully and am  
separated. Ellen Starr be  
though she continued t  
with Jane Addams  
alliance of both the Hu  
as head of much of a le  
in her public person  
achieved as much of a le  
coined out a unique ni  
ever-widening circles."  
American settlements."  
old. As rapidly as Hull-H  
buildings, so did Jane A  
ment woman and then  
an Atlanta newspaper in  
embodying public-spirite  
woman and publicity ag  
ment's success depended  
participation of the poor,  
audiences and women's g  
women.

In this she was inorc  
When Culver, who owned  
the area. Piece by piece at  
another was Louise Bow  
Woman's Club in 1893 and  
Soliciting funds and  
served as a crucial link  
workers, to say nothing of a  
entirely, the settlement ho  
woman's vocation, and J.  
was recognized not on  
America's leading  
ness of Chicago," "The  
of the Land."

Addams's triumph  
the two. By 1911  
ings and adjuncts, co  
now number  
but also filled  
ings, working co  
tant pressure gr  
protective laws, co  
Hull-House were  
1900 were a



many donations to the settlement and serving on its board of trustees. "I miss you dreadfully and am yours 'till death," Jane Addams wrote when they were separated. Ellen Starr became radicalized and an activist in the labor movement, though she continued to live in Hull-House for most of her life as well. Any alliance with Jane Addams seemed to be a permanent one. Addams, meanwhile, as head of both the Hull-House family and a national settlement movement, achieved as much of a leadership role as her father ever had.

In her public persona, beyond the Hull-House family, Jane Addams quickly carved out a unique niche in American life and extended her influence in ever-widening circles. "I find that I am considered quite the grandmother of American settlements," she commented in 1893, when only thirty-three years old. As rapidly as Hull-House programs filled up the Hull mansion and adjacent buildings, so did Jane Addams's reputation blossom, first as Chicago's most eminent woman and then as a national model of benevolence. Jane Addams, said an Atlanta newspaper in 1908, was "synonymous with all that is charitable, ennobling, public-spirited, and good." Addams's skill as Hull-House spokeswoman and publicity agent greatly enhanced her reputation. Since the settlement's success depended as much on the contributions of the rich as on the participation of the poor, Addams spoke continually at public forums, to college audiences and women's groups, and cajoled benefactors, most of them wealthy women.

In this she was inordinately successful. One big donor, for instance, was Helen Culver, who owned the Hull-House building and much of the surrounding area. Piece by piece and year by year, she gave it over to the settlement. Another was Louise Bowen, a rich Chicagoan who joined the Hull-House Woman's Club in 1893 and began to finance adjoining buildings for a variety of clubs. Soliciting funds and dispensing a philosophy of settlement, Jane Addams served as a crucial link between the settlement movement and its wealthy backers, to say nothing of an admiring public. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the settlement house had become an urban fixture, settlement work a woman's vocation, and Jane Addams its leading practitioner. Soon she was widely recognized not only as the matriarch of the settlement movement but also as America's leading woman citizen. Reporters referred to her as "The Lady Abbess of Chicago," "The Only Saint America Has Produced," and "The First Lady of the Land."

Addams's triumph was both institutional and personal; it was hard to separate the two. By 1910, Hull-House had expanded into a huge complex of buildings and adjuncts, covering an entire city block. Nationally, settlements had multiplied, now numbering in the hundreds. Their residents not only exerted local clout but also filled the front ranks in progressive reform. Investigating sweatshops, working conditions, and public school systems, they had become an important pressure group for industrial safety laws, welfare laws, child labor laws, protective laws, compulsory education, and juvenile courts. Jane Addams and Hull-House were at the center of the crusade. At the peak of her influence, between 1900 and World War I, Addams won innumerable honorary degrees, published an inspirational autobiography, reached a national audience through



the big-circulation magazines, served as a leader of women's organizations, and threw her weight into the woman suffrage campaign. She attained the pinnacle of her political success in 1912, when she seconded the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt for President at the Progressive party convention and was greeted by a torrent of cheers and applause. Throughout the progressive era, Jane Addams was a living link between past and present, embodying the virtues of Victorian womanhood while simultaneously providing a model of female leadership in public life.

As a philosopher of settlement, too, Addams performed a unique function. After 1895, when a board of trustees began to supervise Hull-House affairs, Addams devoted more and more time to her public role, as resident intellectual and reformer. Settlement workers were not just philanthropists, as she took great pains to prove, but also social scientists, bent on understanding and explaining the problems that separated class from class or generation from generation. In her role as explicator, Addams adopted a calm, studious, almost ministerial tone, supporting her generalizations with little parables from the settlement experience. Her audience would understand the great divide separating the "submerged tenth" from the middle class and would learn, as she had, why homes in the slums were rarely spotless and neat, why the working girl spent most of her income on clothes, or even why the ward boss, the arch enemy of Hull-House, was able to win the gratitude of his constituents. Addams's writings, tolerant and unsentimental, were peopled with an endless cast of characters—with the German washer-woman, who carried water up and down two flights of stairs; with her daughters who had "fallen victim to the vice of the city"; with the working man who regarded his children as his "savings bank" because of the money they could earn. Her readers met the old woman who had become an opium addict; the local Italians, "with their petty lawsuits, with their incorrigible boys, with their hospital cases, with their aspirations for American clothes"; and the over-worked girls who were attracted to dance halls, streaming along the Chicago streets, with "the self-conscious walk, the giggling speech, the preposterous clothing."

But Jane Addams was more than a mediator between social classes. She also took on the role of mediator between generations. As agile as a minister at combining personal anecdotes with discussions of general problems, Jane Addams could never ignore her own experience. And she could never forget the overwhelming crisis she had gone through in the 1880s, the conflict between her own vague ambitions and her family's demand that she remain a "possession." By the 1890s, she was already transforming her personal experience into a common experience—one shared, she contended, by a whole generation of young women. The "subjective" need for the social settlement, Addams told her national audience, was just as valid as the city's need. It rescued young women from the "family claim" and provided entrée to a "larger life."

By 1900, few of the Addamses were in a position to grasp the import of Jane's experience. During the 1890s, while Hull-House thrived and stepmother Anna aged, some of Jane's siblings died or disintegrated. Sister Mary, whose husband had turned out to be a failure, died in 1894. Jane Addams contributed



to the support of Mary's children. Stepbrother Harry Haldeman and sister Alice had never appreciated Jane's career. Harry disliked Hull-House, and Alice, who had always thought Jane usurped more than her share of attention, felt she should contribute more to family support. George Haldeman had had a nervous breakdown shortly after Hull-House was founded. Brother Weber Addams, also Addams was the psychic survivor of a sinking ship. But the conflict between the daughter and the family—the impossible problem that had used up her twenties—was not, she insisted, solely a personal problem. Rather, it was a social problem. One nub of the problem was that sons were treated as individuals whereas daughters were viewed only as family members. Another was that colleges fostered women's individualism but society gave them nothing to do with it. Left out in limbo, the college woman was unsuited to daughterhood but unprepared for life.

"From babyhood the altruistic tendencies of . . . daughters are cultivated," Addams wrote. "They are taught to be self-forgetting and self-sacrificing, to consider the good of the whole before the good of the Ego. But when all this information and culture show results, when the daughter comes home from college and begins to recognise her social claim to the 'submerged tenth,' and to evince a disposition to fulfill it, the family claim is strenuously asserted." While Addams's writings were usually upbeat, hinting that all problems could be resolved by compromise and compassion, her thoughts about the returning daughter were singularly depressive. Enclosed by the family claim, the daughter was likely to be "restless and miserable," "consumed by vain regrets and desires." "I have seen young girls suffer and grow sensibly lowered in vitality in the first years after they leave school," Addams wrote. The young woman "finds 'life' so different from what she expected it to be. She is besotted with innocent little ambitions, and does not understand this apparent waste of herself, this elaborate preparation, if no work is provided for her."

The son was in a different position, since he was automatically considered a "citizen" and expected to make his way in the world. "The family claim is urged much less strenuously in his case," said Addams, "and as a matter of authority, it ceases gradually to be made at all." Once women were given a college education, however, the "family assumption" about their roles and obligations, she contended, should be considered as invalid as it was for men. The college, in fact, was several steps ahead of both family and society. "Modern education recognises women quite apart from family or society claims and gives her the training which for many years has been deemed successful for highly developing a man's individuality and freeing his powers for independent actions."

Whether this type of education was appropriate for women was a moot point, however. In Addams's view, it raised women above the family claim but did not prepare them for the social claim. The college fostered women's individualism and nurtured their ambitions. But "it trained women almost exclusively for intellectual accumulation; and it did not provide a definite outlet for this training." In her autobiography in 1910, Addams wrote:



I gradually reached a conviction that the first generation of college women had taken their learning too quickly, had departed too suddenly from the active, emotional life led by grandmothers and great-grandmothers; that the contemporary education of young women had developed too exclusively the power of acquiring knowledge and of merely receiving impressions; that somewhere in the process of "being educated" they had lost that simple and almost automatic response to the human appeal.

By the turn of the century, 85,000 young women attended college, but their higher education, Addams felt, tended to bury them "beneath mere mental accumulation" without preparing them "in the line of action." Few would be able, as she had done, to transform a personal problem into a public solution.

Jane Addams ex-  
rian virtues with  
discarded an old  
and transformed  
emulated. Like A  
and mission. Vig  
beyond the fam  
decades of the 1  
shape.

The New  
had antecedent  
class, she was u  
or professional  
college graduat  
to be single tha  
American histo  
might be emple  
women, mainly  
married, she m  
rather than live  
salaried work a  
been reshaped,

By the tu  
productive fun  
consumption, fi  
increasingly st  
help. R.