

Many people who lived in America's cities during the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds were poor and lived under difficult conditions. The cities were overcrowded. Apartments were tiny and crammed with people. The sanitary conditions were very bad (Leuzzi 67).

Beginning in the 1820s a new wave of immigrants came to America. More than five million Europeans arrived by 1860, most settling in cities. Many poor farmers also moved to the cities looking for work. By the 1900s over forty percent of Americans lived in cities (Leuzzi 19).

Over-crowdedness and poor sanitary conditions created putrid rat infested cities ("People and Events"). People got sick. Many babies and children died ("Jane Addams").

In order to combat the poor living conditions for the poor people, in 1889 Jane Addams started the first settlement house in Chicago known as Hull House ("People and Events"). Hull House provided nursing care, child care, clubs, and a meeting place for unions. Hull House was a place for the poor to see art, listen to music, and go to the theater ("Jane Addams" 4). Hull House provided educational opportunities for both children and adults (Whitescarver).

Hull House was successful in making life better for the immigrants and poor people. Inspired by Hull House over four hundred other settlement houses sprang up throughout cities in the United States before World War I ("Jane Addams" 4). Hull House shaped the modern social Work movement in America (Frank 36).