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"Model and patriarch" of southern settlements :  
neighborhood house in Louisville, Kentucky,  
1896-1939.

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“MODEL AND PATRIARCH” OF SOUTHERN SETTLEMENTS:  
NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, 1896-1939

By

Kalie Ann Gipson  
B.A., Bellarmine University, 2014

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts  
in History

Department of History  
University of Louisville  
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A Thesis Approved on

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## ABSTRACT

### “MODEL AND PATRIARCH” OF SOUTHERN SETTLEMENTS: NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, 1896-1939

Kalie Gipson

April 12, 2019

This thesis explores the workings of Neighborhood House, a social settlement in Louisville, Kentucky, from 1896 to 1939. It argues that Neighborhood House represented a typical settlement house that operated during the Progressive Era in the United States. From its beginnings under its founder, Archibald A. Hill, through the tenure of Frances Ingram, Neighborhood House served as an Americanizing institution for urban, European immigrants in Louisville by offering clubs and classes to both immigrant children and adults. Neighborhood House residents also mitigated between immigrant children and parents, pushed for child labor reform, and battled vice in the area. Furthermore, this thesis analyzes the shortcomings of both Neighborhood House and the social settlement movement at large. Settlement leaders, including Ingram, operated under the guise of class superiority, failed to incorporate African-Americans in their work, and created a new bureaucracy in which poor urban immigrants became entrenched.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

When Frances MacGregor Ingram first opened the door to Neighborhood House as its head resident one 1905 morning, she began a new chapter in the House's story and history. Transforming Neighborhood House beyond what Archibald A. Hill could have possibly imagined when he converted an old saloon building into a club room in 1896, Ingram achieved the success at Neighborhood House that few Progressive Era southern settlement houses could claim. Over Ingram's thirty-four-year tenure as head resident, Neighborhood House evolved from an entity meant to meet the needs of urban immigrants to a bastion of social work that involved itself in most aspects of its neighbors' lives. Ingram herself crusaded against child labor and pushed an Americanization program at Neighborhood House that earned her such nicknames as "mother to all Italians" and "the Jane Addams of Louisville."<sup>1</sup>

Settlements like Neighborhood House sprang up in urban cities across the United States throughout the Progress Era as an idealistic middle-class response to mass immigration and widespread urban poverty. The Progressive Era remains a troublesome period for historians to master. From the motivations that spurred the era's main players, to the time period the era encapsulated, historians have reached few definite conclusions.

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<sup>1</sup> The Courier-Journal, June 12, 1938, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 3, and Interview by Miss Laurena Eaton for Senior High School Social Studies Program, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society, 1949.

As the American population reeled from rapid industrialization and urbanization at the turn of the century, several developing problems demanded the country's attention. The breakdown of rural life as both native-born Americans and immigrants flocked to the cities, the mass poverty experienced by industrial laborers, the rise of giant corporations, and rampant political corruption led to social and economic anxiety for Americans trying to make sense of their new world and a scrambling for solutions to its problems. Efforts to label the men and women who participated in the wave of reform that characterized the Progressive Era will necessarily exclude certain people who would have labeled themselves as progressive. This lack of uniformity is not to suggest that an archetypal progressive did not exist. The typical progressive was white, protestant, urban, and middle-class. An increase in educational opportunities for white women in the decades leading up to the twentieth century opened doors for their heavy involvement in the movement as well. The variety of reforms for which they campaigned, the ranging results they achieved, and their multifaceted motivations gave rise to a large body of literature that tackles the progressives, their movement, and their reforms with often competing arguments and conclusions.

In order to understand the workings of Neighborhood House, it is important to know how previous historians have interpreted and struggled with understanding the Progressive Era. Even though the progressive movement enjoyed a broad base of support, historians have offered various interpretations of its origins and provided their ideas and arguments about its main proponents. In 1955, Richard Hofstadter argued for a "status revolution" that found middle-class men feeling anxious over their loss of relative power and wealth in his *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR*. As rapid

industrialization gave rise to a new class of millionaires whose wealth and power dwarfed those of the middle-class, they sought to reassert their status and exert their control. These men became progressives “not because of economic deprivations but primarily because they were victims of an upheaval in status that took place in the United States during the closing decades of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century.”<sup>2</sup>

Hofstadter contended that professionals and intellectuals of the era threw their weight behind progressivism, sharing common embarrassment and grievances against the rising plutocracy.<sup>3</sup> Focusing on the clergy, professors, and lawyers, Hofstadter examined the alienation felt by each group and the ways they contributed to the movement. The clergy pushed the Social Gospel to “restore through secular leadership some of the spiritual influence and authority and social prestige that clergymen had lost.”<sup>4</sup> A growing minority of academic men expressed discontent at the members of the plutocracy who controlled them through trustee boards, and the push for reform required the services of those trained in the social sciences. Lawyers became disillusioned with the business-like direction of the profession as corporations took over. These professionals moved away from their predecessors’ love of laissez faire and advocated state intervention to implement their reforms.<sup>5</sup>

Distinguished historian Robert H. Wiebe found the roots of progressivism inside the middle-class as well, but provided an alternative take on their motivations in *The*

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 135.

<sup>3</sup> Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, 148-149.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-157.

*Search for Order: 1877-1920*, published in 1967. Whereas Hofstadter argued for an anxious middle-class pushing back against their changing status, Wiebe contended that the breakdown of the “island communities” that formed the United States in the nineteenth century led to an emergent middle-class who established order through bureaucratic means.<sup>6</sup> This emergent middle-class accepted the new kind of world that emerged from the ashes of the island communities, and wanted to mold this new world to their benefit. In essence, the Progressive Era encompassed both a breaking down of previous ways of life and a building up of a new one. Wiebe claimed that “a patchwork government could no longer manage the range of urban problems with the expertise and economy that articulate citizens now believed they must have.”<sup>7</sup>

Wiebe contended that these reformers fell short of their goal of reordering government, but still accomplished much in almost every major city. Some reformers tackled municipal problems, some entered the slums, and others focused on the child to ensure future progress. As their programs relied on government administration, reformers clamored to fill expanding government positions with experts. The progressives provided the main thrust in the “revolution that fundamentally altered the structure of politics and government early in the twentieth century.”<sup>8</sup>

Instead of locating progressivism in one core group of actors motivated by status or a search for order, Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick approached the progressive movement in a broad manner in *Progressivism*. Noting the varied and

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<sup>6</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), xiii-xiv.

<sup>7</sup> Wiebe, *The Search for Order*, 167.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

contradictory aims of the progressives, Link and McCormick claimed that the main goal of the progressive movement was social stability. Whether they achieved this social stability through social justice or through social control, the progressives “made the first comprehensive efforts to grapple with the ills of a modern urban-industrial society.”<sup>9</sup> Link and McCormick acknowledged the limitations of narrowing down the core group of progressives. Instead, the historians posited that progressivism gripped many different groups of Americans, all of whom claimed their own central importance in the movement.

To illustrate the movement’s broad nature, Link and McCormick examined individual reforms and their supporters, rationales, and results, as well as the common features that shaped different reform campaigns. Although reformers accepted the industrial society around them, they worked to ameliorate its worst effects. This work necessitated an increase in government power, as it required an intervention into economic and social affairs. Some reformers pushed their vision of reform as informed by their education in the social sciences while others were motivated by the Social Gospel. Although reformers hoped to lessen the worst effects of the new urban-industrial world, Link and McCormick stressed the dual goals of social justice and social control.<sup>10</sup> Motivations behind such social reforms also included the desire of newly-trained professionals to apply their skills and services to social problems and the desire of native-born Americans to control the masses of immigrants and African-Americans.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism*, The American History Series (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Link and McCormick, *Progressivism*, 69.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

Stanley P. Caine offered his take on the beginning of progressivism in “The Origins of Progressivism.” Caine contended that “progressivism began with the breaking of chains of intellectual and religious thought that bound Americans in the late nineteenth century to precepts and assumptions that militated against reform.”<sup>12</sup> Beginning his assessment with Henry George, whose book *Progress and Poverty* (1879) ruminated on the idea of the nation becoming wealthier while also experiencing an increase in poverty, Caine argued that the most important aspect of George’s work was the notion that justice and harmony could be achieved without the end of capitalism. Suffused throughout *Progress and Poverty* was George’s insistence on returning to God to complete this work, a notion that inspired prominent Protestants of the time who were troubled by the new urban, industrial conditions of turn-of-the-century America. Thus, the Social Gospel movement took shape, which combined social justice with Christianity. The idea of Social Christianity influenced middle-class men and women attending prominent universities, and professors of the social sciences searched for solutions to the social problems that churches identified. Underscoring its importance, Caine stated that the Social Gospel movement “was a major source of the righteous indignation that made progressivism in its deepest sense a moral movement.”<sup>13</sup>

These works written about the Progressive Era deal almost exclusively with the United States, but as Daniel T. Rodgers argued in his 1998 book, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, many of the progressives who characterized the movement engaged in a flow of ideas with the greater western world. Progressivism

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<sup>12</sup> Stanley P. Caine, “The Origins of Progressivism,” in *The Progressive Era*, ed. Lewis L. Gould (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1974), 11.

<sup>13</sup> Caine, “The Origins of Progressivism,” 14.

itself as defined during this era existed as a larger western phenomenon in response to the rapid industrialization that occurred throughout the west. Stating that *Atlantic Crossings* was the story of the brokers who spanned the Atlantic connection, Rodgers contended that these brokers shaped the Progressive Era more than historians have understood. These brokers worked against accepted ideas about the validity of imported social policies to forge institutional connections with industrializing countries across the Atlantic. Though their main competition – and models – were Britain and Germany, Rodgers included the region from Berlin to San Francisco, which he called the North Atlantic Economy, in the brokers' connection. The social politics that dominated the period originated in this world between Europe and America.<sup>14</sup>

Covering such policies and ideas like laissez-faire economics, city planning, worker's insurance and compensation, and war collectivism during World War I, Rodgers traced the evolution of policies as they traveled across the Atlantic progressive connection. Though some ideas translated to the United States well and others sank in mid-passage, most underwent an American transformation that exemplified the political and social differences between the United States and Europe. Rodgers claimed that the United States often lagged behind reformist efforts in Europe, though the advent of Fordism and President Franklin Roosevelt's willingness to experiment during the New Deal reversed this trend.<sup>15</sup> As American reformers grafted European social policies onto the American landscape, the more collectivist European ideas clashed with individualistic-minded American ideals.

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 413.

Rodgers found the culmination of this Atlantic progressive connection in the New Deal. Claiming that the Social Security Act of 1935 exemplified the connection, Rodgers noted how reformers tried to import different facets of social insurance for twenty years before Roosevelt's administration drafted social security legislation. Social Security benefitted from the progressive connection and the crisis that spurred its formulation, as the institutionalization of the knowledge of European social insurance policies helped bolster its passage when the country began to understand the limitations of work relief programs. Rodgers described the passing of Social Security, along with the New Deal in its entirety, as the "cosmopolitan progressives' moment."<sup>16</sup>

It serves as a testament to the sweeping nature of reform during the Progressive Era that both major political parties boasted progressive presidents. John Milton Cooper, Jr., explored the similarities and differences between the two progressive presidents in *The Warrior and the Priest: Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson*. Using the analogy of Friedrich Nietzsche's warrior and priest and the rivalry between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton for comparison, Cooper explained how Roosevelt and Wilson served as each other's political foils. Both men reinvigorated the presidential office and reshaped the contours of political life, while expanding public dramatization and party leadership of the office during their time as president.<sup>17</sup> Cooper argued that Roosevelt and Wilson are "the principal architects of modern American politics."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 428-429, 442-443, 446.

<sup>17</sup> John Milton Cooper, Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), xi-xii.

<sup>18</sup> Cooper, Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest*, 361.



Cooper's biography covered both men's childhoods until their deaths. Both Roosevelt and Wilson overcame childhood handicaps that spurred their actions as adults. An infatuation with war shaped Roosevelt's early years, while religion shaped Wilson's. Roosevelt became a Harvard-trained historian with a passion for politics, while Wilson became president of Princeton College. Cooper claimed that the years before the two men's presidential terms shaped their eventual presidential politics. Roosevelt upheld the existing social order and protected the aristocracy to which he belonged, but understood the criticisms that those of the lower classes raised against the system and believed in a broad sense of democracy. Wilson wrote about the diffusion of power in the United States and the malleable nature of the Constitution. Both men agreed on trust regulation, currency, tariffs, and the new imperialist nature of United States foreign politics.<sup>19</sup>

As Cooper contended, the two men shared such similar progressive stances that they played up their differences and often misrepresented each other during the 1912 presidential campaign.<sup>20</sup> As Wilson won the presidency over Republican nominee William Howard Taft and Roosevelt's third party, the Bull Moose (Progressive) Party, he enacted most of the Progressive Party's platform. However, the two men's views diverged in two significant ways: the issue of trusts and the direction of leadership. Roosevelt believed that large corporations achieved their stature through efficient competition, that economic conditions represented progress, and that large corporations were permanent fixtures in the United States. Claiming that the problem was not the size of the corporations, Roosevelt advocated for a paternalistic government that supervised

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 3, 15, 41, 61.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 208-209.

the economy for national strength and social harmony. Wilson believed in the opposite of Roosevelt's three points about trusts and economic conditions. Believing that unregulated competition stifled competition, Wilson advocated for government regulation over such competition. To Wilson, reform meant to revitalize the economy through government actions that would open the market to new entrants. Whereas Roosevelt wanted to "inspire" people to be better than they were, Wilson sought to "educate" them. Wilson wanted to help people recognize their own best interests and then use that recognition to fuel their pursuits. While Roosevelt envisioned a government full of leaders who uplifted and unified citizens under high national ideals, Wilson wished for the people's interests to be represented by leaders who listened to them.<sup>21</sup> These differences in Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" and Wilson's "New Freedom" illustrate Cooper's argument that the lines of Roosevelt's realism and Wilson's idealism were often blurrier than historians thought. Furthermore, Cooper connected Wilson's fears of government paternalism and economic dependence to the modern welfare state.

Since educational opportunities expanded for women in the years leading up to the Progressive Era, many of these women looked to apply their skills and their time to an important cause. The crowded urban cities provided fertile ground for these women to help immigrants by collecting statistics and data to inform policy, providing education and Americanization classes, and establishing Kindergarten and day centers for children. Thus, the settlement house constituted an important and prominent structure of the Progressive Era. Allen F. Davis's classic work on settlement houses, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914*, explored the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 212-214.

impact of these houses in Chicago, New York, and Boston. Though Davis stated that his study was one “of a group of idealists,” he argued that the settlement workers in those urban cities took the initiative of reform in the Progressive Era.<sup>22</sup> Davis’s work laid out their reforms in a topical order to illustrate how their reforms took shape from the neighborhoods in which they worked to the country at large. Though Davis called them idealists, who at times believed solutions to America’s problems could be found after collecting enough statistics, he also considered them realists who understood the nature of the American political system. Davis contended that settlement workers helped enlarge the role of social welfare from the municipal level to the national level.<sup>23</sup>

Davis traced the settlement workers’ reforms and impact on education, city planning, and city politics, and examined their relationships with immigrants, African-Americans, women, and laborers. Many of the settlement workers possessed a teaching or otherwise educational background and believed in the value of education as a method of social reform. Settlement workers experimented with a variety of educational techniques, from art exhibits to providing kindergartens and vocational training. Davis noted the importance of the settlement house as a model for public schools to follow. When it came to their relationships with immigrants and African-Americans, Davis highlighted the workers’ ideal of seeking opportunity for these groups and their sometimes bigoted or condescending attitudes toward them. Workers found it difficult to bridge the gap between their Anglo-American, middle-class background and the poverty-stricken, culturally-alien backgrounds of immigrants and African Americans. These

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<sup>22</sup> Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), xi.

<sup>23</sup> Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, xii-xiii.

neighborhood residents also distrusted the newcomers who wanted to transform their neighborhoods.<sup>24</sup>

While Davis ended his study with the effects of World War I on settlement houses, its workers, and the overall spirit of settlement work, Judith Trolander examined the trajectory of settlement houses past the 1920's in *Settlement Houses and the Great Depression*. Trolander focused on the changes that occurred to the settlement movement as the nation moved into the New Deal, a period Trolander called "the second major reform period of the twentieth century."<sup>25</sup> Focusing on the decline of the settlement house as a major factor in social reform even as the nation entered a new reform period, Trolander began her work with the hypothesis that settlement houses during this time period possessed conservative social outlooks. However, as her research progressed, she discovered that the entire settlement movement could not be characterized as conservative. As she discovered varying social attitudes in cities like New York and Chicago, she refined her question to explore why such a range of social outlooks existed across cities. Trolander found that the demise of the settlement house coincided with the rise of the Community Chest.<sup>26</sup>

As the Progressive Era waned, so did the zest for settlement houses and the personalities that kept them running. This downward slide produced less funding for settlement houses, as most houses outside of major cities like Chicago and New York lost their financial independence. Trolander traced the funds that kept settlement houses

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 40-58.

<sup>25</sup> Judith Ann Trolander, *Settlement Houses and the Great Depression* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 9.

<sup>26</sup> Trolander, *Settlement Houses and the Great Depression*, 16.

operating and connected them to the types of activities they sponsored. When the settlement house's funding came from the community chest, it possessed a more conservative social outlook. Trolander noted that settlement houses took three different approaches while offering their services: the Hoover approach, the New Deal approach, and the radical approach. The Hoover approach meant that settlement houses became a conduit through which needy neighborhood residents could receive relief. Under the New Deal approach, various settlement workers advocated for and worked within federal relief programs. Houses in New York and Chicago favored more radical approaches while working with labor unions, as they relied on their own financial independence instead of private funding.<sup>27</sup>

While Davis and Trolander explored the impact of major settlement houses and the settlement movement's eventual decline, Rivka Shpak Lissak analyzed the motivations behind Jane Addams's Hull House in *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890-1919*. Lissak's work examined the extent of Addams's belief in cultural pluralism and how those beliefs translated to her work at Hull House. Believing that the "Liberal Progressives" of Hull House disfavored cultural pluralism, Lissak argued that they instead worked towards the immigrant's delayed assimilation into American life and culture.

To make her point, Lissak explored views shared by Addams and others involved with Hull House on nationalism, cultural pluralism, and assimilation, and their impact on surrounding Greek, Jewish, and German ethnic communities. Lissak claimed that Addams "interpreted the settlement idea as the response of men and women drawn from

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 64-106.

the enlightened upper middle class, and representatives of the middle class, to the crisis of American society.”<sup>28</sup> The settlement spirit implied that the upper-middle-class needed to lead, while the lower-class needed to be led. Instead of challenging the existing social order between classes, this idea continued it.<sup>29</sup> When it came to new immigrants from Greek, German, and Jewish communities, Addams and Hull House affiliates wanted to loosen their cultural ties and dissolve their communities to preserve American democracy.<sup>30</sup> In fact, Lissak claimed that Hull House held little sway over these communities, with the Jewish community being the most resistant to settlement work. Most immigrant leaders desired to keep their ethnic identity and fought for its preservation.<sup>31</sup>

While Davis examined the political actions performed by settlement leaders in major cities, Trolander traced the changes to settlement work in the 1930’s, and Lissak challenged the “saintly” view of Jane Addams and her Hull House circle, Mina Carson delved into the cultural origins of the settlement idea and how its cultural construction changed over time. In *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930*, Carson argued that settlement workers in the United States borrowed cultural values from Victorian England while promoting social and economic research to build an effective social welfare platform. Under this new platform, trained professionals offered special services in a technocratic society.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Rivka Shpak Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890-1919* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 19.

<sup>29</sup> Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives*, 20, 22.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>32</sup> Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8.

Carson described how the impulse behind settlement houses evolved from the Social Christianity movement of the late nineteenth century. Appealing to an educated urban audience, the movement promoted the idea that ethics constituted the core of religion.<sup>33</sup> Such thinking about the Social Gospel wedded with the surge in social sciences at prominent universities. Carson stated that “one of the settlement movement’s distinctive contributions to social thought was the promoting of social investigation as the foundation of for rational public policy.”<sup>34</sup> The idea of the “religion of humanity,” or the social organism, resulted from this wedding of social science and Social Christianity, as well as the notion that social sciences could solve the industrial problem plaguing both England and the United States.<sup>35</sup>

As the movement transitioned from England to the United States, the American settlement workers retained its Victorian influence while molding it to fit their own realities. The founders of the American settlement movement envisioned themselves as mediators between competing economic and social interests of American natives and the immigrants they served. Instead of the poor rising up through revolution, settlement founders believed the poor should raise themselves up through self-determination. However, Carson noted that through the workers’ insistence on increasing government control over issues like sanitation, housing, and health care in their neighborhoods, they built bureaucracies of civil services that trampled on their neighborhoods’ abilities to help themselves. Even their work with labor unions typified their controlling nature, as Carson explained that settlement workers hoped to co-opt the labor movement. Hoping

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<sup>33</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 18.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

to use the influence of the “wiser” labor leaders, the settlement workers steered labor unionists away from their more class-oriented activities towards the workers’ ideals of a “classless society” concerned with higher brotherhood and democracy.<sup>36</sup>

These efforts highlight a fundamental contradiction in the settlement workers’ doctrine. As Carson explained, the premise of settlement work – that educated, middle-class people possessed gifts that needed to be shared with the poorer classes – worked against their expressed goal of promoting self-help in these communities. The problem that followed was the workers’ reluctance to allow those neighborhoods to determine their own wants, needs, and values as citizens. Even though the movement survived these contradictions, by 1910 it became evident that the workers’ advocacy of democratic self-determination strained under the realities of American social and economic life. These strains pushed settlement workers to increase their intervention into their neighbors’ lives.<sup>37</sup>

These historians either mentioned race in brief or ignored the issue in their works about the settlement movement. Although Allen F. Davis claimed that “efforts to aid the urban Negro were closely related to attempts to help immigrants,” and that some settlement workers “were exceptions in an era that usually thought of the progressive movement as progress for whites only,”<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn fleshed out a more complicated narrative in *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945*. Lasch-Quinn argued that the settlement movement “largely ignored the parallel situation of African Americans when

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 53, 72, 81.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 85-86, 121.

<sup>38</sup> Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 94.



they began to replace whites in settlement neighborhoods.”<sup>39</sup> She examined the viewpoints of Jane Addams, Louise de Koven Bowen, Frances Kellor, and John Daniels to piece together the reason behind the settlement movement’s failure to respond to black migration into the north. Lasch-Quinn argued that, instead of dismissing the problem of race, the vanguard of the settlement movement considered race to be a social problem. However, their perception of Black culture and African-Americans as individuals shaped their negative responses to the problem.<sup>40</sup>

Lasch-Quinn found that another issue behind the movement’s relationship with race was that the mainstream settlement movement defined its own settlements. The mainstream movement’s definition excluded many of the institutions in the South that fit the settlement mold. Lasch-Quinn highlighted the different kinds of settlements that appeared in the South for African-Americans, such as the southern school-settlements in Alabama and South Carolina, as well as the women, both white and black, who involved themselves with southern settlement work. Many black women involved in settlement work shared the same beliefs as the white women who spearheaded the movement, like women’s responsibility as mothers to their own children and to society at large as well as their own “heightened moral sensitivity” as women.<sup>41</sup>

Since Jane Addams spearheaded the settlement movement and remains its most influential figure, it comes as no surprise that most of the literature on settlement houses deals with her actions or beliefs. In 2005 Louise W. Knight tackled a biography of

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<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

Addams with *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy*. Knight provided a sympathetic but not uncritical portrait of the first half of Addams's life, the years Knight claimed molded Addams into the complete "citizen" she became in the early twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> Interested in how she developed her ethics and her conception of democracy, Knight analyzed Addams's life experiences and her speeches and writings to trace the refinement of her beliefs and explore her formation into a social reformer.

Although Knight wrote with a clear respect for her subject, she noted some of the contradictions and limitations that colored her life's work. Knight highlighted how culture became a "double-edged sword" for Addams, which "both challenged her to escape her class and racial biases and reinforced their claim on her."<sup>43</sup> Addams chased higher education and a higher calling at a time when women were considered selfish for such pursuits, but she still used her education and ambition to serve others through the founding of Hull House. While Addams respected the immigrants she served, she possessed a condescension toward them that she rationalized through her theory of human progress. This theory claimed that human progress existed on a continuum, and peasant immigrants were still in the lower stages of progress.<sup>44</sup> Despite these contradictions, Addams incorporated what she learned from her experiences as head Hull House resident into her conception of ethics and democracy and transformed into a world-renowned reformer.

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<sup>42</sup> Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5.

<sup>43</sup> Knight, *Citizen*, 90.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

Even though Knight's biography of Addams covered her life only until 1899, in 2010 she wrote a second biography entitled *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action*. While Knight covered much familiar ground from the deeper *Citizen*, she explored new territory, covering Addams's life after 1899. Of particular interest are Addams's views towards African-Americans, her closeness to Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party during the 1912 presidential campaign, and her advocacy of peace during World War I. Addams's later years revealed a woman sought after by Theodore Roosevelt to help lend credibility to his women's suffrage plank, embroiled in controversy over the lynching of African-Americans, and hated for her anti-war stances.<sup>45</sup>

While settlement work served as an opportune way for educated women to test their social theories and serve underprivileged populations, some women used their education in the social sciences to branch out into other areas of reform. In *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform*, Ellen Fitzpatrick examined the lives of Sophonisba Breckenridge, Edith Abbott, Katharine Davis, and Frances Kellor to make broader arguments about women's intellectual views, the professional struggles they endured, and their impact on twentieth-century social reform.<sup>46</sup>

Breckenridge, Abbott, Davis, and Kellor shared similar backgrounds. All four women received their postgraduate training at the University of Chicago, a hotbed for social sciences in the early twentieth century, and utilized their education to advance their reform efforts. Fitzpatrick argued that the four women "helped lay the intellectual

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<sup>45</sup> Louise W. Knight, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

foundations for a modern social welfare policy.”<sup>47</sup> Even though earning their degrees at the University of Chicago provided them with professional status, the four women still navigated a world with few professional opportunities for women. However, Fitzpatrick posited that the social and political climate of the Progressive Era aided the women’s professional lives.<sup>48</sup>

Each woman carved out her own niche in social reform efforts. Edith Abbott studied political economy while Sophonisba Breckenridge studied political science, and both women retained their ties to academia throughout their professional careers. The two women worked together through the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, where they wedded their social activism with their academic research.<sup>49</sup> Frances Kellor became chief of New York State’s Bureau of Industries and Immigration, served as a close advisor to Theodore Roosevelt as a member of the Progressive Party’s National Committee, and worked as the head of the party’s Progressive Service. Fitzpatrick claimed that Kellor “wielded a power in organized politics that was nearly unprecedented for a woman of her own, or any previous, generation.”<sup>50</sup> Katharine Davis served as superintendent of New York’s Reformatory for Women, where she performed research on female criminality and advocated for social policies based on her research.<sup>51</sup> These four women typified the educated, middle-class white woman reformer’s focus on education, research, and social policy throughout the era.

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<sup>47</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade*, xii.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-176.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

Though this new group of women reformers carved out their own place in the movement, it is important to remember the limitations of their research and the unintended consequences of the policies they promoted. Many of the essays in *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, edited by Noralee Frankel and Nancy S. Dye, examined these unintended consequences and the inability of these reformers to bridge racial and class divides. First delivered as papers at the Conference on Women in the Progressive Era at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., in 1988, the collection provided snapshots of women's experiences across racial and class backgrounds from the perspectives of the reformers and their subjects.

Dye's introduction evaluated the idea of gender consciousness and examined its impact on women reformers of the era. Middle-class women progressives believed domesticity and maternity constituted universal female experiences and utilized this essential idea of gender to justify their entry into politics and social reform. Not only did these gendered beliefs impel them, they also allowed women reformers to form a collective identity and provided them a basis for critique of America's social values. However, Dye argued that this gender consciousness limited them as well, as middle-class women reformers often failed to overcome the racial and class barriers that separated them from the lower-class women they served. Furthermore, these women's ideas about gender differences reflected common social attitudes about women's place in society, and by failing to challenge these ideas these women further limited women's abilities to enter the public domain.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Noralee Frankel and Nancy S. Dye, eds., *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 5.

One selection that demonstrated Dye's thesis is "Hull House Goes to Washington," written by Molly Ladd-Taylor. Ladd-Taylor argued that the women reformers of the United States Children's Bureau left an ambiguous legacy, since many of their constituents considered the Keating-Owen Act of 1916, a federal child labor law passed under the auspices of the Children's Bureau, to be harmful to their economic well-being. The Keating-Owen Act established authority for the federal government to regulate child labor by creating guidelines for the ages of children in certain industries and the number of hours they could work. However, many states already enacted child-labor laws with stronger standards than the Keating-Owen Act, and the act ignored children who worked in industries outside of its guidelines. Beyond its limitations, the act also imposed the state onto working-class women and deprived them of the income their children generated without offering any monetary substitutions.<sup>53</sup>

Other works in the collection further demonstrated the unintended consequences of social policies during the Progressive Era. Alice Kessler-Harris examined the ramifications of minimum wage laws for women in "Law and a Living: The Gendered Content of 'Free Labor.'" Kessler-Harris argued that the idea of difference shaped the cultural context over which debates about workplace expectations and aspirations took place.<sup>54</sup> In "Reconstructing the 'Family': Women, Progressive Reform, and the Problem of Social Control," Eileen Boris argued that women reformers played important roles in the new activist state, and utilized their designated sphere to redefine public life based on

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<sup>53</sup> Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Hull House Goes to Washington," in *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, 118-123.

<sup>54</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, "Law and a Living: The Gendered Content of 'Free Labor,'" in *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, 105.

their own ideals of womanhood. Furthermore, these reformers improved conditions for working-class women while carving out a new professional niche for themselves. Though they defended the family wage and believed in the male's responsibility to support his wife and children, these women based their programs on women's economic realities instead of the principle of equal rights. The women who formed their "client" base often demanded some of the services the women reformers offered, which complicated the narrative of social control.<sup>55</sup> Rosalyn Terborg-Penn highlighted how the lynching era coincided with the Progressive Era in "African-American Women's Networks in the Anti-Lynching Crusade." Terborg-Penn argued that African-American women pioneered the anti-lynching movement through their fundraising activities and the strategies they used.<sup>56</sup> This study of the anti-lynching campaign demonstrated that the progressive base included black women as well.

While many of these works about the era ruminated on the consequences of urbanization and industrialization and the reformers who proposed solutions to the problems these phenomena caused, they glossed over or ignored the progressive movement as it occurred in the South. However, the reformist zeal that characterized the movement did sweep through the South, though the question of race stamped its progressivism in a distinct manner. Dewey Grantham provided a comprehensive examination of southern progressivism in *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*. Grantham contended that southern progressivism attempted to

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<sup>55</sup> Eileen Boris, "Reconstructing the 'Family': Women, Progressive Reform, and the Problem of Social Control," in *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, 73-86.

<sup>56</sup> Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "African-American Women's Networks in the Anti-Lynching Crusade," in *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, 148, 159.

“modernize” the region without abandoning its cultural and moral values.<sup>57</sup> Grantham divided the progressive campaigns into three distinct but interrelated categories: the imposition of social controls and state regulations, which affected race relations in particular; the search for social justice, which manifested through child labor campaigns, public education, and charity; and the promotion of social efficiency, which focused on agricultural, municipal, and industrial reform.<sup>58</sup>

Grantham stated that no typical progressive existed in the South, but middle-class men and women from the urban south constituted the most prominent and significant progressive base. Though these southern progressives preached democracy, they limited themselves to the southern idea of “Herrenvolk democracy,” which meant democracy for whites only. White progressives in the South considered segregation a necessary tool for social stability and peaceful race relations. Not only did progressives believe that African-Americans would develop their own institutions under Jim Crow, but they hoped to keep African-Americans away from poorer whites who inflamed racial tensions through mob actions. This belief explained some of the progressives’ push for education, not only as a tool for individual progress and economic development, but as a means to remove “white ignorance.”<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, white progressives justified the enactment of disenfranchising measures to blacks and illiterate whites on the basis that such measures reformed their electoral process.<sup>60</sup> Beyond disenfranchisement and segregation of African-Americans, Grantham touched on several other aspects of southern

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<sup>57</sup> Dewey Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), xvi.

<sup>58</sup> Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xix-xx.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii, 125.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.



progressivism. After providing a detailed analysis of each states' politics, Grantham covered reform efforts to create a more cohesive society using state regulatory measures towards blacks, criminals, and trusts and the more humanitarian efforts of reformers hoping to curb exploitation, poverty, and lack of education. Grantham claimed that the "role of the state as regulator, arbiter, and instrument of social control was at the very heart of southern progressivism."<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, Grantham posited that Woodrow Wilson's presidency helped nationalize Southern politics and legitimized many of the southern progressives' reform efforts. Wilson's progressive program allowed reformers in the region to seek further federal assistance while national programs stimulated state and local reform efforts. On the other hand, the end of World War 1 lessened the reformers' optimism as central groups disbanded and reformers shared less common goals and objectives. However, Grantham stated that progressivism in the South did not die after the war. Instead, its main proponents remained influential political figures in the South in the 1920's and beyond. Despite the reformers' limitations and contradictions, Grantham regarded this era of reform the most important in the South's history.<sup>62</sup>

Instead of a sweeping history of southern progressivism, William A. Link focused on the relationship between reformists in the South and the rural communities they targeted in *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*. Link claimed that "southern progressivism should be understood as a clash between radically divergent

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 410, 422.

views of the social contract.”<sup>63</sup> As urban, middle-class white reformers considered the environment around southerners to be filled with problems that needed solutions carried out through increased bureaucracy and state intervention, the localist, traditional southerners resisted their efforts. The southerners that belonged to rural communities wielded different beliefs about community and the role of the state in community affairs.<sup>64</sup>

Link focused on public education, public health, child labor, and temperance to highlight the southern struggle against paternalistic reformers. Leading into the twentieth century, the government at all levels played the smallest role in the lives of Southerners living in isolated, rural communities. The social policies that did exist evolved around pockets of isolated power, and Link called this style of governance “centrifugal rather than central.”<sup>65</sup> According to Link, the fight against liquor spurred the genuine, coherent reform movement that developed in the South. This fight epitomized the reformers’ evangelical roots, their notions of moral human behavior, and their ideas about the social order. However, as these earlier reformers attempted to derail the “whiskey power,” they discovered that the Southern structure of governance limited their efforts. This limitation led to a promotion of a more involved, coercive government structure that could assert more power over the population. The temperance movement provided a framework for southern progressives to push other reforms.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xi.

<sup>64</sup> Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, xii.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-57.

The battles reformers waged in the South over public health, public education, child labor, and other social policies often left them frustrated. As Link noted, the dispersed, isolated nature of Southern communities, as well as their insistence on local autonomy and control, often dispelled reformist efforts. Reformers in the South never gained large-scale support for their reforms. Link contended that the paradox that afflicted Southern progressivism was a paradox inherent in reform, describing it as “that combination of democracy and hierarchy, of humanitarianism and coercion, and of racism and paternalistic uplift that lay behind a cultural invasion of southern communities.”<sup>67</sup>

Since historians have offered different interpretations of the Progressive Era’s time-span, its main proponents, its origins, and its effects, the historiography of the era leads to indeterminate conclusions. While historians agree on certain aspects of the time period, such as the problems caused by rapid industrialization and urbanization, they widely dispute the legacies these reformers left behind. In the policies they promoted lies the foundation for the modern welfare state, and further questions about the reformers’ intentions as humanitarians or arbiters of social control remain without definitive answers. The successes and failures of the era beg further questions about the role of the state in American life and the unintended consequences of social policies as well. Since many of the issues these reformers grappled with in the early twentieth century still plague the United States today, it is possible to conclude that the Progressive Era never ended.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 324.

Historians have often ignored the presence of southern settlements altogether in favor of expanding upon existing literature about the major settlements in the East and Midwest. If mentioned at all, Neighborhood House is for the most part relegated to a footnote. Based upon the Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers collection housed at the Filson Historical Society, this thesis examines Neighborhood House from its inception in 1896 until Ingram's retirement as head resident in 1939. Further, this thesis argues that even though Neighborhood House was a southern settlement, it exemplified the settlement movement as it occurred in the East and Midwest. Its social democratic origins, its Americanization program that encouraged immigrants to retain certain aspects of their culture, and its evolution into social work represented the major trends in the overall settlement movement.

Chapter two explores the first nine years of Neighborhood House, from its inception under Archibald A. Hill to the beginning of Ingram's tenure as head resident. Inspired by Dr. Graham Taylor and the Social Gospel, Hill conceived of a non-denominational, non-charitable settlement to help reestablish relationships between the middle and working classes. Chapter three examines Ingram's time as head resident, including her Americanization program for both immigrant adults and children, her efforts against child labor and sexual vice, and other needs that Neighborhood House met for immigrants and their families. This chapter also examines issues surrounding Neighborhood House's relationship with the Jewish and African-American communities. The conclusion examines the shortcomings of Neighborhood House and the settlement movement as a whole. An examination of Neighborhood House and the United States settlement movement at large touches on major topics such as social control, social

justice, and the implications of race, class, and gender when attempting to implement social reform. Although they hoped to establish better relationships between the middle and working classes, settlement leaders' belief in their own social and cultural superiority, their failure to address structural reasons for poverty, their avoidance of African-Americans, and the entrenchment of both public and private bureaucracy hindered their efforts to create meaningful and beneficial change for the urban poor.

## CHAPTER II

### A “PRACTICAL EXPRESSION OF DEMOCRACY”: ARCHIBALD A. HILL, MARY D. ANDERSON, AND THE ORIGINS OF NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Established in 1896, Neighborhood House of Louisville stood as the “patriarch and model” of Southern settlements.<sup>68</sup> Although Neighborhood House faced the constant fear of closure because of financial insecurity, it expanded its services every year and moved its physical location twice to accommodate its expansion. In its original neighborhood, the House offered clubs and classes to children and adults that met both practical and intellectual needs of the predominantly Jewish immigrants. The residents of Neighborhood House helped their neighbors with a wide variety of problems and acted as an Americanizing agent towards them. This chapter argues that Neighborhood House founder, Archibald A. Hill, influenced by the Social Gospel and other contemporary moral reformers, established a Southern settlement that followed the major tenets of the settlement movement as they opened in the East and Midwest. Hill conceived of his settlement as a non-denominational, non-charitable entity that filled the needs of neighbors as they arose. This chapter first explores the first nine years of Neighborhood House, including its programs and institutional growth. Then this chapter delves into the social and intellectual foundations of Neighborhood House’s founding, such as the

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<sup>68</sup> “A Social Settlement in Louisville: A Visit to Neighborhood House; the Work and Its Aims,” *The Morning Herald*, April 29, 1900, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 20, Filson Historical Society.

influence of Dr. Graham Taylor and the Social Gospel on Archibald A. Hill, social organicism and social democracy, and the push of college-educated women into the developing field of social work.

Neighborhood House became a reality through the work of a handful of individuals spurred to action by the progressive impulse. While Neighborhood House materials before Frances Ingram's long tenure as head resident are sparse, annual reports, newspaper clippings, and a memoir left by Mary Anderson Hill, the second head resident at Neighborhood House, offer a glimpse into the first nine years of the House's operation. The idea to establish a settlement in Louisville began with Archibald A. Hill, a theological student attending Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. While taking summer courses at Bay View, Wisconsin, Hill heard a lecture delivered by Dr. Graham Taylor, theologian and head resident of Chicago Commons, a settlement he founded in 1894.<sup>69</sup> Inspired, Hill spent time as a resident at Chicago Commons. Although the exact year Hill volunteered at Chicago Commons is unclear, it most likely occurred between 1895 and 1896, as Hill returned to Louisville after his residence in Chicago to establish his own settlement in 1896.<sup>70</sup>

As Hill searched for volunteers and a suitable location for his settlement, Lucy Belknap also shared interest in establishing a settlement in Louisville. Inspired by the work of Jane Addams at Hull House in the mid-1890's, Belknap held meetings in her

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<sup>69</sup> For more information on Dr. Graham Taylor and Chicago Commons, see Louise C. Wade, *Graham Taylor: Pioneer for Social Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), and Susan E. Henking, "Sociological Christianity and Christian Sociology: The Paradox of Early American Sociology," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 3 (Winter 1993): 49-67.

<sup>70</sup> Mary Anderson Hill, "The Beginnings of Neighborhood House," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 17, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

home to discuss settlement leaders like Addams and Taylor and arouse enthusiasm for a settlement in Louisville.<sup>71</sup> It is possible that Belknap attended talks given by both Addams and Taylor when Hill invited them to speak in Louisville in 1895.<sup>72</sup> Although Belknap never lived at the settlement herself, she donated a large sum of money to help Hill begin the settlement together with further help from other wealthy Louisville citizens.<sup>73</sup> Although Mary Anderson never mentioned the other benefactors, a 1910 Neighborhood House program schedule suggests that other prominent Louisville families such as the Bernheims and the Brandeises contributed funds to the project.<sup>74</sup> With funds secured, Hill found a desirable location thanks to his sister, Patty Smith Hill, who oversaw a kindergarten near the Ohio River. Being familiar with the area's economic need, Patty Hill convinced her brother to operate his settlement at the corner of Jefferson and Preston Streets. Hill converted an old saloon building, which consisted of only two rooms, into what became Neighborhood House. In her memoir, Mary Anderson (who married Hill in 1901) claimed that Hill made no announcements about his intentions with the building. Instead, Hill opted to befriend his neighbors one by one. To keep the building clean, Hill procured a janitor named Jo Zachariah, who Anderson credited with serving as an important link between Hill and the neighbors. Zachariah often vouched

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<sup>71</sup> Sixth Annual Report to the Federation of Jewish Charities, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 27, 1915. For more information on Jane Addams, see Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), and Victoria Bissell Brown, *The Education of Jane Addams* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

<sup>72</sup> Ann Taylor Allen and James F. Osborne, "Neighborhood House of Louisville: The Early Years, 1896-1901," *Ohio Valley History* 10 (Fall 2010): 48.

<sup>73</sup> Hill, "The Beginnings of Neighborhood House," Filson Historical Society.

<sup>74</sup> "Neighborhood House: A Social Settlement," Rare Pamphlet Collection, The Filson Historical Society, 1910.



for Hill's reputation to neighbors in the area and encouraged attendance as the clubs formed.<sup>75</sup>

As Hill began his experiment, he called on both Mary Anderson and his sister, Mary Hill, to help conduct the settlement's activities. Like Archibald Hill and Lucy Belknap, Mary Anderson heard lectures by two prominent figures of the settlement movement, Stanton Coit and Janet Fine, while attending Vassar College. Anderson stated that these two lectures left an impression on her, even though she desired to become a teacher instead of a settlement leader. While Anderson taught at an unknown college prep school in Louisville, the opportunity to become involved with Neighborhood House came through Mary Hill, Archibald Hill's sister. Mary Hill invited Anderson to read to a group of mothers at a Christmas gathering. After the reading, Archibald Hill asked Anderson to lead a girls' club at his settlement, to which she agreed.<sup>76</sup>

What became Neighborhood House began with a group of teenage boys who formed the first club, which turned into a club about United States history taught by Archibald Hill's brother, Wallace Hill.<sup>77</sup> Wallace Hill taught the boys topics such as the history of the early colonists and the American Revolution. Archibald Hill's reports described how the boys' perceptions about the United States changed over the duration of the club. One Russian boy declared that he shared no heritage with the "pilgrim fathers" because of racial differences. After several club meetings, the boy referred to the early

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<sup>75</sup> Hill, "The Beginnings of Neighborhood House," Filson Historical Society.

<sup>76</sup> Hill, "The Beginnings of Neighborhood House," and "A Social Settlement in Louisville: A Visit to Neighborhood House; the Work and Its Aims," *The Morning Herald*, April 29, 1900, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 20, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>77</sup> Hill, "The Beginnings of Neighborhood House," Filson Historical Society.

colonists as “our forefathers.”<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, Hill stated that during one lesson about the defense of Fort Moultrie during the American Revolution, the boys “cheered lustily” when they learned that a man brought gunpowder in time to defend the fort successfully. Hill highlighted this incident to demonstrate the effect of “personal contact” on the young men, asserting that “they had become interested in the success of the American army. Nothing had been said to these boys about patriotism, but they had come into contact with a man who loved his country.”<sup>79</sup>

Neighborhood House also offered classes for young girls and women. The girls’ club began as a literary club, but as services grew, the House offered many clubs for girls and women. Other classes included crocheting, sewing, and embroidery for young girls and a mothers’ club for adults. Such classes reinforced traditional, Anglo-American gender roles for women. Mary Anderson claimed that these clubs served a greater purpose than just their organization. The clubs also served as a means for the immigrants living in the neighborhood to become acquainted with both civil, municipal, and thoroughly American resources available to them. Anderson asserted that the relationships Hill cultivated with the neighbors proved to be more important than any other aspect of the settlement. The janitor, Jo Zachariah, continued to aid Hill in gaining the neighbors’ trust.<sup>80</sup>

Anderson’s recollections recreated the area as Archibald Hill and the other residents of Neighborhood House experienced it. Anderson stated that the large

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<sup>78</sup> 1898 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 12, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>79</sup> Archibald A. Hill, “Neighborhood House,” *The OWL*, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 20, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

<sup>80</sup> Hill, “The Beginnings of Neighborhood House,” Filson Historical Society.

population of Russian Orthodox Jews gave the neighborhood a distinct foreign feel. As the Jews became more comfortable with Hill, they showed him the scars on their backs from stones and lashes given by Greek orthodox superiors. The Jewish community built a tabernacle on Jefferson Street, close to the settlement. The children attended public school and received instructions in the Talmud in the afternoon. Differences in the observed Sabbath created conflict for younger Jews, as they observed their Sabbath on Saturday instead of Sunday, which rendered it difficult for young Jewish men to find work in the community. Anderson remembered that House residents worked to find a solution to the problem by meeting with employers and parents and helping the young Jews understand that “in adapting to the new, reverence to the old wasn’t being tossed aside.”<sup>81</sup> The Jewish Sabbath lost some of its sacredness to the young Jews as they grew older, causing a rift between the children and their parents. The residents at Neighborhood House mediated between the Americanized children and their parents, a practice that continued after the original residents departed.<sup>82</sup>

Soon the settlement’s services grew too large to remain in the old saloon building at the corner of Preston and Jefferson Streets. In September 1897, Hill secured a building at 324 East Jefferson Street. Hill wrote that the residents encountered “prejudice” against them as they sought new quarters but failed to explain what this prejudice entailed any further. An informed observer might suggest that Neighborhood House residents encountered resistance from the Jewish community because they hoped to maintain their own social and cultural institutions. A report from 1910 claimed that Jewish members of

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<sup>81</sup> Mary Anderson Hill to Frances MacGregor Ingram, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 67, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

<sup>82</sup> Hill, “Beginnings of Neighborhood House,” Filson Historical Society.

the Neighborhood House board of trustees “keenly” felt the struggle for funds during the House’s early years, as one-third of the funds came from Jewish philanthropists while three-fourths of Neighborhood House’s beneficiaries were Jewish.<sup>83</sup> The 1898 annual report also suggested that both Jane Addams and Graham Taylor returned to Louisville to help the residents secure funds for the new building. Both settlement leaders spoke at Warren Memorial Church in 1897, but it is unclear whether Addams and Taylor delivered lectures to indicate the importance of settlement work or donated funds themselves to the Louisville settlement.<sup>84</sup> After the move, Mary Anderson, Archibald Hill, and his sister Mary Hill took up permanent residence at the new building. Another theological student, Reverend W.E. Wilkins, named the settlement Neighborhood House.<sup>85</sup> While Anderson and Archibald Hill offered most of their time to the settlement, Mary Hill taught at a kindergarten during the day and performed no club or class work. However, Anderson stated that Mary Hill sacrificed much to be a presence at the settlement since she traveled a long distance to her kindergarten and back during the day and risked her health by living in the cramped, unsanitary neighborhood. The three residents assisted their neighbors with such issues as employment, physical health, problems with their landlords, and gaining citizenship.<sup>86</sup>

Alongside the original clubs, Neighborhood House offered a circulating library, manual training classes for boys, and sewing and crocheting classes for girls.

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<sup>83</sup> First Annual Report of Neighborhood House to Federation of Jewish Charities, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 14, Filson Historical Society, January 1910.

<sup>84</sup> “The Social Settlement,” *The Courier-Journal*, May 2, 1897, Patty Smith Hill Papers, Folder 32, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>85</sup> 1898 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>86</sup> Hill, “The Beginnings of Neighborhood House,” Filson Historical Society.

Neighborhood House also hosted a mothers' group that discussed social problems like poverty, housing, socialism, and anarchy.<sup>87</sup> Under the auspices of the National Council of Jewish Women, residents procured public bath houses for their neighbors' use. For two hours twice weekly, residents directed the use of four public paths which totaled 954 total baths given. Furthermore, public school teachers reached out to Neighborhood House residents about students at risk of failing their classes. Other teachers in the area devoted two afternoons a week for individual tutoring for at-risk students, mainly in English. Neighborhood House also conducted summer classes for students who already failed their classes. In 1898 the National Council of Jewish Women paid to operate a kindergarten indoors at Neighborhood House over the summer, and in the spring of that same year the settlement employed a trained nurse who lived at the House for a month.<sup>88</sup>

In 1899, Archibald Hill accepted an offer to move to New York to run West Side Neighborhood House.<sup>89</sup> In 1900, with the future of Neighborhood House in doubt, an advisory committee formed that raised the necessary funds to continue the settlement for another year. After Hill's departure, Mary Anderson stepped up to be head resident before moving to New York to marry Hill in 1901. Little record exists from Mary Anderson's departure to Ingram's appointment as head resident in 1905. Charlotte Kimball served a brief tenure as head resident from 1901 to 1902, when Eleanor Tarrant took over the position. Although the exact year is unclear, Neighborhood House moved

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<sup>87</sup> 1898 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>88</sup> 1899 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 12, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>89</sup> Meeting of the Board of Managers of Neighborhood House, Patty Smith Hill Papers, Folder 32, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

once again to 428 South First Street after W. B. Belknap gifted the building.<sup>90</sup>

Neighborhood House continued to struggle for funds after the move. Together with the Louisville Woman's Club and the National Council for Jewish Women, Tarrant hosted Jane Addams in January of 1905 to deliver a lecture which "forcibly called the attention of the people of Louisville to the fact that the same work which is done in Chicago by Hull House is done in Louisville by Neighborhood House."<sup>91</sup> Before Eleanor Tarrant resigned from her position to prepare for marriage, she reached out to Frances Ingram about taking her place.<sup>92</sup> Ingram served Neighborhood House as head resident from 1905 to 1939, when she retired due to ill health.<sup>93</sup>

Available records from Neighborhood House's first nine years also offer a glimpse into the motivations and inspirations of the founders of Neighborhood House and the residents who worked there. The Social Gospel provided the moral and intellectual basis of Neighborhood House's establishment. Furthermore, Archibald Hill's beliefs about religious instruction in the settlement, the settlement's rejection of charity, and the reciprocity of the residents' relationship with their neighbors mimicked those of other settlement leaders. Work at Neighborhood House also represented the career path that many college-educated women pursued after studying the social sciences in universities.

What became known as the "Social Gospel" provided a spiritual and moral basis for many clergymen who sought solutions to social problems. A counterpart to English

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<sup>90</sup> 1941 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>91</sup> Board of Trustees to Unknown Recipient, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 20, Filson Historical Society, February 3, 1905.

<sup>92</sup> Frances MacGregor Ingram, "An Autobiography," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

<sup>93</sup> 1941 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

Christian socialism occurring across the Atlantic, the Social Gospel fused the idea of man's "essential oneness" with God to the development of social sciences. With the help of interested philanthropists, university professors, and government officials, theologians following the Social Gospel crafted an image of the social sciences as experimental scientific disciplines that promoted social reform. The influx of immigrants into the United States further spurred their efforts, when prominent theologian William Jewett Tucker called for an evangelization of immigrants bringing "habits of irreligion and immorality" into the country by claiming America needed an urban ministry. Instead of the tenets of Calvinism that pushed the idea of individual spiritual fitness, Tucker promoted a universal gospel based on God's love for mankind.<sup>94</sup>

The ideas behind the Social Gospel blended with the idea of "social organicism" which permeated the settlement movement in the United States. Social organicism constituted a two-pronged idea: first, the spiritual equality of brotherhood as the basis for political and social democracy, and second, the justification for social control through the imposition of moral and social codes on the working class. The analogy of the social organism worked by conceptualizing society as a biological body. If one limb felt pain, it signaled to the rest of the body that the entire organism needed relief. These "enlightened Christians" that espoused these beliefs prepared to make sacrifices for the best interests of the whole organism.<sup>95</sup>

Archibald Hill's inspiration to create a social settlement came both from his understanding of the Social Gospel and the influence of Graham Taylor. The son of

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<sup>94</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 11-13.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8, 13.

middle-class, educated Presbyterians with modern outlooks on life, Hill inherited his parents' liberal theological views. Hill's father, Reverend William Wallace Hill, taught Darwin's theory of evolution to his students at Bellewood Female Seminary and Chapel in Anchorage, Kentucky, and his mother, Martha Smith Hill, completed the requirements for graduation at the all-male Centre College with the help of a private tutor. The elder Hill encouraged his two sons and four daughters to enter professional careers, and Archibald Hill attended Louisville Presbyterian Seminary after graduating from Centre College in 1893.<sup>96</sup> Hill likely fine-tuned his ideas about the Social Gospel while volunteering at Chicago Commons under Graham Taylor as well. Taylor founded Chicago Commons in 1894 as a joint project with the Department of Christian Sociology at the Chicago Theological Seminary. While serving as a pastor at the Fourth Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut, in the 1880's, Taylor witnessed the more prosperous residents in the church's neighborhood move away as the city industrialized. Instead of ignoring the remaining impoverished residents, Taylor taught adult Bible classes, held prayer meetings, and visited their homes. After becoming a professor of practical theology at the Hartford Theological Seminary, Taylor learned more about liberal theology from proponents of the Social Gospel and developed his curriculum to reflect these liberal theological currents. The conversation around the intermixture of heredity and environment in determining a person's moral character became of particular interest to Taylor. Grappling with the classic debate of nature versus nurture, his work as a pastor led him to reevaluate the popular notion that someone's moral character determined their social behavior. Taylor began to suggest

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<sup>96</sup> Allen and Osborne, "Neighborhood House of Louisville," 48.



that a combination of heredity and environment, and not just man's own inherent morality, influenced individuals' social behavior and contended that the church must deal with social problems.<sup>97</sup>

Hill's writings about Neighborhood House demonstrated the Social Gospel's heavy influence on his settlement experiment. In the 1898 annual report, Hill described the foundation of the social settlement movement as the "essential oneness of mankind." To overcome class and ethnic differences, Hill stressed the "brotherhood of men," stating that "we would have men look beyond the narrow horizon of their own lives and see that they are parts of an eternally glorious whole." Hill considered the work performed by the settlement to be representative of Christian redemption. Claiming that the sins of man have not yet "obliterated" man's likeness to the "high Parent," Hill stated that those working in settlements "do not look upon man as socially lost, but as one of the factors of social redemption."<sup>98</sup> Such rhetoric demonstrated Hill's belief in the Social Gospel and the idea of spiritual equality for all men. Since all men shared a likeness with God, the middle-class shared responsibility for the poorer segments of society.

Although the Social Gospel inspired many settlement leaders like Hill and Taylor, settlements tended to be non-denominational and abstained from offering religious instruction. This non-sectarian approach worked well with the Social Gospel, as many settlement leaders believed that the doctrine of social Christianity transcended all faiths.<sup>99</sup> Neighborhood House also offered a non-sectarian experience. Most of the original

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<sup>97</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 14-15.

<sup>98</sup> 1898 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>99</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 53, 57.

residents identified as Christians, while most volunteers were Jewish.<sup>100</sup> Although the residents were Christian, Hill offered no religious instruction at the House. Mary Anderson noted the importance of a non-denominational approach to their Jewish neighbors from Russia, claiming that “we had to prove to them that Christians could be not prosecutors but friends.”<sup>101</sup> Residents at Neighborhood House even avoided holding Christmas celebrations or parties and took caution to ensure they did not impose upon their neighbors’ religious beliefs.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, Hill espoused the same beliefs as Taylor about the mixture of heredity and environment impacting individuals. Writing about his immigrant neighbors, Hill asserted that “they have received a downward thrust from behind in the form of a bad heredity, and daily are receiving a downward push from society in the shape of a wretched environment.”<sup>103</sup>

Hill’s Neighborhood House embodied another major aspect of the settlement movement by distinguishing the settlement from a charitable institution. Leaders of the major social settlements in Chicago, Boston, and New York criticized organized charity and believed that cultivating personal character improved their neighbors’ conditions more than relief.<sup>104</sup> Hill ensured that neighbors and outsiders alike understood that Neighborhood House was not a charitable institution, writing that “we do not dole out old clothes and thus take away the last vestiges of a man’s self-respect.”<sup>105</sup> Neighborhood House charged a small fee for services and Hill even fined children for misbehavior while

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<sup>100</sup> Hill, “Neighborhood House,” *The OWL*, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>101</sup> Hill, “The Beginnings of Neighborhood House,” Filson Historical Society.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> 1898 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>104</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 65-66.

<sup>105</sup> 1898 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

attending clubs and classes. He doubled the fine if children argued against it.<sup>106</sup> Even when Neighborhood House residents directed the public baths, the children brought pennies to help cover the cost of towels, soap, and laundry. If a family required relief due to the breadwinner being unable to work, the House introduced the family to the proper relief agency.<sup>107</sup>

Settlement leaders believed that their intimate relationship with their neighbors set them apart from charitable organizations. Leaders conceived of their work not as philanthropy but as an attempt to heal rifts in society by starting a dialogue between classes. Residents considered the relationship to their neighbors to be reciprocal.<sup>108</sup> Hill expressed similar beliefs about his work at Neighborhood House. Musing about the state of work before the age of industrialism, Hill wrote that “the master worked at the same bench with the men and was himself a workman. He grew into friendly relations with his men. If they were in trouble the master soon learned of it. But when the great industrial development changed the manufacturer’s position, and the great industrial cities sprang into being like magic, the personal touch was lost, the friendly relation, of necessity, dropped into that of employer and employee.” Neighborhood House, then, worked to reestablish personal relationships between the middle and working classes. Instead of the working-class being the only beneficiary in this relationship, however, Hill stressed the importance of what the residents gained as well. He expressed the belief that “. . . the

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<sup>106</sup> Hill, “Neighborhood House,” *The OWL*, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>107</sup> Hill, “The Beginnings of Neighborhood House,” Filson Historical Society.

<sup>108</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 66-67.

workman was not the only loser when the friendly personal relation was lost . . . the master lost as much as the man.”<sup>109</sup>

Under Mary Anderson, Neighborhood House continued to embody these ideals, and Anderson took Hill’s conceptions a step further by entrenching the House’s work in Americanized notions of democracy. Anderson asserted that Neighborhood House constituted a “practical expression of democracy” and attempted to “live out every day the doctrine on which rested the Declaration of Independence and which underlies our present Bill of Rights.”<sup>110</sup> Such rhetoric underscored Anderson’s declaration that the “soul of the work” was “social democracy.”<sup>111</sup>

The work performed at Neighborhood House by women fit the national pattern of female college graduates entering social work. With access to higher education at rates never before seen in the United States, middle-class white women found ample opportunity to apply their new skills in the Progressive Era.<sup>112</sup> By the turn of the century, women constituted thirty-five percent of college enrollment. This increase in women’s education meant that women navigated post-graduate life in a society forced to grapple with women’s professional prospects. As educators fumbled over the proper professional course for their female students, a new emphasis emerged on what women should do with

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<sup>109</sup> 1898 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>110</sup> 1941 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>111</sup> “A Social Settlement in Louisville: A Visit to Neighborhood House; the Work and Its Aims,” *The Morning Herald*, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>112</sup> For more information on women during the Progressive Era, see Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), Noralee Frankel and Nancy S. Dye, eds., *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), and Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

their education. This emphasis combined the public and private spheres and declared that women still held responsibility for the progress of civilization, but instead of shielding women from public life, they should be educated about it. Women found a career path that suited this ideal of womanhood in the social sciences.<sup>113</sup>

Mary Anderson and Hill's sisters, Martha Hill and Patty Smith Hill, represented this trend of college-educated women entering the service field. The kindergarten constituted one area of service where both Hill sisters shined.<sup>114</sup> A leading kindergarten activist in Louisville, Patty Smith Hill convinced Hill to establish his settlement in the same area where she oversaw her kindergarten. Martha Hill taught a kindergarten that operated at Neighborhood House under the auspices of the National Council of Jewish Women.<sup>115</sup> Anderson taught in Louisville before rendering her services to Hill's settlement, and in her memoir she reminisced about young, educated men and women desiring to be useful. Anderson claimed that this desire inspired women (and one man) to establish settlements in the rural areas of Hindman and Pine Mountain in Kentucky after their tenure as workers at Neighborhood House.<sup>116</sup> Although Hill served as head resident

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<sup>113</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 23-24.

<sup>114</sup> For more information about the kindergarten movement, see Ann Taylor Allen, *The Transatlantic Kindergarten: Education and Women's Movements in Germany and the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), Allen, "The Kindergarten in Germany and the United States, 1840-1914: A Comparative Perspective," *History of Education* 35 (March 2006): 173-188, Michael S. Shapiro, *Child's Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), and Elizabeth Dale Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade: The Establishment of Preschool Education in the United States* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1973).

<sup>115</sup> Allen and Osborne, "Neighborhood House of Louisville," 49.

<sup>116</sup> Hill, "The Beginnings of Neighborhood House," Filson Historical Society. For more information about the women who pioneered the Hindman and Pine Mountain social settlements, see Nancy K. Forderhase, "Eve Returns to the Garden: Women Reformers in

of Neighborhood House until 1899, Anderson, Martha Hill, and other women workers performed the bulk of its work.<sup>117</sup>

Neighborhood House continued to expand its services under Frances Ingram, and the Americanizing element present during the House's first nine years comprised a significant portion of its work in the early twentieth century. As its services increased, the House employed many more women with an educational background in social work. Neighborhood House remained a non-denominational agency and residents continued to make accommodations for their neighbors' religious beliefs. Under the initial direction of Archibald Hill and through the work of female residents afterward, Neighborhood House developed into one of the only prominent settlements in the South.

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Appalachian Kentucky in the Early Twentieth Century," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 85 (Summer 1987): 237-261.

<sup>117</sup> Allen and Osborne, "Neighborhood House of Louisville," 49.

## CHAPTER III

### THE “JANE ADDAMS OF LOUISVILLE” AT NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE: AMERICANIZATION, WHOLESOME RECREATION, AND NEIGHBORLINESS IN THE SOUTHERN SETTLEMENT

From 1905 to 1939, Frances MacGregor Ingram acted as Head Resident of Neighborhood House, located at 421 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Louisville, Kentucky. This chapter argues that Ingram, as well as Neighborhood House itself, represented the main tenets of the settlement house movement by focusing on Americanizing the “foreign element” of Louisville, endowing immigrant children with their own ideas of character and culture to shape them into ideal American citizens, and mitigating their neighbors’ poverty. Ingram and Neighborhood House staff taught Louisville immigrants United States history and civics through citizenship classes, blended immigrants’ native cultures with “Americanisms,” offered ample recreational opportunities for children, and acted as a liaison between neighbors and social agencies. As a settlement, Neighborhood House experienced similar issues and shortcomings as the archetypal Hull House, and Ingram, who earned the nickname “the Jane Addams of Louisville,” shared similar ideas and the same volume of work as Jane Addams.<sup>118</sup> This chapter explores Frances MacGregor Ingram’s philosophy and actions as Head Resident of Neighborhood House, as well as the work the House performed for its neighbors, to assess the House’s relationship to the

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<sup>118</sup> Interview by Miss Laurena Eaton for Senior High School Social Studies Program, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society, 1949.

settlement movement as it unfolded during the Progressive Era. Operating in the South, outside of the three major settlement areas of Chicago, Boston, and New York, Neighborhood House, as well as its longest-tenured head resident, remain overlooked in the history of the settlement movement.

Born in 1874 in Loup City, Nebraska, Frances MacGregor Ingram's childhood differed from many women involved in Progressive Era reform. Instead of being born into a wealthy family, Ingram was born into a family who struggled on the Nebraska high plains. After staking a claim of land from the government near the Platte River, her father moved to Loup City with hopes of making a fortune. After experiencing natural disasters like blizzards and fires which destroyed his herds and dealing with the constant threat of coyotes and snakes, her father gave up on striking it rich and moved his family back to Louisville around 1881, to the "hum drum existence in the city where the problems of life began to be borne in our mind full force."<sup>119</sup> While her father experienced financial hardships and her mother became sick with an unknown illness, a large share of household responsibility fell upon Ingram's shoulders, forcing her to act as housemaid and cook for her parents and younger siblings. During her formative years, Ingram described herself as "intensely religious," and she became a confirmed Episcopalian who took her affiliation seriously. In 1894 Ingram graduated from Louisville Girls' High School and although she desired to go to Vassar College, she attended Louisville Normal School instead due to her family's financial problems. After

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<sup>119</sup> Frances MacGregor Ingram, "An Autobiography," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society, n.d.



graduating from Louisville Normal School in 1896, Ingram taught in Louisville Public Schools.<sup>120</sup>

Ingram's first indication of interest in social work came after she attended special classes called "institutes" at the Cook County Normal School in Chicago, Illinois. Although it is unclear what year Ingram attended these institutes, it is likely she attended them during her time at Louisville Normal School. While taking these classes at Cook County Normal School, Ingram heard an address by Colonel Francis Wayland Parker (1837-1902), a prominent education scholar. Ingram believed in Parker's educational philosophy, which advocated for supervised leisure time for children. This philosophy served as a backbone for her future work as Head Resident of Neighborhood House.<sup>121</sup>

Even though she heard Parker's lectures at the Cook County Normal School, Ingram claimed that she never planned to enter the field of social work. She wrote that her entry into social work "came as a complete surprise. Such a thought had never entered my mind until I received a note from Miss Tarrant who was leaving to be married if I would consider becoming Head Resident of Neighborhood House."<sup>122</sup> Although no formal record of Ingram volunteering at Neighborhood House before her appointment as head resident exists, she claimed she volunteered there like many students in Louisville

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<sup>120</sup> Ingram, "An Autobiography," Filson Historical Society.

<sup>121</sup> Interview by Miss Laurena Eaton for Senior High School Social Studies Program, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society, 1949. For more information on Colonel Francis Wayland Parker, see Jack K. Campbell, *Colonel Francis W. Parker, the Children's Crusader* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), Natalie Crohn Schmitt, "Francis Wayland Parker's Morning Exercise and the Progressive Movement," *American Educational History Journal* 37 (Spring 2010): 109-127, and Robert E. Tostberg, "Colonel Parker's Quest for 'A School in Which All Good Things Come Together,'" *History of Education Quarterly* 6 (Spring 1966): 22-42.

<sup>122</sup> Frances MacGregor Ingram, "An Autobiography," Filson Historical Society.

after its inception. Although Ingram failed to say during what years she volunteered, it is likely she volunteered sometime between 1902 and 1904, under Miss M. Eleanor Tarrant's time as Head Resident.<sup>123</sup> Since Ingram stated that Tarrant reached out to her about the position, perhaps Ingram's efforts as a volunteer impressed Tarrant.

While Head Resident at Neighborhood House, Ingram acted as a "specialist in Americanization work," and much of the activity of Neighborhood House reflected this specialization.<sup>124</sup> Ingram and the philosophy behind Neighborhood House advocated for cultural blending where immigrants held on to some of their old-world customs while embracing American values. At the Kentucky Conference of Social Work held in Louisville in 1919, Ingram provided a definition of Americanization, considering it "the uniting of the new with the Native Born, in common understanding and appreciation, to secure by means of self-government the highest welfare of all." Immigrants underwent this uniting process by "entering into the spirit of America – that spirit which stands for liberty and democracy."<sup>125</sup> Ingram ensured the audience that immigrants needed more than just their naturalization papers when they resettled in the United States. Furthermore, she claimed that "any Americanization program based entirely on the ignorance of the immigrant and the superiority of the native born is incomplete."<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Interview by Miss Laurena Eaton, and Neighborhood House 1941 Annual Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>124</sup> Unknown Newspaper Clipping, "Specialist in Americanization Work," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 3, Filson Historical Society, 1921.

<sup>125</sup> Frances MacGregor Ingram, "Americanization in Louisville," speech delivered at the Kentucky Conference of Social Work, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 6, Filson Historical Society, November 24, 1919.

<sup>126</sup> Ingram, "Americanization in Louisville," Filson Historical Society.

The citizenship class offered through Neighborhood House served as an avenue for adult immigrants to learn United States history and civics in order to receive their naturalization papers. The citizenship class materialized after one of the early clubs organized by adult immigrants expressed their desire to obtain citizenship status. According to a variety of Neighborhood House materials, this citizenship class constituted the only class in the state of Kentucky that helped immigrants receive their papers. Ingram stated that the class “instructs would be Americans . . . in American ideals, teaches them the meaning of the Constitution, and gives them a background in American history.”<sup>127</sup>

Some of the immigrants who attended the class expressed appreciation for both the class and their new home. Sometimes the immigrants swore an oath of allegiance to the United States, which proved that they were “desirous of becoming a loyal and patriotic American citizen.”<sup>128</sup> Ingram relayed the words of an older immigrant woman, who claimed she “knew more about the ‘Constitush’ than my grocery man does, and he was born here.”<sup>129</sup> Cecil Osborne, who taught the class in 1928, wrote that many first-time students expressed reluctance about attending and considered the class a burden imposed upon them by the government. However, at the conclusion of their classes, the immigrants expressed appreciation for the course. Osborne claimed that one Syrian man said that he was “happy and prosperous” in America, and so should understand its history

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<sup>127</sup> The Courier-Journal, June 12, 1938, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 3, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>128</sup> American Legion to Beudetto Bosco, October 16, 1922, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 5, Filson Historical Society. This letter featured blacked-out text.

<sup>129</sup> Interview by Miss Laurena Eaton, Filson Historical Society.

and government.<sup>130</sup> Ingram pushed Constitution Day as well, urging immigrants to attend Louisville's celebration of Constitution Day, "one of the most important days in history."<sup>131</sup> Some of the immigrants who attended the class formed a citizenship alumni group to aid new immigrants in receiving their naturalization papers.<sup>132</sup>

Ingram familiarized herself with the naturalization process and the examiners who administered the test to immigrants. Though the examiner did not require a literacy test, he required applicants to speak English and to sign their name in English. Anyone over the age of twenty-one could apply, but Ingram noted that the examiner showed more consideration for older women. Furthermore, Ingram stated that the federal court did not let social standing in the community sway its judgment. She relayed a story about a wealthy older woman who appeared before the examiner with two prominent bankers as her witnesses. Though she was wealthy with wealthy people as her witnesses, she failed to answer the court's questions in a satisfactory manner and the examiner directed her to the citizenship class offered at Neighborhood House. On the other hand, the examiner considered the personal reputation of the applicant, though it is unknown how the examiner assessed applicant's personal reputation. Thirteen immigrants on average attended the citizenship class in 1930, though Ingram claimed that the average attendance

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<sup>130</sup> Neighborhood House Stories, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 15, Filson Historical Society, 1928.

<sup>131</sup> Frances Ingram to Mr. Guiseppe DeMatteo, September 10, 1924, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 5, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>132</sup> Frances Ingram, "The Neighborhood House: Its Place in the Life of a City," address given at 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Tennessee Conference on Social Work, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 24, Filson Historical Society, April 29, 1925.

in previous years ranged between forty and fifty immigrants. Nationwide restrictions on immigration lowered the number.<sup>133</sup>

The citizenship class encountered financial hardships, and Ingram reached out to various organizations in Louisville for funding. The class closed for a brief period in the early 1930's, as the Board of Education discontinued its support. In her solicitations for help, Ingram played up the immigrants' personal character and their desire to become American citizens, claiming that "all of the pupils work and most of them are taxpayers."<sup>134</sup> She claimed that the night class provided immigrants with the only reliable information on American government and history. Ingram contacted various organizations around the city, and both the John Marshall and Fincastle chapters of the Daughters of the Revolution helped finance the class in 1932.<sup>135</sup>

The offering of citizenship classes through Neighborhood House, the material learned, and Ingram's efforts to secure funding for the classes demonstrated the assimilation efforts of the settlement and the centrality of Americanization to its work. The classes provided both a practical path to citizenship and a slew of materials that espoused the belief of the superiority of the American constitutional system. In Ingram's eyes, immigrants emerged from the courses with an appreciation of American civics, a knowledge of United States history, and the ability to pass the examination and obtain

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<sup>133</sup> National Council on Naturalization and Citizenship Questionnaire, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 9, Filson Historical Society, 1931.

<sup>134</sup> Ingram to "Patriotic Societies," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 5, Filson Historical Society, 1932.

<sup>135</sup> Frances Ingram, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 5, Filson Historical Society, 1932.

their naturalization papers. The classes developed these immigrants into citizens who believed in and supported American democracy.

When it came to both adult immigrants and their children, Ingram and Neighborhood House employed a program that blended elements of the immigrants' cultures with "Americanisms." One situation during World War I highlighted this cultural blend as well as Ingram's willingness to work with immigrants with different cultural needs. After the United States entered World War I and created the United States Food Administration, Neighborhood House's Domestic Science Department gave several demonstrations on the preparation, conservation, and canning of foods. Women learned to can food using the "cold pack" method promoted by the United States government. In addition to canning demonstrations, Neighborhood House also held lessons in dietetics and hosted experts from the National Council of Defense to help with food demonstrations. Many immigrant women, mainly Jewish and Italian, refused to eat some of the new recipes that fit wartime restrictions because of their own cultural dietary restrictions and customs. Ingram noticed that some women threw their cereal away, and one claimed her stomach could not digest corn meal. To help these women adjust to the new diets, Ingram created a "community kitchen" where Neighborhood House staff taught immigrants how to prepare dishes resembling their national recipes using certain ingredients. The House purchased a special set of dishes for their Jewish neighbors to use and observed all dietary laws as needed for immigrants. One Jewish woman created a strudel dish using substitute flour, while another created noodles out of barley flour and

then boiled them in milk.<sup>136</sup> The Council of Jewish Women helped facilitate the community kitchen, both advising staff about Jewish dietary laws and urging Jewish neighbors to attend. Neighborhood House staff recommended immigrant and American women to exchange recipes so American women could develop a “finer appreciation of the characteristics of our foreign sisters.”<sup>137</sup> Ingram referenced the cultural blending these immigrants experienced by participating in the recipe exchange stating that the immigrants were “proud to be American – not ashamed of being European.”<sup>138</sup> She delivered a speech about the community kitchen to the National Conference of Social Work, where she claimed that foreign women possessed keen cooking knowledge and “could make a real contribution to America.”<sup>139</sup>

Ingram and Neighborhood House also acted as an Americanizing element towards immigrant children as well. Neighborhood House mediated between children of the “New” and their parents of the “Old.” Such circumstances sometimes resulted in an absorption of American values by immigrant children. One detailed report of a club of teenage girls from Syria, given to the National Federation of Settlements in 1932, illustrated the cultural assimilation desired by Neighborhood House residents and undergone by the Syrian girls. This group of girls, whose parents “arrived in America on the same steamer,” created a club after registering at Neighborhood House. The report stated that these girls’ desire to create a club reflected their longing of an understanding

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<sup>136</sup> Frances Ingram, “A Community Kitchen in A Neighborhood House,” Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 22, Filson Historical Society, 1918.

<sup>137</sup> Minutes, The Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, June 5, 1918.

<sup>138</sup> Ingram, “A Community Kitchen in a Neighborhood House,” Filson Historical Society.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

between the old ways of their parents and the new ways of American culture. However, the girls' parents presented an obstacle. Many of the parents expressed their reluctance to let the girls participate in activities sponsored by the House, since they believed that young girls belonged in the home. The staff member who oversaw the club visited the girls' parents several times to gain their trust. The girls persisted in their regular club meetings and the report noted that the parents began to understand the differences between their children's circumstances and their own as children in Syria. While it was normal for these girls to marry as young as fourteen or fifteen-years-old, the report detailed how these girls moved away from early marriage and began to see school as more important than their old-world traditions. Information about six of the eight original members of the club as they aged denoted this tendency to avoid marriage for school. Three completed junior high school, one completed four years of vocational high school, and one was enrolled as a junior at Louisville Girls' High School, while only one married early. Members present at the time of the report included two high school graduates, one graduate of business college, two girls engaged to be married, and others who were "enjoying life without any shame or social stigma because they are not married past eighteen years old."<sup>140</sup> The report described one of the teenage girls as "progressive and modern" since she preferred to marry a Syrian man who embraced more modern notions of a wife's responsibilities in marriage. Another one of the teenage girls worked as a cashier at a butcher shop and refused to marry. Instead, she took night classes at the

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<sup>140</sup> National Federation of Settlements, Inc., Committee on Group Work, Form for Study of Clubs, Study of Busy Bee Club, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 12, Filson Historical Society, October 1931.



Young Men's Christian Association in hopes of advancing her professional career, potentially as a typist or clerk.<sup>141</sup>

Although Neighborhood House documented the young women's cultural change from believing in marriage at an early age to believing in the necessity of school, it also held celebrations of their Syrian nationalities and recognized their national holidays. Such a situation highlighted how Neighborhood House's work fell on the spectrum between cultural assimilation and cultural pluralism. On one hand, Neighborhood House staff considered school to be an important aspect of American citizenship and suggested to this group that they should ignore their old customs of early marriage for higher education. The staff's intervention in their homes to persuade their parents demonstrated not only the staff's desire to take control of the girls' education and customs, but also their awareness of the child's heightened ability to assimilate over their parents. On the other hand, Neighborhood House celebrated their nationality so that the girls could, at least, hold on to some vestige of their former Syrian identity.

Visiting the homes of children constituted a regular practice for Neighborhood House residents.<sup>142</sup> In addition to home visits, Neighborhood House residents performed other kinds of interventions with immigrant children. In a letter to the Federation of Jewish Charities, Ingram included figures detailing how many children and young adults registered for clubs and classes at the House but stated that those figures "do not reflect the immense body of personal work" performed by the House staff. Such work included calling doctors for children, mediating between students and teachers at school, and

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<sup>141</sup> Study of Busy Bee Club, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>142</sup> Neighborhood House 1913 Annual Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 12, Filson Historical Society.

interceding between children and their parents as the children learned English faster than their parent.<sup>143</sup> Ingram also mediated between children and their parents in instances of work. One child's mother refused him permission to return to school because she needed his help around the family store. Stressing the importance of school in the child's life, Ingram convinced the mother to allow the child to attend school in the morning and work at the shop in the afternoon. According to her report, the child said "let Miss Ingram tell me what to do. She has told plenty of guys what to do and made men of them."<sup>144</sup>

Ingram and Neighborhood House staff also worked with different agencies around the neighborhood to ensure the wellbeing of children in the area. In one instance, they worked with the Juvenile Court to take children away from their alcoholic mother.<sup>145</sup> In another instance, Ingram and other residents worked with the Juvenile Court, the Detention Home, and the Parental Home at the request of a family of a fifteen-year-old girl who was causing them trouble, possibly by running away from home to be with boys. Ingram and the other organizations helped change her "scheme of life."<sup>146</sup>

Ingram believed that the issue of language often separated the immigrant child from the immigrant parent. Ingram underscored the importance of mediating between the

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<sup>143</sup> Frances Ingram to Cyrus L. Adler of the Federation of Jewish Charities, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 10, Filson Historical Society, April 4, 1911.

<sup>144</sup> Minutes, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, November 18, 1915.

<sup>145</sup> Minutes, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, November 18, 1915.

<sup>146</sup> Eight Annual Report As Given to the Federation of Jewish Charities, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 26, 1917. For more information about juvenile courts in the Progressive Era, see Elizabeth J. Clapp, *Mothers of All Children: Women Reformers and the Rise of Juvenile Courts in Progressive Era America* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998), and Victoria Getis, *The Juvenile Court and the Progressives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

parent and child in an address to the Council of Jewish Women, stating that “the settlement makes for the conservation of the family group by aiding the parents, with their old country ideas and language, to understand the child who, so much more quickly, acquires the new language. The child, by his knowledge of the language, which the parent has not learned, stands between the parent and the American world.”<sup>147</sup>

Neighborhood House offered English classes to both adults and children, and staff coached immigrant children on reading, writing, and spelling.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, some of the clubs and classes participated in “patriotic” recreational activities while others taught American history to the children. In 1915, Neighborhood House staff hosted talks by the Colonial Dames who targeted Neighborhood House because of its proximity to foreign children.<sup>149</sup>

The inculcation of moral character and conduct onto immigrant children constituted another aspect of Ingram and Neighborhood House’s Americanization program. Ingram and Neighborhood House residents believed that immigrant children needed not only an appropriate outlet for their youthful energy, but also an environment free from vice and moral corruption. Such an environment provided children with the necessary tools and influences to become ideal American citizens regardless of their nationality. Ingram described the aim of Neighborhood House as an effort to “influence personal character by furnishing through its clubs, classes, and other activities a social

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<sup>147</sup> Frances Ingram, “What the Philanthropic and Educational Institutions Offer the Jewish Immigrant in Louisville,” Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 23, Filson Historical Society, February 17, 1914.

<sup>148</sup> “Neighborhood House and its Work,” Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 18, Filson Historical Society, January 11, 1906.

<sup>149</sup> Seventh Annual Report to the Federation of Jewish Charities, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 27, 1916.

and intellectual center for the neighborhood.”<sup>150</sup> Through its clubs and classes, Neighborhood House offered immigrant children a place not only for recreation, but also a place to learn practical skills such as handicrafts. Ingram and House staff considered the playground to be one of the most valuable aspects of recreation for children. Ingram conceptualized the playground as a recreational tool and as a school for citizenship, since it “developed character and ideals of fair play through its training.”<sup>151</sup> The playground acted as a “preventative agent in a congested neighborhood.”<sup>152</sup>

The recreation offered at Neighborhood House served as a means to keep susceptible children away from the vice, sexual vice in particular, that permeated the neighborhood.<sup>153</sup> Neighborhood House reported the goal of combatting “temptations and allurements by having a program twice as active and varied as would be called for in a neighborhood of fewer social hazards.”<sup>154</sup> Alongside steering children away from temptations, Neighborhood House collaborated with local agencies to battle vice themselves. Ingram convinced the local police chief to handle what she called the problem of “objectionable women” around the neighborhood in 1915. To rid the

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<sup>150</sup> Questionnaire, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 9, Filson Historical Society, 1931.

<sup>151</sup> Frances Ingram to Albert J. Kennedy, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 10, Filson Historical Society, October 11, 1933.

<sup>152</sup> Sixth Annual Report to the Federation of Jewish Charities, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 27, 1915.

<sup>153</sup> For more information on sexual vice in the Progressive Era, see Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), Mara L. Keire, “The Vice Trust: A Reinterpretation of the White Slavery Scare in the United States, 1907-1917,” *Journal of Social History* 35 (Autumn 2001): 5-41, and Roy Lubove, “The Progressives and the Prostitute,” *The Historian* 24 (May 1962): 308-330.

<sup>154</sup> Neighborhood House Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 11, Filson Historical Society, 1935-1936.

neighborhood of these women who lodged at nearby tenement houses, Ingram urged the police chief to remove them from the houses. After days of holing up in different lodging houses in hopes of avoiding the police chief, these women circled back to the same tenement house. After arranging a meeting between the police chief, Neighborhood House President E. S. Tachau, and herself, Ingram and Tachau convinced the police chief to ban these women from the tenement house across the street from Neighborhood House.<sup>155</sup> Ingram described the tenement and lodging houses as a “distinctly evil factor” in the community.<sup>156</sup> House staff also reported suspected prostitution houses to the police.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, Ingram noted how often federal workers raided the neighborhood for moonshine and dope rings. The House even operated as a representative on the Board of Censors which censored the Saturday night movies.<sup>158</sup>

Neighborhood House staff focused on the dance hall as an evaluation of character as well. One resident of Neighborhood House, Ruth Sapinsky, stated that the Settlement at large paid special attention to the dance in 1910. Neighborhood House conducted an investigation of dance halls in Louisville and found violations in most, such as the selling of alcohol, girls having no choice but to dance with any boy who asked, and “loose dancing.” The strength of the investigation brought the Recreation and Playground

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<sup>155</sup> Seventh Annual Report to the Federation of Jewish Charities, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 27, 1916.

<sup>156</sup> Questionnaire for Self-Survey of Settlements, Community Houses, and Other Character-Building Agencies, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 14, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

<sup>157</sup> Tentative Statement of Aims and Activities of the Settlement, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 23, Filson Historical Society, December 10, 1923.

<sup>158</sup> Questionnaire for Self-Survey of Settlements, Community Houses, and Other Character-Building Agencies, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Filson Historical Society.

Association of America to Louisville to study Louisville's entire system of recreation.<sup>159</sup> During World War I, Ingram herself supervised dance halls across the city to regulate moral conduct.<sup>160</sup> At the urging of the Welfare Committee of the War Recreation Board of Louisville, Neighborhood House also performed what Ingram called the "girl end of war work."<sup>161</sup> Since common beliefs dictated that women were "apt to completely loose (sic) their heads over the soldiers," Welfare Committee members worked through Neighborhood House to supervise camps, dance halls, and other public attractions to ensure moral conduct between women and soldiers at all times.<sup>162</sup> Neighborhood House board of trustees considered this work their "most important and far reaching contribution to the community in 1917," a testament to their strong beliefs about character and moral conduct.<sup>163</sup>

While Ingram and other Neighborhood House residents offered recreational activities for children, regulated moral conduct, and battled vice throughout the neighborhood, Ingram's efforts against child labor represented another component of character-building for children. Some of her earliest efforts involved combatting "street trades" for children, such as the selling of newspapers. Ingram worked with the Kentucky Consumers' League to investigate cases of school truancy under the Committee of Child Labor and Truancy. Working alongside truancy officers, factory

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<sup>159</sup> Ruth Sapinsky, "A Kentucky Settlement," *The Wellesley College News*, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 25, Filson Historical Society, 1910.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Miss Laurena Eaton, *The Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers*, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>161</sup> Ninth Annual Report, *The Neighborhood House Minutes Book 1912-1918*, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 28, 1918.

<sup>162</sup> Ninth Annual Report, *Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918*, 1957, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

inspectors, and the Juvenile Court, League members investigated the families of children working the street during school hours to determine the necessity of their child's employment. The county judge granted the Consumers' League permission to investigate all applications for labor permits filed at the county clerk's office. The League tallied 362 investigations and concluded that most children were not on the street because of financial necessity. Instead, many of the children refused to go to school. For those families that the League deemed to be in dire financial need, League members secured work for adult family members, provided clothing and shoes for the children, and set up doctor appointments for children with eye, ear, and skin conditions. The League also provided scholarships for children that covered the income they otherwise received from working on the street, granted the children provided a signed note from their teachers that proved regular school attendance. Furthermore, the League returned some children with labor permits back to school after their investigation.<sup>164</sup>

However, Ingram noted that the streets remained "swarming with children" despite the League's efforts.<sup>165</sup> The Committee of Child Labor and Truancy concluded that most of the street children wanted to be in school, but circumstances outside of their control pushed them onto the street. Some parents kept their child at home, some claimed ignorance of the existing law, and others needed their child to provide additional income for the family. Ingram noted that the children's excuses for not being in school ranged from having a corn on their toe to their dress being dirty. In 1908, these findings

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<sup>164</sup> Report of the Child Labor and Truancy Committee, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 32, Filson Historical Society, 1907.

<sup>165</sup> Report of the Child Labor and Truancy Committee, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 32, Filson Historical Society, February 20, 1908.

brought together the Board of Education, the Juvenile Court, and the Consumers' League to draft a compulsory education bill, which the Kentucky legislature enacted that same year.<sup>166</sup>

The Consumers' League's crackdown on child labor and truancy brought additional problems after the passage of the 1908 Child Labor Law and the Compulsory Education Law. These problems revolved around the standards of the child labor law and employers' efforts to circumvent them. The Superintendent of Louisville Public Schools, E.H. Mark, expressed his frustration to the president of the Kentucky Child Labor Association about issuing work certificates to children. Mark claimed he issued 1,430 work permits to children, some who could not read or write. Even though Mark knew some of these children possessed only a fourth-grade level of education, he felt compelled to issue work permits to these children anyway because he believed they would otherwise become "loafers." Stating that the 1908 Child Labor Law was too stringent for children under fourteen, Mark referred to the case of a boy who worked for the Courier-Journal Job Printing Company during his vacation from school and planned to use the wages for clothes and books when school resumed. Mark claimed that "the boy was learning to be an ideal citizen by acquiring habits of industry and a knowledge of business methods."<sup>167</sup>

In addition to children under fourteen needing the wages from work, employers who circumvented the law posed another problem for Ingram. Ingram expressed disdain over "amateur nights," which she claimed managers of theatres invented to work around

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> E. H. Mark to Mr. Allen, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 28, Filson Historical Society, December 17, 1908.



the child labor law. Instead of being employed by these managers, children competed on stage for prizes. Ingram lamented the “tragic sight” of “little girls in tinsel and gauze trying to enhance their charms by singing vulgar songs and by dancing suggestive dances.”<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, Ingram battled the employment of boys as night messengers (boys who directed men to bawdy houses). Ingram declared some features of the report she prepared for the Kentucky Federation of Women’s Clubs “too vile” and refused to allow Federation women to read the entire report. She considered night messenger service to be one of the worst demoralizing influences on boys.<sup>169</sup>

Ingram also countered businessmen’s assertions that the newspaper trade provided proper job training for young boys. Through the Kentucky Child Labor Association, Ingram studied newspaper boys and evaluated the necessity of their street work. She investigated 55 families and 83 children under the age of fourteen. While twelve of the families insisted that financial necessity drove their children to selling newspapers, Ingram considered these claims to be false. Instead, the report shared that some parents forced their children to sell newspapers without financial necessity, and others professed ignorance of the child labor law. Only fifteen of the boys possessed the requisite badges to prove their legality. Children pretending to be ill-fed posed another problem in the report. Ingram asserted that children having no place to play and release

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<sup>168</sup> “Child Labor: Miss Ingram’s Report to the Federation of Women,” *The Courier-Journal*, May 31, 1912, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 32, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>169</sup> “Child Labor: Miss Ingram’s Report to Federation of Women,” Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Filson Historical Society.

excess energy resulted in the street trade problem.<sup>170</sup> While those who employed children on the street claimed that selling newspapers taught children good business ethics, Ingram considered this notion a popular misconception. Instead of constituting appropriate training for future work, Ingram asserted that the children learned poor principles by pretending to be ill-fed and desolate to sell papers. She concluded that the lure of the street, not financial necessity, called young boys to sell papers.<sup>171</sup>

In 1913 Ingram expressed satisfaction with the 1908 Kentucky Child Labor Law, claiming that after its enactment only the occasional child could not read or write. Hoping to strengthen the law, she next advocated for an eight-hour workday for children, prohibition of children in the street trades, and a twenty-one-year age limit for boys working as night messengers.<sup>172</sup> By 1922 the National Child Labor Committee reported that child labor constituted a declining problem in Kentucky as a result of the child labor and compulsory education laws.<sup>173</sup> Ingram reported that those involved in the fight against child labor considered Kentucky's child labor law to be one of the best in the South. She called for a constitutional amendment for child labor, since the United States Supreme Court was set to render the federal child labor law to be unconstitutional with the *Adkins v. Children's Hospital* decision in 1923. To further prove her point, she cited abysmal statistics about the health and education of young soldiers drafted during World

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<sup>170</sup> Kentucky Child Labor Association, Report on Study of Children Under 14 Engaged in the Sale of Newspapers on the Streets of Louisville, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 30, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

<sup>171</sup> Frances Ingram, "A Popular Misconception," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 15, Filson Historical Society, May 21, 1927.

<sup>172</sup> Frances Ingram, "Factory Conditions," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 30, Filson Historical Society, January 21, 1913.

<sup>173</sup> National Child Labor Committee Memo, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 30, Filson Historical Society, January 23, 1922.

War I. To improve health and education standards, Ingram rallied for a “crusade for a better Americanization – an Americanization that will insure a normal and healthful development for every child, that will establish health standards and give several more years of school to children whatever their life work may be.”<sup>174</sup>

The insistence of children attending school instead of working or loafing on the street went hand-in-hand with Ingram’s notions that the public school served as the chief factor of Americanization for the immigrant.<sup>175</sup> If proper Americanization of the immigrant occurred in public schools, Ingram and her cohorts in the Consumers’ League and the Child Labor Committee ensured that as many children as possible attended public school. The social workers determined which families needed the financial assistance, wrenching power away from those families and placing power over children in their own hands. Furthermore, Ingram’s insistence on building moral character in children through “wholesome” recreation at Neighborhood House and censoring outside activities served to Americanize the child and build him or her into an ideal adult American citizen, one molded by middle-class experts. The settlement, then, acted as the “yeast that started the social rising.”<sup>176</sup>

The coercive work that Ingram and Neighborhood House residents performed for children comprised a large portion of its work, but they also intervened on behalf of the adult immigrant neighbors as well. Residents handled issues ranging from helping

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<sup>174</sup> Frances Ingram, “Child Labor,” Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 30, Filson Historical Society, November 23, 1922.

<sup>175</sup> Frances Ingram, “What the Philanthropic and Educational Institutions Offer the Jewish Immigrant in Louisville,” Filson Historical Society.

<sup>176</sup> Tentative Statement of Aims and Activities of the Settlement, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Filson Historical Society.

neighbors secure employment to providing evidence in criminal trials. Residents called doctors for neighbors and visited hospitals.<sup>177</sup> When neighbors experienced legal troubles, residents stepped in to help secure legal aid or provide their own assistance. One case involved an Italian man who contacted Neighborhood House after being accused of an unknown crime. Residents convinced the court that the man's case should be investigated and provided evidence during his trial. The evidence helped secure the man's acquittal. In cases of crime committed against neighborhood children, Neighborhood House helped secure convictions against those responsible. Residents aided with small cases as well such as the case of an immigrant woman who purchased a defective stove from a "second-hand" dealer.<sup>178</sup> Ingram allowed certain medical agencies to run their services through the Neighborhood House building, many of which provided free medical services to neighbors. Nurses from the Louisville Medical College practiced through Neighborhood House as well.<sup>179</sup> Neighborhood House residents facilitated the registration and administration of the Fresh Air Home during summers, which served as a camp for mothers with young children. Finding its permanent home in PeWee Valley, Kentucky, in 1924, the Fresh Air Home provided a space for tired mothers with sick children to rest and recover. Mothers stayed for up to ten days on the premises in order to rest while their children enjoyed the outdoors free from the congestion of the city.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Minutes, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, November 18, 1915.

<sup>178</sup> Tentative Statement of Aims and Activities of the Settlement, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>179</sup> Interview with Miss Laurena Eaton, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>180</sup> 1941 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 12, and Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society.

Neighborhood House also served its neighbors and the city at large when, in 1937, the Great Flood struck Louisville.<sup>181</sup> While the city flooded, the Welfare Department of City Hall requested that Ingram lend the Neighborhood House facilities to flood relief. Ingram obliged, and converted the House gymnasium into a kitchen. The Works Progress Administration sent cooks and other helpers to work alongside House residents and National Youth Administration workers to provide meals for flood refugees, City Hall workers, and men building the pontoon bridge at East Jefferson Street. Soon the gymnasium's make-shift kitchen no longer sufficed for the number of people needing meals, and Ingram opened the kitchen in the Lucy Belknap building as well as the kitchen in the House's main building to continue cooking. For nine days, residents and other workers cooked four meals a day for those without food, which amounted to more than 10,000 meals cooked. Neighborhood House also supplemented the Salvation Army's feeding stations.<sup>182</sup>

The fact that Neighborhood House secured services for neighbors and provided in times of dire need demonstrated the "neighborliness" Ingram considered to be a core function of the settlement. Neighborhood House provided practical help for neighbors who otherwise could not help themselves due to a variety of cultural, social, and economic factors. While residents operated under the assumption that they knew what was best for their poorer neighbors, they also provided services which helped mitigate

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<sup>181</sup> For more information about the Great Flood of Louisville and the greater Ohio Valley Flood, see Stratton Hammon, "'Send A Boat': Images of Louisville's 1937 Flood," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 81 (Spring 1983): 154-167, and David Welky, *The Thousand-Year Flood: The Ohio-Mississippi Disaster of 1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

<sup>182</sup> Frances Ingram, "The Story of the Neighborhood House Canteen," Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 21, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

their poverty, even if staff failed to acknowledge economic structures behind the socioeconomic status of their neighbors.

While Louisville's Neighborhood House represented a typical settlement of the era with its Americanization program for immigrants, it encountered similar problems as the more famous settlements, such as Hull House in Chicago, Illinois. Two of these notable issues involve the assimilation of the Jewish community and the settlement's work with African-Americans. Both Hull House and Neighborhood House experienced difficulties in their efforts to Americanize the Jews in their neighborhood, some of whom desired to build their own institutions, and both failed to incorporate African-Americans in their programs.

Historian Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn claimed that Addams constituted the most likely settlement worker to hold a more "enlightened" view of African-Americans, but she noted Addams's distinctions between white immigrants and blacks. Addams asserted that residential segregation denied African-Americans their ability for "social restraint," which resulted in their inability to be brought under "social control." Here Lasch-Quinn defined Addams's conception of social control as "the ability of the family to re-create the inner moral structure composed of elements such as family bonds, parental discipline, and generational continuity that instilled respect and led to socially desirable behavior."<sup>183</sup> For Addams, the black family's problem rested on both its residential segregation and its moral weakness, which led its children to vice. Yet Addams still proclaimed that "Because we are no longer stirred as the Abolitionists were, to remove fetters, to prevent cruelty, to lead the humblest to the banquet of civilization, we have

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 14.

allowed ourselves to become indifferent to the gravest situation in our American life.”<sup>184</sup> Rather than integrating her black neighbors, though, Addams preferred to help African-Americans through other means, such as raising money for the Frederick Douglass Center, an integrated social settlement in Chicago.<sup>185</sup>

Ingram expressed a similar view in regards to the plight of African-Americans, yet Neighborhood House failed to provide services for them. Although Ingram’s personal papers say little about African-Americans, certain aspects of Neighborhood House’s relationship to blacks can be surmised from available sources. In a 1925 speech delivered at the Tennessee Conference on Social Work, Ingram asserted that “the lack of recreational facilities for the colored people is not only one of the tragedies of this neighborhood, but one of the tragedies of the city at large.”<sup>186</sup> Ingram may have considered the lack of recreational services for African-Americans in Louisville to be a tragedy, but Neighborhood House materials suggest that the House did not extend its services to them. As early as 1917, African-Americans comprised a significant portion of the population in the immediate vicinity of Neighborhood House. Ingram even remarked that this statistic meant that most children who used Neighborhood House’s services came from a distance.<sup>187</sup> Neighborhood House clubs performed minstrel shows as well

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<sup>184</sup> Jane Addams, *The Second Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 397, 400-401.

<sup>185</sup> Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*, 15.

<sup>186</sup> Frances Ingram, “The Neighborhood House: Its Place in the Life of a City,” address given at 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Tennessee Conference on Social Work, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 24, Filson Historical Society, April 29, 1925.

<sup>187</sup> Seventh Annual Report to the Federation of Jewish Charities, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 27, 1916.

and no records indicated that the House employed black residents.<sup>188</sup> However, the House did employ a black maid named Hinnie Thompson, who “faithfully served” Neighborhood House for over twenty-five years.<sup>189</sup>

As Neighborhood House and most major settlements employed an Americanization program to immerse immigrant children in American culture through public schools and American institutions, their plans clashed with the Jewish community. Both Hull House and Neighborhood House faced difficulties with some Jewish leaders who desired to keep Jewish children in Jewish institutions. Historian Rivka Lissak argued that Jane Addams failed to understand the tight-knit Jewish community that developed on the west side of Chicago. Although Addams considered immigrants to be helpless and without leadership, the Jewish community boasted able leadership and built their own institutions to aid their resettlement in the United States. As a result, Addams never penetrated the Jewish community as deeply as the Italian or Greek communities that formed in Chicago.<sup>190</sup>

When Neighborhood House first opened in 1896, Jewish immigrants, mainly Russian Orthodox, constituted the largest population in the neighborhood.<sup>191</sup> Neighborhood House operated as a constituent of the Federation of Jewish Charities for twenty-two years, until the House became a member of the Louisville Federation of

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<sup>188</sup> Minutes, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, April 13, 1917.

<sup>189</sup> Frances Ingram, “The Story of the Neighborhood House Canteen,” Filson Historical Society.

<sup>190</sup> Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives*, 80-94.

<sup>191</sup> Neighborhood House Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 11, Filson Historical Society, 1935-1936.



Social Agencies in 1917.<sup>192</sup> The prominent Louisville Jewish leader E.S. Tachau served as president on the Board of Trustees of Neighborhood House for almost as long as Ingram served as head resident. The Council of Jewish Women also cooperated with Ingram and Neighborhood House.<sup>193</sup> Though Ingram and the House developed strong ties with the Jewish community, problems arose both with local rabbis and the Federation of Jewish Charities itself.

Ingram and the Federation of Jewish Charities butted heads over which agency should handle cases of children involved in minor incidences. Ingram declared that Neighborhood House reserved the right of probation over all Jewish children and their families who used its services. In cases of children appearing in Jewish court, Ingram cited Neighborhood House's "intimate touch and intimate knowledge" of children as qualifications to handle their cases. The case that sparked the contest between Ingram and the Federation of Jewish Charities involved a Jewish boy who skipped school one day to shoot dice in the street. A policeman took the boy to Jewish court, but Ingram argued that the incident "obviously" could have been handled outside of the court. Ingram further claimed that Neighborhood House handled both similar and tougher cases, such as trouble between students and their teachers and even cases involving child abuse.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Minutes, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, October 4, 1918.

<sup>193</sup> Frances Ingram, "A Community Kitchen in a Neighborhood House," Filson Historical Society.

<sup>194</sup> Frances Ingram to Mr. Henry Klauber, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 10, Filson Historical Society, February 15, 1911.

Another incident involved trouble with a local rabbi. In the later months of 1916, Ingram reported a problem with a Jewish rabbi who denounced Neighborhood House. Several residents of Neighborhood House reported that Rabbi Zarchi opposed the House and warned his congregation to keep themselves and their family away. Ingram characterized this opposition as a problem for both Jew and Gentile, stating “when a Jewish child announces in the community that Neighborhood House is not a nice place, without stating the reason that it is because Gentiles go there, the Gentiles themselves begin to say Neighborhood House is not a nice place, not knowing it is because they themselves go there.” Ingram believed that the problem lied with Rabbi Zarchi’s disapproval of a marriage between a Jewish woman and a Gentile man, both of whom attended Neighborhood House together. To combat this issue, President Tachau interviewed Rabbi Zarchi, who claimed that he took no issue with Neighborhood House but desired Jews to interact with Gentiles only during times of recreation.

This problem coincided with other issues that caused a drop in attendance for Jews at Neighborhood House. Ingram noted that Jews began to leave the neighborhood during the 1910’s because of their improved economic circumstances. In addition to Jewish families leaving the area, the local Hebrew School drew children away from Neighborhood House and the Young Men’s Hebrew Association offered more services than previous years. To combat these problems, Ingram hoped to re-establish trust between the Jewish community and Neighborhood House. The Federation of Jewish Charities even appointed a committee to grapple with these issues and “undo the harm”

caused by Rabbi Zarchi.<sup>195</sup> Although Neighborhood House acted as a constituent of the Federation of Jewish Charities, it competed with the Jewish community's own institutions and agencies. This competition demonstrated that the Jewish community near Neighborhood House desired to resettle in the United States on their own terms, much like large sections of the Jewish community near Hull House.

These problems that Neighborhood House encountered with Jewish assimilation and the integration of African-Americans raise further questions about the ability of settlement houses to assimilate immigrant communities and how African-Americans fit into their portrait of the ideal United States. While Jewish communities sometimes preferred to establish and maintain their own social and cultural institutions to avoid the assimilation and Americanization that middle-class progressives sought for them, the African-American community remained outside the reach of most mainstream settlements. Even when leaders like Ingram and Addams noted the plight of the African-American community, they still failed to reach out in any meaningful way to help improve its condition.

Ingram's policies of Americanization, her efforts against child labor and for "wholesome" recreation, and the promotion of neighborliness to both immigrant adults and children followed the general trends of the settlement movement in the United States. Even the problems Neighborhood House experienced with forming relationships with the Jewish community and its disregard of the African-American community mimicked national trends among the most famous settlement houses and provide historians with

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<sup>195</sup> Report to the Board of Trustees for October, November, December, Neighborhood House Minutes Book, 1912-1918, 1957, Filson Historical Society, January 19, 1917.

further questions about the true aims of settlement house leaders and the effectiveness of their programs. From their earliest foundations based on social democracy and universal brotherhood to their emphasis on social work and bureaucracy, settlement houses and their leaders often worked against their expressed goal of improving the lives of urban immigrants on the immigrants' own terms. Instead, settlement leaders, including those at Neighborhood House, skirted around the structural components of poverty, believed in their own cultural and social superiority, and built a new social work apparatus that further entrenched the lives of urban immigrants into bureaucracy.

## CHAPTER IV

### “BENIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SOCIAL CONTROL”: THE SHORTCOMINGS OF NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE AND THE UNITED STATES SETTLEMENT MOVEMENT

Neighborhood House of Louisville exemplified the common settlement house in the United State with its origins steeped in the Social Gospel, an Americanization program for both immigrant adults and children, and the direct and indirect help it offered to its urban neighbors. Though Neighborhood House expanded its services over time and furthered its outreach throughout the early twentieth century, its impact on the community is difficult to assess, much like it is difficult to assess the impact of the overall settlement movement on the United States in the early twentieth century. This concluding chapter argues that their beliefs in their own social and cultural superiority, their social organicist ideas, and their failure to recognize and address class issues hindered settlement workers' impact on the communities they served. Settlement houses also typified problems with race and gender during the Progressive Era. Most settlement leaders missed an opportunity to tackle race relations when they failed to include African-Americans in their programs when African-Americans began to replace European immigrants in poor neighborhoods as a result of the great migration of 1915-1920. Furthermore, settlement houses symbolized educated women's push into careers that enforced the typical view of women as domestic caregivers. The largest impact settlement workers had on the lower classes was the expansion of bureaucracy and social

work which created standards based on the beliefs of middle-class “experts” and managed to work against the self-determination of immigrants – ironically, the goal of the settlement house movement.

Settlement workers balanced the recognition and celebration of immigrants’ cultural heritage with social control of the immigrant through Americanization. Leaders like Jane Addams, the most influential settlement worker, as well as those they influenced, like Frances Ingram, believed in their own social and cultural superiority over European immigrants. This belief of superiority can be seen both in their own writings and in the programs they employed in their settlements. Addams spoke of the “better element” being entrusted with spreading democracy in the cities. Imbued with culture and character, the “enlightened” upper middle class held responsibility for serving the working class.<sup>196</sup> Ingram’s writing often demonstrated the belief in immigrant inferiority, even if she never said so outright. Ingram noted the “especially good type” of Italians who “come to Neighborhood House eager for instruction in reading and writing, quick to imitate whatever is good in dress and manners and at all times gentlemanly.”<sup>197</sup> In a club report, Ingram claimed that a German family possessed an “unusual background of talent” with interior decorators and painters.<sup>198</sup> These statements positioned European immigrants as inferior by default, with the more “cultured” immigrants -- meaning those imitating or possessing characteristics Ingram considered ideal -- being exceptional. Such beliefs underscored the unequal relationship between settlement workers and their

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<sup>196</sup> Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives*, 19.

<sup>197</sup> Frances Ingram to E. S. Tachau, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 10, Filson Historical Society, April 19, 1911.

<sup>198</sup> National Federation of Settlements, Study of Glee Club, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 11, Filson Historical Society, 1932.

new immigrant, urban neighbors. Furthermore, this unequal relationship meant that settlement workers measured any success or progress that immigrants made according to the standards of the settlement house workers, not the immigrants themselves.

The emphasis on cultivating culture and character in their neighbors exemplified settlement leaders' belief in their own superiority and further enforced the social control aspect of their work. This form of social control affected the children of the lower classes the most. Residents considered these children susceptible to the temptations of city life, and so immigrant children needed their guidance on battling these temptations through appropriate, middle-class approved, activities. Appropriate recreation ensured the wellbeing of the entire United States, as these children represented the future of the country.<sup>199</sup> In *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, Addams discussed the need to provide wholesome recreation for children of the cities. She implored those performing work in the cities to "know the modern city in its weakness and wickedness," then to "rectify and purify it" until it no longer provided temptations for its youth. Addams further asserted that reformers in the city could not expect "fathers and mothers who have come to the city from farms or who have emigrated from other lands to appreciate or rectify these dangers."<sup>200</sup> Frances Ingram focused her efforts on purifying Louisville. While head resident of Neighborhood House, Ingram monitored dance halls, conducted studies of street children and took measures to place them back in school, and worked with the board of censors to censor the Saturday night movies. Ingram declared that recreation at Neighborhood House offered "the opportunity for the elements of character

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<sup>199</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 112.

<sup>200</sup> Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930).

building which produce our normal, healthy, happy American boys and girls.”<sup>201</sup> For settlement workers like Addams and Ingram, this work produced ideal future United States citizens.

The key descriptor in Ingram’s statement about recreation is “American.” As demonstrated, Ingram centered Americanization in Neighborhood House’s work during her tenure as head resident. Like many other settlement workers, Ingram balanced the imposition of American social and cultural values with careful preservation of immigrants’ ethnic cultures. In the case of Hull House and the “liberal progressives” interested in its work, historian Rivka Lissak argued that their efforts to promote cultural pluralism constituted a short-term necessity for their long-term goal of full assimilation.<sup>202</sup> One could argue that most settlements desired this path to full assimilation on the surface, but the thesis is difficult to prove. Ingram’s work complicates the argument. Although she never equivocated on her ultimate goal of Americanization, Ingram and even earlier Neighborhood House residents appeared sure of the need for immigrants to retain certain aspects of their culture. Neighborhood House residents held celebrations of ethnic holidays, never imposed their own Christian holidays on neighbors, and allowed immigrant children to perform ethnic songs and dances. An Americanization pamphlet found in Ingram’s papers demonstrated the balance between assimilation and pluralism she aimed to achieve. Most likely written after World War II by the Common Council for American Unity, the pamphlet argued that the diversity of the United States population should be a source of strength instead of weakness.

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<sup>201</sup> Program for Neighborhood House Activities, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 11, Filson Historical Society, February, 1925.

<sup>202</sup> Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives*.



However, the pamphlet warned of different nationalities who, should they not be fully assimilated, “may be intent on the claims of their native countries than the fundamental American interest.”<sup>203</sup> Even though the Common Council for American Unity published the pamphlet after Ingram departed from Neighborhood House, the fact that Ingram owned the pamphlet says much about her beliefs on Americanization. The wartime pamphlet exemplified Ingram’s beliefs about immigrants in the United States: as long as immigrants understood that the United States came first, they could retain vestiges of their ethnic culture.

This argument about settlement workers’ belief in their own superiority and the Americanization program they enacted is not to suggest that settlement houses performed no valuable work in their neighborhoods. Residents did aim to meet the immediate needs of the community and their clubs and classes often provided real help for immigrants and allowed them to develop practical skills. Like most social settlements, Neighborhood House offered classes that taught manual training, cooking, and English and its residents aided neighbors with legal affairs, illness, and parenting. The citizenship class sponsored by Neighborhood House helped adult immigrants obtain their naturalization papers and taught them about the United States constitutional system, which would be valuable information for immigrants new to the country. Residents at Neighborhood House also familiarized immigrants with resources available to them in the community and often served as a liaison between immigrants and other agencies, secular and religious, in Louisville.

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<sup>203</sup> Pamphlet, “Divided We Fail ...”, Common Council for American Unity, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 9, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

By emphasizing the cultivation of character and culture and coupling that idea with social organicism, settlement leaders created a way to skirt around the structural components of poverty and wealth inequality that characterized the Progressive Era. Although residents often expressed their understanding of poverty as a social problem requiring a social solution, their analysis failed to provide a critical examination of the economic structures that dictated it. Instead, their idealistic views about social democracy clouded the economic implications of class and suggested that a classless society could exist without structural economic changes. This failure occurred as a result of the residents' ideas about class in the United States and their perception of their own class positions. Their ideas mimicked the greater progressive idea of the middle class being the best interpreters and representatives of society's best interests. In other words, the middle class considered themselves above narrow class interests. As Lissak argued, this approach delegitimized real class interests and proved that many of these leading progressives still conceived of American society as widely middle-class or even a "frontier classless society."<sup>204</sup> Such notions blended well with the Social Gospel as espoused by Archibald Hill and Graham Taylor. Both ideas – that of a frontier classless society and democratic brotherhood – rendered class interests illegitimate and neither provided a useful framework for the lower classes, as a group, to better their societal position.

Although these progressives shared the genuine belief that American society could transcend issues of class, perhaps they felt motivated to reach the masses of immigrants before those immigrants discovered other avenues to air out class grievances.

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<sup>204</sup> Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives*, 18-19.

Fear of revolutionary sentiments among immigrants might have motivated settlement leaders as much as the desire to help them. Not only would immigrants' loyalty to their home countries threaten the stability of the United States, they could also slip into the depravity of city life or, even worse, become radicalized politically. Lissak posited that settlement leaders designed their policies to perpetuate the existing social order.<sup>205</sup> Whether or not settlement workers crafted their ideology with this intention, their mediation between immigrants and the upper classes ensured that the economic status quo remained intact. As Jane Addams became involved in the 1894 Pullman Strike, she grappled with the ethics behind the labor movement and fell short of criticizing capitalism as a *system* and instead pointed the finger at the corrupt moral character of individual capitalists. Addams invoked the necessity for capital and labor to unite for the common good, not an evaluation of material conditions for the city's poor.<sup>206</sup> Such rhetoric highlighted the settlement movement's efforts to co-opt the labor movement to promote their social organicist ideals.<sup>207</sup> Addams's approach to the Pullman Strike also underscored how progressives accepted the economic landscape of the United States but hoped to ameliorate its worst conditions by reestablishing relationships between classes. The settlement house represented this ameliorative aspect of progressivism.

While settlement leaders envisioned a classless society when they positioned themselves in congested cities to serve immigrants, for the most part their services failed to extend to the African-Americans who migrated to the cities between the world wars. Although progressive leaders like Graham Taylor grappled with the notion that a mixture

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>206</sup> Knight, *Citizen*, 327-328.

<sup>207</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 81.

of bad heredity and a bad environment plagued their immigrant neighbors, they still believed that they could shape immigrants into ideal American citizens. Leaders failed to extend this belief to African-Americans. Even if progressive leaders never came to a consensus about what plagued African-Americans the most, they pointed to the perceived weakness of the black family and the long-lasting impact of slavery on the black personality. Instead of adapting their services to the needs of their new neighbors, most settlements chose to follow their white neighbors out of the neighborhood when African-Americans migrated to the cities. With few exceptions, settlements even refused to offer segregated activities. Those residents interested in performing settlement work for African-Americans in hopes of improving race relations encountered the problem of promoting segregated facilities while also advocating for those improvements.<sup>208</sup>

As historian Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn argued, settlement leaders did not apply their ideas about the environmental causes of poverty to the plight of African-Americans. Residents instead emphasized slavery's long-lasting impact on blacks and advocated for reform measures they deemed more appropriate for African-Americans' perceived social and cultural levels. Settlement pioneer Albert J. Kennedy asserted that relationships between whites and blacks under slavery encouraged poor moral conduct in African-Americans and such thinking laid the basis for a belief in the inferiority of the black personality. Even the founders of the most exceptional integrated settlement house, Karamu House in Cleveland, Ohio, based their settlement on the superiority of urban culture over the more rural culture of African-Americans.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*, 24-26.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-31.

From its inception through Ingram's retirement in 1939, Neighborhood House never opened its doors to African-American neighbors in a service capacity. Mary Anderson stated that the House employed black servants "as we would have in our own homes," but she claimed that offering integrated clubs and classes would prove impossible in the South.<sup>210</sup> Ingram proclaimed that African-Americans in Louisville needed their own recreational institutions but chose not to offer the recreation at Neighborhood House to the blacks who migrated into the neighborhood as the twentieth century progressed. Although Ingram expressed the purpose of Neighborhood House to be that of promoting neighborliness, which meant meeting the needs of neighbors as they arose, her inaction towards African-Americans in the neighborhood suggests that she too viewed African-Americans differently than she viewed European immigrants. Perhaps Ingram shared similar reservations with other settlement leaders about offering integrated services. It is possible that Ingram weighed the dangers of offering integrated activities in a Southern city, since progressives in the South promoted segregation as reform. Existing evidence provides no definite answers.

Ingram's choice to keep Neighborhood House's doors closed to African-Americans added to the larger debate surrounding the settlement movement about the true target of the movement's services. As the movement matured, leaders debated whether they served a particular neighborhood itself or if they served a particular population. Lasch-Quinn posited that this discussion provided a loophole for settlement workers to neglect certain neighbors.<sup>211</sup> Knowing that African-Americans began to

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<sup>210</sup> Hill, "The Beginnings of Neighborhood House," Filson Historical Society.

<sup>211</sup> Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*, 25.

constitute a majority of the population surrounding Neighborhood House in the early 1900's, it appeared that Ingram conceived of Neighborhood House as serving the white, European ethnic immigrant population and not the immediate geographical area. As a result, the institution failed to adapt its services to the needs of its immediate area.

Even if settlements like Neighborhood House offered activities for African-Americans, it would be difficult to assess the impact of such policy. What can be suggested is that Ingram and prior Neighborhood House residents shared the common sentiments expressed by many prominent settlement leaders about African-Americans. This belief in fundamental differences between European immigrants and African-Americans allowed settlement workers to either ignore the plight of African-Americans or provide funds for other agencies to perform the work. Even if the middle-class settlement workers considered themselves superior to European immigrants, by their efforts to Americanize them and ameliorate some of their conditions, workers demonstrated that they believed the immigrant capable of becoming an ideal American citizen. On the other hand, the failure of settlement leaders to extend their efforts to African-Americans highlighted their belief in the fundamental inferiority of blacks and their incapacity to improve. Though leaders often lamented African-Americans' lower-class position, they decided that other agencies were best equipped to handle the issue.

The settlement movement also represented women's push into social services. Settlements not only served as ideal places for educated women to establish a career, but they also served as a launching pad for many women's careers into other areas of the social sciences. Many of these women pioneered studies about crime, poverty, and other facets of city life, some held positions as heads of bureaus and other groups that came to

exist in the Progressive Era, and some, like Ingram, served on countless committees, developed several surveys, and spoke at various conferences while working as the head resident in a settlement house. While the advancement of college-educated women into various careers in the social sciences and social work expanded women's role in public life, the kind of public role women performed remained limited by beliefs about women's domestic, maternal nature. The settlement house served as a perfect position for a woman to both fulfill her desire for a professional career and meet the expectation of domestic service.

The idea of saving the city through service fit well into acceptable boundaries of an educated woman's role in society. Both progressive men and women wrestled with the implications of women's education and what constituted an appropriate career for women after graduation. Instead of tossing aside essentialist notions of gender, many progressive women embraced these notions of women's domesticity and employed them to justify their entry into public affairs. Historian Nancy S. Dye argued that this embrace of maternal rhetoric aided the progressive impulse, as it provided a framework for a collective female identity that allowed women to better understand poverty and envision collective solutions to urban problems. The beliefs and actions of these women further entrenched women into domestic, service-oriented careers and failed to expand accepted views of women's professionalism.<sup>212</sup>

The settlement house connected the various paths that women trained in the social sciences chose to take. Women like the Hill sisters not only conducted kindergartens in Louisville, but Patty Smith Hill led the city's kindergarten movement. With help from

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<sup>212</sup> Frankel and Dye, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, 5.

local chapters of organizations like the National Council of Jewish Women, kindergartens operated at Neighborhood House under the guise of Mary Hill and other female teachers. While Archibald Hill founded Neighborhood House and served as its first head resident, women ran most of the day-to-day operations, oversaw most of the clubs and classes, and, after Hill's departure, served as the House's head residents. Although men played their part at Neighborhood House and other major settlements, women performed most of the work. Women serving as assistant residents also helped conduct studies on the neighborhood to fight poverty, combat child labor, and improve housing and sanitation. Ingram worked for several organizations, including the Kentucky Children's Bureau, the Kentucky Children's Code Commission, and the Committee of Youth Outside of School and Home.<sup>213</sup> While Ingram and other women like Addams enjoyed their work and considered it necessary, the work still centered around the teaching and protection of children as well as adults who needed help. While only one aspect of women's progressivism, settlement houses still typified the acceptable and expected professional role of women: service to others.

Though they also served adults, the special focus on children at settlement houses required the work of women since progressives took essentialism for granted. Societal expectations dictated that women teach children, and progressives aimed to reach the youth of the city to mold them into respectable, ideal American citizens as they became adults. Women fulfilled both their expected roles as teachers and caregivers and the broader progressive goal of molding susceptible children. Most of Ingram's activities inside and outside of Neighborhood House involved teaching children, ensuring that

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<sup>213</sup> 1941 Neighborhood House Annual Report, Filson Historical Society.



children remained in school, and providing appropriate recreation for children who might otherwise run the streets.

Perhaps one of the most long-lasting and far-reaching aspects of the settlement movement was the entrenchment of bureaucracy into the lives of the lower classes and the expansion of social work. Although settlements cannot lay exclusive claim to these two points – the expansion of bureaucracy and social work became central to the Progressive Era and the United States ever since – the expansive list of issues residents encountered dictated a larger apparatus than the settlement structure provided. As historian Mina Carson noted, when settlement leaders realized the interconnectedness of neighbors' abundant health problems, they called for greater state control over sanitation and other matters of health in the city. However, the residents' efforts countered their own stated goals of fostering self-help and self-determination for the lower classes of the cities by placing their needs in the hands of "experts."<sup>214</sup> This contradiction became a vital component of the settlement movement as it matured.

The trajectory of the settlement movement from its original founding ideals to the beginnings of modern social work indicated this emphasis on the use of middle-class experts. Neighborhood House underwent this transformation as well. Inspired by the Social Gospel and the work of Graham Taylor, Archibald Hill established Neighborhood House in hopes of forming congenial relationships between classes and filling the needs of the neighborhood as those needs arose. Over Ingram's time as head resident, larger agencies absorbed the work of smaller committees and took over certain activities offered at the House. For example, the Child Labor and Truancy Committee, through which

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<sup>214</sup> Carson, *Settlement Folk*, 72.

Ingram investigated street children, became a part of the Kentucky Child Labor Association as the Committee on Investigation and Relief.<sup>215</sup> Ingram also worked for the Kentucky Children's Code Commission and the Kentucky Child Welfare Commission, both of which the Kentucky Children's Bureau absorbed in 1929.<sup>216</sup> Even the public school system took over the kindergarten that operated at Neighborhood House.<sup>217</sup>

Instead of immigrants of the lower classes determining their own needs in the community based on their own standards, settlement workers and other "experts" determined the kind of help that the city population needed. This emphasis on bureaucracy and the use of social work wrenched autonomy from immigrants and created standards not rooted in their own wants and needs but in the beliefs of middle-class civil servants who determined what criteria should be met by whom in such areas as health and education. As Carson asserted, settlement workers "shared the faith of the Progressive Era" by employing what they considered to be "benign and constructive social control" exerted by experts, even if they never let go of their ideas about social democracy.<sup>218</sup> Settlement leaders believed they knew best what the lower classes needed and, in turn, contributed to the imposition of strangers and the state into all aspects of their lives.

Settlement leaders engaged in their work with a healthy dose of enthusiasm, but their idealism, their class blinders, and their belief in their own social and cultural

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<sup>215</sup> Kentucky Child Labor Association Report, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 32, Filson Historical Society, n.d.

<sup>216</sup> Frances MacGregor Ingram to Wiley H. Swift, Frances MacGregor Ingram Papers, Folder 28, Filson Historical Society, February 15, 1929.

<sup>217</sup> Interview with Laurena Eaton, Filson Historical Society.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

superiority limited the impact of their work. Although they shared a general understanding of the needs of African-Americans, most leaders stopped short of offering them help. Furthermore, settlement houses exemplified women's push into domestic professional service and facilitated the establishment of bureaucracy and social work that removed autonomy from the lower classes. These negative aspects of the settlement movement do not suggest that individual adults and children who attended classes, formed clubs, and received help at Neighborhood House and other settlements found no personal fulfillment or never enjoyed the presence of the settlement in their neighborhood. Nor do these negative aspects suggest that settlements performed no valuable work for their neighbors. However, the unequal relationship between residents and their neighbors created further problems for the neighbors as residents imposed their own programs and standards.

This example of Neighborhood House as a social settlement suggests much about social reform and its strengths and weaknesses from the Progressive Era to the urban environment of today's world. Although middle-class reformers like Ingram believed they had the best interests of their poorer neighbors at heart, the programs they created and the standards they imposed left little room for urban immigrants in the cities to take control of their own lives and determine their own needs and wants as working-class people. Problems and drawbacks with Progressive Era reform echo today, as the further imposition of the state and the further entrenchment of bureaucracy affects urban communities' capacity for self-determination. Furthermore, working-class voices are still drowned out by middle-class experts who dominate conversations about social reform and social change. As the example of Neighborhood House shows, while the efforts of

these reformers could sometimes bring beneficial changes to a poor, urban community, those efforts often came without their input and placed the working-class on the sideline of their own struggle.

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