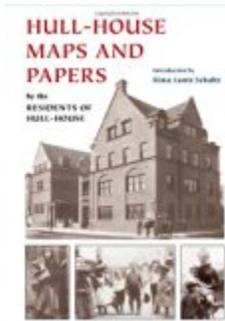


Rima Lunin Schultz, ed. *Hull-House Maps and Papers: A Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago, Together With Comments and Essays on Problems Growing Out of the Social Conditions*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007. x + 178 pp. \$50.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-252-03134-2.

Reviewed by Ruth Crocker (Department of History, Auburn University)
Published on H-SHGAPE (January, 2008)



If Jacob Riis Had Lived at Hull-House

The appearance of a new edition of *Hull-House Maps and Papers*, first published in 1895, suggests the continuing fascination of scholars with the famous Chicago settlement house and its founder, Jane Addams. It joins a number of important new studies of Hull-House and its reform circle by biographers, historians, and moral philosophers.[1] This edition, the first since the Arno Press reprint of 1970, is welcome for its thoughtful extended introduction by Rima Lunin Schultz, assistant director of the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, and for the eight full-color maps showing wage and ethnicity data accompanying what has been described as the first social survey in the United States.

Settlement houses like Hull-House were a new kind of institution, neither government agency, nor graduate school, nor charity, that became a center of reform activism for an extraordinary group of reformers, many of them college-educated women. They gravitated to settlement houses in this period because these institutions offered an opportunity for collective life and work in the city. Barred from most positions in higher education and from professions open to their male peers such as medicine or the ministry, women resident in the settlement houses engaged both in social research and social work (the term was new). The settlements served as an arena for producing social knowledge and as centers for the reform campaigns fueled by that new knowledge.[2]

New interest by scholars in the early years of Amer-

ican social science makes the reissue of *Hull-House Maps and Papers* particularly timely. *Hull-House Maps and Papers* is clearly part of the literature of reform—Rima Schultz calls it “a major work of sociological investigation and analysis” (p. 15). It reflects the Progressive belief that by publishing statistics of harsh working conditions or bad housing social scientists would activate an informed public that would demand reform. It was produced at a time when social scientists could be sociologists, humanitarians, Social Gospellers, and activists, all at once. Later the practitioners of this engaged social science would be marginalized, as social science retreated to university departments of sociology and political economy, and drew the covers of objectivity and professionalism over its head.[3] *Hull-House Maps and Papers* exemplifies the Progressive-era confidence that reform begins with fact-finding and publicity, a tradition that runs from Charles Booth in England to W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), to the Pittsburgh Survey (1909-11) and beyond. Interestingly, Jane Addams made no such claim. She wrote, “The residents of Hull-House offer these maps and papers to the public, not as exhaustive treatises, but as recorded observations, which may possibly be of value, because they are immediate, and the result of long acquaintance” (quoted, p. 5).

Hull-House Maps and Papers was in fact an improvised volume, the result of intersecting reform initiatives—a U.S. Department of Labor investigation of slums, and an Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics inquiry

into sweated labor. Both employed Hull-House resident expert Florence Kelley. In the wake of the public outcry prompted by Jacob Riis's sensational *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), U.S. Commissioner of Labor Carroll D. Wright had been charged by Congress to undertake the investigation that produced *A Special Investigation of the Slums of Great Cities* (1893). Wright appointed Kelley, whose investigation of labor conditions under the auspices of the Illinois Bureau of Labor resulted in the first legislation regulating sweatshops in Illinois to head the Chicago phase of this investigation. Kelley selected as the area of study ("the slum"), a neighborhood of barely one-third of a square mile east of Hull-House in Chicago's Nineteenth Ward. For several months, investigators collected house-by-house data on wages and nationalities, which they plotted onto colored maps. They then faced the dilemma of how to publicize them.

Louise Knight in her new biography of Jane Addams gives a sense of the improvisation that produced the volume. Residents had been collecting data on nationalities and wages in the settlement neighborhood all spring for the Department of Labor study, and had agreed to prepare maps to illustrate their findings. "But nothing else had been decided. At a Residents' Meeting in August, the minutes plaintively recorded the question, 'What is to go with the maps?'"[4] They decided to add research papers by Florence Kelley, Jane Addams, Julia Lathrop, and Ellen Gates Starr that were versions of papers given at the Chicago Congress on Social Settlements the year before. Jane Addams then titled the resulting volume *Hull-House Maps and Papers: A Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago, Together With Comments and Essays on Problems Growing Out of the Social Conditions*. At the invitation of Richard Ely, it became part of the series, *Library of Economics and Politics*, published by Thomas Y. Crowell.

The resulting volume is a collection of papers, uneven in length and perspective. Several of the essays (including those on the Bohemians and the Italians) make no mention of the maps. *Hull-House Maps and Papers* begins with Agnes Holbrook's discussion of the research design and methods of the social survey and the mapping project. Holbrook, a Wellesley graduate and a resident since 1892 of Hull-House, had worked with Kelley to prepare the maps. Then follows Florence Kelley's essay, "The Sweating System," a brilliant demonstration of fact-based advocacy. Florence Kelley and Alzina Stevens's "Wage-Earning Children" is next, based on first-hand investigation and observation. Isabel Eaton's powerful indictment of work conditions among the cloak makers was

also included, as were two essays by Hull-House residents who were both immigrants and journalists, Josepha Humpal-Zeman on the Bohemians, and Alessandro Mastro Valerio on Chicago's Italians. Charles Zueblin's curious essay, "The Chicago Ghetto," rounded out the essays on immigrant "colonies," a portrait of a Jewish community that was already so dispersed that the word "ghetto" seems more about "othering" than social scientific observation. (Zueblin used the term "ghetto" despite the evidence that the Jewish community was fast dispersing; in fact, with the delay in publication, the maps were rapidly becoming out of date).[5]. Also included is Julia Lathrop's jaundiced assessment of Cook County Charities by an advocate of social work professionalization; Ellen Gates Starr's "Art and Labor," and finally Addams's "The Settlement as a Factor in the Labor Movement." The volume ends with a brief and deceptively naïve overview by Addams of Hull-House, an "Outline Sketch" of the settlement's purpose and its activities, illustrated with internal and external photographs of the settlement buildings.

Rima Schultz's introduction helps the reader make sense of this rather idiosyncratic collection. Building on the work of others, she discusses how women were able to become social science experts and even to develop a "female dominion" in reform, simply because when they engaged with topics deemed natural for women, such as child health, juvenile courts, and women workers, they spoke with authority. *Hull-House Maps and Papers* offers a close-up of women as practitioners of social science.[6]. Their writings imagined an expanded state power that would protect women and children and end child labor. They were strong advocates of organized labor, municipal reform, regulation of sweatshops, and consumer protection. They called for housing reform and for a living wage for labor, and as experts on the city and labor conditions they offered to mediate in disputes between employers and labor. The writing is powerfully effective without the sensationalism characteristic of Riis. Here are Kelley and Stevens rebutting arguments for child labor:

"[W]age-earning children are an unmitigated injury to themselves, to the community upon which they will later be burdens, and to the trade which they demoralize. They learn nothing valuable; they shorten the average of the trade life, and they lower the standard of living of the adults with whom they compete" (p. 89).

Central to this project was the insistence that data were legitimate not because of the investigators' academic credentials (some were frankly amateurs), but be-

cause of their residency in the neighborhood—their data was experience-based. In this way the volume anticipates the pragmatist project that Hull-House was becoming. Not only did the essays present various views of the “social problem,” they even had no common body of data. Nor was there an editorial voice, for the volume’s authorship was a collective, “Residents of Hull-House, a Social Settlement.” This puts it in contrast to Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*, with its strong authorial voice and journalistic tone, and its undeniable voyeurism. Riis, too, used facts to gather support for reform of conditions, presenting them in the form of maps, tables, and of course photographs.

Schultz acknowledges her debt to recent work on gender and social science by Helene Silverberg, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Dorothy Ross. But she also has interesting things to say of her own. She points out lapses in objectivity and examples of the moralism that still shaped the social surveys of this period, such as the tendency of these privileged observers to label immigrant communities “clannish,” when they should have valorized the immigrants’ ethic of cooperation and survival (p. 113). Investigators assumed the existence of “foreign colonies” or “quarters” in the city, and took them as a unit of study, even when their own maps showed evidence of ethnic intermingling and upward mobility contradicting these assumptions. Schultz discusses how the area chosen for study omitted “better areas,” thus creating a misleading impression of lack of upward mobility. In this connection she might have cited work by Alan Mayne and Seth Koven on representation by privileged observers of “slums” and slum-dwellers in this period.[7]

Schultz’s introduction also usefully synthesizes some new research on Hull-House funding and on connections between the reform community and the elite clubwomen who formed what has been called Chicago’s “women’s political culture.” As co-editor of the excellent prize-winning biographical volume, *Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990* (2001), Schultz has more information than ever about these connections. She carefully weighs the benefits of this sponsorship against possible pressure from elite funders, and concludes that Hull-House residents were free to engage in social experiments and to express radical ideas. She forthrightly states that “wealthy clubwomen underwrote the reform agenda at the Hull-House” (p. 15).[8]

The introduction also includes a fascinating discussion of the curious photos that accompany Jane Addams’s appendix, “Outline Sketch Descriptive of Hull-House.”

There, empty rooms and exterior views of buildings draw attention to the settlement itself, not to the mixed nationalities of working-class Chicago who were the settlement’s intended clients. It makes you wonder. What if Jacob Riis had lived at Hull-House? What if *Hull-House Maps and Papers* had included images of the settlement’s working poor and immigrant residents to illustrate the weight of the text documenting a vast amount of exploitation of immigrant labor and woeful lack of regulation of work conditions that amounted to little more than slavery? Would the American welfare state have emerged that much sooner? As it was, *How the Other Half* was a sensation, while *Hull-House Maps and Papers*, a much more authoritative documenting of poverty but without the photographs of poor people, had a short publishing history. The maps were expensive to reproduce and the publisher suspended publication after only one thousand copies.[9]. It will be useful to have this volume, long out of print, available once more.

It seems ungenerous to criticize such a useful and welcome volume but this reader was put off by an editorial decision to limit notes and commentary to the introduction, leaving the papers themselves without reference notes. This forces the reader to go back and forth to the introduction for background and biographical information on each paper. In addition the notes could have used a little more editing to cut duplication and occasional inaccuracies (for example, Riis’s book is more than “a graphic account of children,” as Schultz describes it on p. 2). Finally, readers who want a richer context for the Hull-House social survey should read this volume along with Alice O’Connor’s *Poverty Knowledge*, a long view of the social survey movement in the United States, and her recent *Social Science For What?*, an impassioned defense of engaged social research in the Progressive Era and in our own time.

Notes

[1]. Victoria Bissell Brown, *The Education of Jane Addams* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy: A Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

[2]. Ruth Crocker, “Settlement Houses,” in *Oxford Companion to United States History*, ed. Paul Boyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 699-700. See also Crocker, “Unsettling Perspectives: The Settlement Movement, the Rhetoric of Social History and the Search for

Synthesis,” in *Contesting the Master Narrative: Essays in Social History*, ed. Jeff Cox and Shelton Stromquist (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998), 179-205.

[3]. Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); O'Connor, *Social Science for What? Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turned Right Side Up* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006). See also Mary Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865-1905* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975).

[4]. Louise W. Knight, *Citizen*, 275.

[5]. The point is made in Kathryn Kish Sklar, “Hull-House Maps and Papers: Social Science as Women’s Work in the 1890s,” in *Gender and American Social Science: The Formative Years*, ed. Helene Silverberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 146. Sklar’s essay first appeared in *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective, 1880-1940*, ed. Martin Bulmer, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Kevin Bales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

sity Press, 1991).

[6]. An important discussion is Dorothy Ross, “Gendered Social Knowledge: Domestic Discourse, Jane Addams, and the Possibilities of Social Science,” in *Gender and American Social Science*, 235-264. Kathryn Kish Sklar writes that, while social science “gave women the language and analytic tools equal to their male peers, [it also]” deepened their identification with female-specific topics and issues.“ Sklar, “Hull-House Maps,” 128.

[7]. Alan Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities, 1870-1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[8]. See also Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast, eds., *Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990: A Biographical Dictionary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). This edition of *Hull-House Maps and Papers* illustrates that the biographical essays it contains are now an essential resource for Chicago history.

[9]. Sklar, “Hull-House Maps,” 146.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-shgape>

Citation: Ruth Crocker. Review of Schultz, Rima Lunin, ed., *Hull-House Maps and Papers: A Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago, Together With Comments and Essays on Problems Growing Out of the Social Conditions*. H-SHGAPE, H-Net Reviews. January, 2008.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=14047>

Copyright © 2008 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu.