

# Jacob Riis and Jane Addams essay on progressive era

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



At the turn of the twentieth century the press received a great amount of credit for the success of the Progressive movement. Notable muckrakers Jane Addams and Jacob Riis showed determination towards there being a change; each made sure to use their abilities to aid in not only a social way, but ask economically and politically, even to this day what they've done has made a massive impact. A native of Denmark, Jacob Riis moved to the US in 1870 to pursue work. Riis worked as a police reporter, but eventually became a social reformer. He fought to eliminate the devastating slum-like conditions that were present in New York City's Lower East Side. With the use of his book "How the Other Half Lives", Riis was able to open many of the wealthy residences eyes to how immigrants and the less fortunate lives during that era. Riis himself endured similar conditions when he first made the transition to the states; he struggled with being jobless, hungry and homeless, many nights he copes with thoughts of suicide. Three years later he acquired a job as a journalist working for the New York association. "How the Other Half Lives" targeted the minds of wealthy citizens as a way to get them to open their eyes to what others just like them were forced to live through. Jacob Riis pointed out that there were single family dwellings that shared side walls with other houses, they were called tenements and were overcrowded and unsanitary. Riis was able to project a very concerned tone and empathize with the people that suffered with poverty, because he too himself knows what it feels like to experience such an battle. Through the pictures in his book, America was able to see what little the government did to help financially unstable people. Riis along with fellow muckrakers Upton Sinclair with his novel "The Jungle" which shed light on disgusting and filthy

conditions surrounding the production of food products, and Jane Addams who created the Hull Houses as a way to provide shelter and better living conditions for Americans. Overall Riis was able to accomplish exactly what he wanted, he was capable of successfully accomplishing what he set out to, with the recognition "How the Other Half Lives" received, people from the outside looking in changed their mindsets and actually improve the living conditions for the poor, which at that time lessened the amount of diseases spreading. An advocate for immigrants, the poor and women, at the age of twenty-nine Jane Addams established the Hull House in 1889, which opened its doors to European immigrants, providing them with food and shelter. Located in Chicago, the Hull House became the first settlement house in the United States. As a social reformer, Addams became the spokesperson for organized labors and was determined to eliminate poverty. Through her writing and speeches, Addams left a lasting impression on the nation during the Progressive Era; her commitment to immigrant communities, and similar to Jacob Riis in her work with wanting to improve slum-like communities, helped change the way people view impoverished living conditions and the things they do to improve them. Both Jane Addams and Jacob Riis did whatever they sought necessary to improve the conditions that immigrants encountered during the progressive era, both worked and successfully got the wealthy and the government to make a change in the way they handled those specific situations, all while influencing modern day. With what they've done during the Progressive Era, Jane Addams and Jacob Riis made a key point in empathizing the needs for more jobs for immigrants and shelters for the less fortunate.