

History of Social Workers

In the early 1900's many programs and services was created through the social workers addressing the needs of the poor and the immigrants. The early social workers were advocates for issues such as, increasing access to suitable housing and medical care, obtaining fair wages, providing health care and education to the community. Early social workers recognized that poverty and lack of education could exacerbate illness, and were crusaders for social equality.

Sara A. Collins Fernandis (1863-1951)

Sara A. Fernandis, is the founder of the first Black Social Settlement House in the United States in Washington, D.C. and received her MSW degree from New York University. Her life long career was organizing social welfare and public health activities in the segregated Black communities of the period. She was the first Black Social Worker employed by the Baltimore Health Department in the early 1900's.

Jane Addams 1860-1935

Jane Addams was a Nobel Peace Prize winner and perhaps the most famous Social Worker from the United States. Addams is the founder of the Hull House in Chicago in 1889. Addams believed as a Social Worker, poverty was not due to character deficits, but social conditions that needed to be changed. She also felt helping people meet their immediate needs, and the Hull House worked for social change, addressing such issues as child labor, public health reform, labor laws, and race relations.

