

A pair of lithograph maps, printed in colours, a few areas of discolouration at folds.

“THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT WORK BY AMERICAN WOMEN SOCIAL SCIENTISTS BEFORE 1900”

[The Hull-House Maps] 1. Wage map no. 1, Polk to Twelfth [together with] 2. Nationalities map no. 1, Polk to Twelfth.

Author
ADDAMS, Jane, GATES STARR, Ellen, KELLEY, Florence and Samuel Sewell GREELEY

Publication date
1895].

Publisher
Thomas Y. Crowell,

Publication place
[New York,

Physical description
A pair of lithograph maps, printed in colours, a few areas of discolouration at folds.

Dimensions
360 by 1120mm. (14.25 by 44 inches).

Notes
The Hull House maps were groundbreaking in both sociology and cartography, pioneering the method of mapping “social and demographic characteristics of a population within a geographical area” over time to initiate social change (Deegan). The maps document socioeconomic data from slum neighbourhoods in the midst of immigration into the United States. When impoverished Europeans fled to America in search of financial security, the rapid influx and lack of housing that awaited them led to atrocious conditions of decay and overcrowding in industrial centres.

Hull House was set up to counter this trend. It was opened by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889, two social reformers and activists who decided to start the house after visiting a similar institution, Toynbee Hall, in Britain. Settlement houses were charity centres which aimed to alleviate poverty and encourage social diversity by housing middle class volunteers amongst working class recipients. Hull House acted as a residential facility as well as a community centre for newly arrived

immigrants. A place where integration into American society was taught through various skills and language classes, Hull House illustrated the burgeoning social concerns circulating throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Hull House Maps and Papers project was led by Florence Kelley, a researcher and advocate who was particularly interested in social and working conditions. As well as the Hull House project, she also worked on the report of the smallpox epidemic in Chicago in 1893, and helped enforce the provisions of the Illinois Factory Inspection Law (she was the first female factory inspector in America). The team based at Hull House collected data by visiting and questioning the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, helped by four workers from the Bureau of Labor (the research was part of a wider project on slums commissioned by Congress in 1892). The book eventually produced was a collection of essays on topics ranging from labour unions to the function of art in the community. The highlights, however, were the maps, inspired by Charles Booth's poverty maps of London.

There are two sets of maps covering the same four sections of Chicago: one showing the nationality of the inhabitants of each buildings, and one showing the weekly household income. The different nationalities and income bands are represented by different colours. The maps can be juxtaposed to show both the variety of people emigrating to America, and also how successful they were. Hull House then used these maps as the basis of discussion for future projects. For example, by comparing the first wage and nationality maps showing Halstead Street to Jefferson, it is clear that the strips of English-speaking people along De Koven and West 12th tended to earn in the highest income bracket, above 20 dollars per week, suggesting the importance of the language lessons offered by the House.

The maps are also an important example of the growth in research work done by women in centres like Hull-House, while social science as a discipline was still forming in traditional academic institutions. They were "the single most important work by American women social scientists before 1900" (Kish Sklar).

Bibliography

Mary Jo Deegan, 'The Hull House Maps and Papers', in Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O'Connor (eds.), Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics and Policy (Santa Barbara, Denver and Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2004), vol. I, p.386; Robert Holland, Chicago in Maps, (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), pp.160-163; Kathryn Kish Sklar, 'Hull-House Maps and Papers: social science as women's work in the 1890s', in Martin Bulmer, Kevin Bales, and Kathryn Kish Sklar (eds.), The Social Survey in Historical Perspective 1880-1940 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.111-147.

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