

Document A (Modified)

As more young immigrants moved from farms in the country to urban areas, dance halls became a popular form of recreation. Many progressive reformers found these dance halls to be inappropriate and pushed to create alternative forms of entertainment for youth, like amusement parks.

One Sunday night at twelve o'clock I walked past a large public dance hall. As I was standing by the rail, a young man approached me and quite simply asked me to introduce him to some 'nice girl,' saying that he did not know anyone there. I replied that a public dance hall was not the best place in which to look for a nice girl, and he said: 'But I'm awfully lonesome since I came to Chicago.' And then he added rather defiantly: 'Some nice girls do come here. It's one of the best halls in town.'

The public dance halls are filled with frivolous and irresponsible young people in a feverish search for pleasure. They are not a substitute for the old dances on the village green in which all of the older people in the village participated. Chaperonage then was not a social duty but natural and inevitable.

Let us fix this modern city so that it shall be free from the wickedness and weakness which tempt the young people who are living in its tenement houses and working in its factories.

Vocabulary

Defiantly: boldly opposing

Frivolous: Not having serious purpose or value

Chaperonage: adult supervision

Tenement: run-down and overcrowded apartment

Source: *Excerpt from Jane Addams, The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets, 1909.*

Document B (Modified)

The dances are short—four to five minutes; the intermissions are long—fifteen to twenty minutes; thus ample opportunity is given for drinking.

In these same halls obscene language is permitted, and even the girls carry on indecent conversation, cursing a lot, while the less sophisticated girls stand around listening, scandalized but fascinated.

Many of the halls are poorly lighted. There is very little protection in case of fire...

A city law should be passed covering the following points:

1. All dance halls should be made to comply with the regulations of the Building and Fire Departments so as to insure proper sanitation and adequate fire protection....
2. The sale of liquor in dance halls or in buildings connected with them should be prohibited....
7. No immoral dancing or familiarity should be tolerated.
8. People under the influence of liquor or known prostitutes should not be permitted in dance halls....
11. There should be an inspector of dance halls who should have in his department a corps of assistants who would regularly inspect the halls and make reports concerning them to him weekly.

Vocabulary

familiarity: inappropriate or offensive language or behavior

Source: *Excerpts from an article by a Progressive social reformer, Louise de Koven Bowen, called "Dance Halls," published in June 1911.*

Document C (Modified)

An Italian girl who has had lessons in cooking will help her mother to connect the entire family with American food and household habits. That the mother has never baked bread in Italy—only mixed it in her own house and then taken it out to the village oven—makes all the more valuable her daughter's understanding of the complicated cooking stove. The same thing is true of the girl who learns to sew, and more than anything else, perhaps, of the girl who receives the first simple instruction in the care of little children—that skillful care which every tenement-house baby requires if he is to live through his second summer.

Through civic instruction in the public schools, the Italian woman slowly becomes urbanized, and the habits of her entire family change. The public schools in the immigrant neighborhoods deserve all the praise as Americanizing forces.

Source: *Excerpt from Jane Addams' book, Twenty Years at Hull-House, (1910). This passage comes from a chapter called "Immigrants and Their Children."*

Document D (Modified)

Several days before Christmas 1896 one of my Irish playmates suggested that I go with her to a Christmas party at Hull-House. I asked her if there would be any Jewish children at the party. She said that there were Jewish children at the parties every year.

I then began to understand that things might be different in America. In Poland it had not been safe for Jewish children to be on the streets on Christmas.

At the party, the children of the Hull-House Music School sang some songs, that I later found out were called "Christmas carols." I shall never forget the sweetness of those voices. I could not connect this beautiful party with any hatred or superstition that existed among the people of Poland.

As I look back, I know that I became an American at this party. I was with children who had been brought here from all over the world, with their fathers and mothers, in search of a free and happy life. And we were all having a good time at a party, as the guests of an American, Jane Addams.

Source: *The document below was written by Hilda Satt Polacheck in the 1950s, in her book I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl. She tells about her memories of Hull House from 1896.*