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# **Review: The Jane Addams Papers Project**

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**Project**

The Jane Addams Papers Project

**Project Directors**

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**Project URL**

<https://janeaddams.ramapo.edu/>

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**Project Overview****Cathy Moran Hajo**

The Jane Addams Papers (JADE) is a scholarly editing project sponsored by Ramapo College of New Jersey's School of Humanities and Global Studies. Its mission is to make the papers of Jane Addams (1860-1935) widely available in digital and book formats, and to serve as a digital humanities training site for undergraduate students and volunteers.

JADE is a work in progress that publishes documents written by and to Jane Addams from the years 1901-1935 on a freely accessible website. We focus on correspondence, writings, and digitized images from the Jane Addams Microfilm Edition, supplemented by new scans if needed. The project creates descriptive metadata to facilitate searches; transcribes all documents for ease of reading and searchability; and identifies, maps, and links people, organizations, and events mentioned in the texts. The project uses Omeka Classic for its digital edition, with a custom theme designed by Anneliese Dehner. We are currently working on enabling downloads of data so that digital humanists can visualize the contents.

Three scholarly editors, Cathy Moran Hajo, Stacy Pratt McDermott, and Victoria Sciancalepore, design, supervise, and proofread the work of a team of 10-15 undergraduate students from Ramapo College of New Jersey. Part of the project's function is to serve as an experiential lab for training undergraduate students in digital humanities techniques and historical research.

We aim to serve a wide range of users from scholars to middle school and high school students and teachers. We are adding educational tools to help younger scholars create National History Day projects and are currently working on an Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum based on the texts. We have broadened access to Addams's documents by making them accessible via the internet. Our educational resources have become the most widely viewed pages, which shows us that we are reaching younger scholars and their teachers.

The project has received support from Ramapo College of New Jersey, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, the Gladys Delmas Foundation, and the Ruth McCormick Tankersley Charitable Trust, as well as donations by individuals.

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## Project Review

Núria Sara Miras Boronat

The Jane Addams Digital Edition (JADE) is a scholarly editing project that digitizes papers and correspondence by Jane Addams from 1901 to 1935—from the time she started to compose the essays included in her first book, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), until she died in 1935. The webpage offers two different paths of exploration, with the two tabs marked in the right upper corner: “Papers Project” and “Digital Edition.”

The “Papers Project” offers students and researchers unfamiliar with Addams a short biography, a very exhaustive chronology, links to other resources (i.e., archives, collections, museums, related organizations), and a list of Hull-House residents registered from the opening until its transformation into the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. The list of residents is given in alphabetical order and classified by profession. It would be interesting to investigate the periods in which each resident was active at Hull-House to get a general idea of the communities formed and the projects in which those communities were working. The “Papers Project” also provides access to interesting blog entries on Addams, her times, and her contemporaries. The front page seems to contain only direct links to the last three entries, giving the strange impression to the inexperienced user that there is no additional blog content. The user only notices that there is so much more by accessing one of these three entries—

and if these entries are not appealing, users would miss these delightful short pieces. Therefore, it would be advisable to make the entries and the tags more visible.

The tab “Digital Edition” is most useful for advanced scholars searching for connections and topics in Addams's writings. This is a highly valuable resource because Addams wrote deliberately in a popular, not academic, style (e.g., the texts do not include bibliographies or notes). Addams was assuming that her audience was well aware of her sometimes not-so-subtle references, but they can be difficult to discern for today’s readers. For instance, “A Modern Lear” (written in 1894 and published in 1912 in the original version of *Democracy and Social Ethics*, though significantly modified) was intended to be an invective against George Pullman and his untenable position during the Chicago strike in 1894. By using the search engine, we are led to the printed version of the text, to the related documents, and the mentions of relevant facts and figures. We have the option to see the digitized copies of the 1912 version as well as a whole transcript of the text, which is very useful for research. At the bottom of the page, there is also a map with the locations related to the documents identified with red points in the map.

What is clear is that the project is growing thanks to the permanent team in the Ramapo College, as well as also through the contributions of scholars all over the world who can help by sending information about the subjects, people, events, and organizations, or by transcribing some of the less legible letters. It creates a genuine community of inquiry, quite a pragmatist concept in line with Jane Addams’s spirit.

JADE is one of the most important interventions that has occurred in the last decade for not only Addams' work but also for pragmatist scholarship. It provides very valuable information about the intertextual and contextual references of her writings, which are not obvious to contemporary readers, especially if those readers are not from the U.S. or are not English native speakers. It also informs readers about the density of connections and affections of one of the greatest thinkers and activists of the progressive era. Finally, it has a strong value as a project for teaching digital humanities.