

# Ideas for Reform

## READING FOCUS

- How did different movements help the needy?
- How and where did sociology develop?
- What efforts were made to control immigration and personal behavior in the late 1800s?

## MAIN IDEA

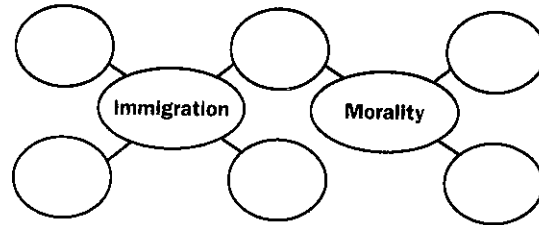
A variety of groups worked to improve social, economic, and political conditions in the cities.

## KEY TERMS

social gospel movement  
settlement house  
sociology  
nativism  
temperance movement  
prohibition  
vice

## TAKING NOTES

Copy the web diagram below. As you read, fill in each blank circle with important movements that focused on immigration, morality, or both.



**Setting the Scene** During the Gilded Age, saloons, places where men could meet to drink and gamble, could be found in nearly every city and town. Frances Willard paid her first visit to one at the age of 35. Unlike the customers, she arrived with a prayer group. Willard later wrote:

*“The tall, stately lady who led us placed her Bible on the bar and read a psalm . . . and then one of the older women whispered to me softly that the leader wished to know if I would pray. It was strange, perhaps, but I felt not the least reluctance, and kneeling on the sawdust floor, with a group of earnest hearts around me, and behind them . . . a crowd of unwashed, unkempt, hard-looking drinking men, I was conscious that perhaps never in my life, save beside my sister Mary’s dying bed, had I prayed as truly as I did then.”*

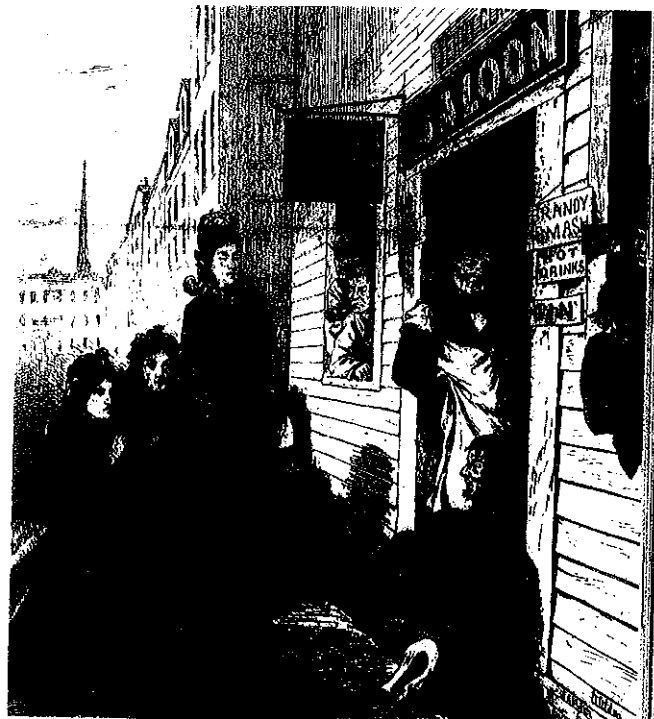
—Frances Willard

Frances Willard described the experience as her “baptism” in the “Crusade.” One week later she became president of the Chicago chapter of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, an anti-alcohol group. Frances Willard was a reformer. Like many Americans of her time, she observed a problem in society and chose to confront it, motivated by her faith and her concern for the well-being of others. However, not everyone agreed with her wish to ban alcohol. Like many other crusaders, Frances Willard found that her personal goals could lead to conflict.

## Helping the Needy

Many middle-class people were genuinely shocked by poor living and working conditions in the slums. Moved by social conscience or religious idealism, thousands of individuals joined groups to improve society by helping the needy. They argued that prosperous Americans should fight poverty and improve unwholesome social conditions in cities.

Temperance advocates pray outside a saloon.



**The Charity Organization Movement** In 1882, Josephine Shaw-Lowell founded the New York Charity Organization Society (COS). The COS tried to make charity a scientific enterprise. Members kept detailed files on those who received help. In this way, COS leaders could more easily determine how to serve their clients. Yet keeping detailed files also allowed COS leaders to distinguish between the poor whom they considered worthy of help and those whom they deemed unworthy. This attitude sometimes led to unkind treatment of the needy.

Many COS members wanted immigrants to adopt American, middle-class standards of child-raising, cooking, and cleaning. They did not care how strange these customs seemed to people with different cultural backgrounds. This disturbed some immigrants, but others were grateful for the assistance.

**The Social Gospel Movement** In the 1880s and 1890s, urban churches began to provide social services for the poor who now surrounded them. They

also tried to aim some reform campaigns in new directions. Instead of blaming immigrants for drinking, gambling, and other behaviors, the churches sought to treat the problems that drove people into such activities.

Soon a social reform movement developed within religious institutions. It was called the **social gospel movement** and it sought to apply the gospel (teachings) of Jesus directly to society. The movement focused on the gospel ideals of charity and justice, especially by seeking labor reforms. In 1908, followers of such views formed the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ. This organization supported providing improved living conditions and a larger share in the national wealth for all workers. Other religious organizations, including some Jewish synagogues, adapted the social gospel ideal for themselves.

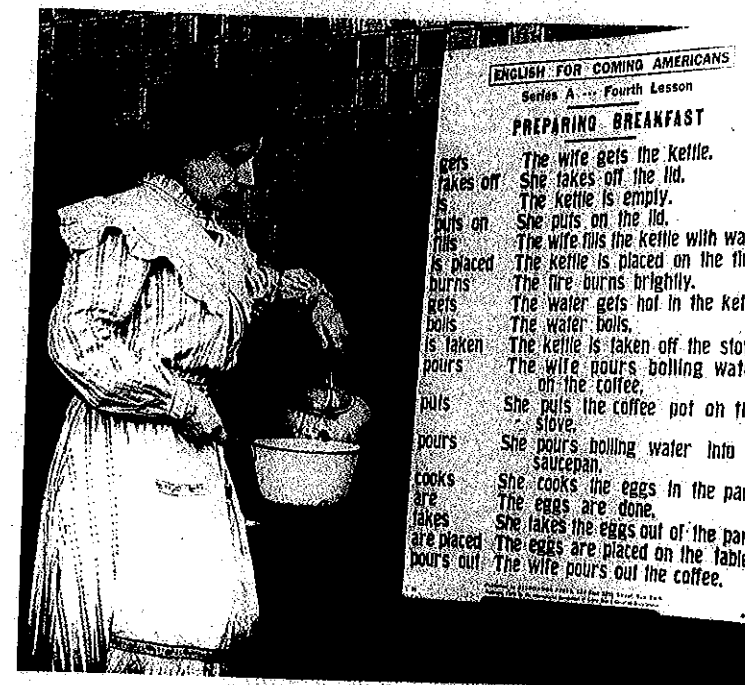
**The Settlement Movement** Thousands of young, educated women and men put the social

gospel into practice in an innovative reform program called the settlement movement. These young reformers settled into a house in the midst of a poor neighborhood. From this **settlement house**, a kind of community center, they eventually offered social services.

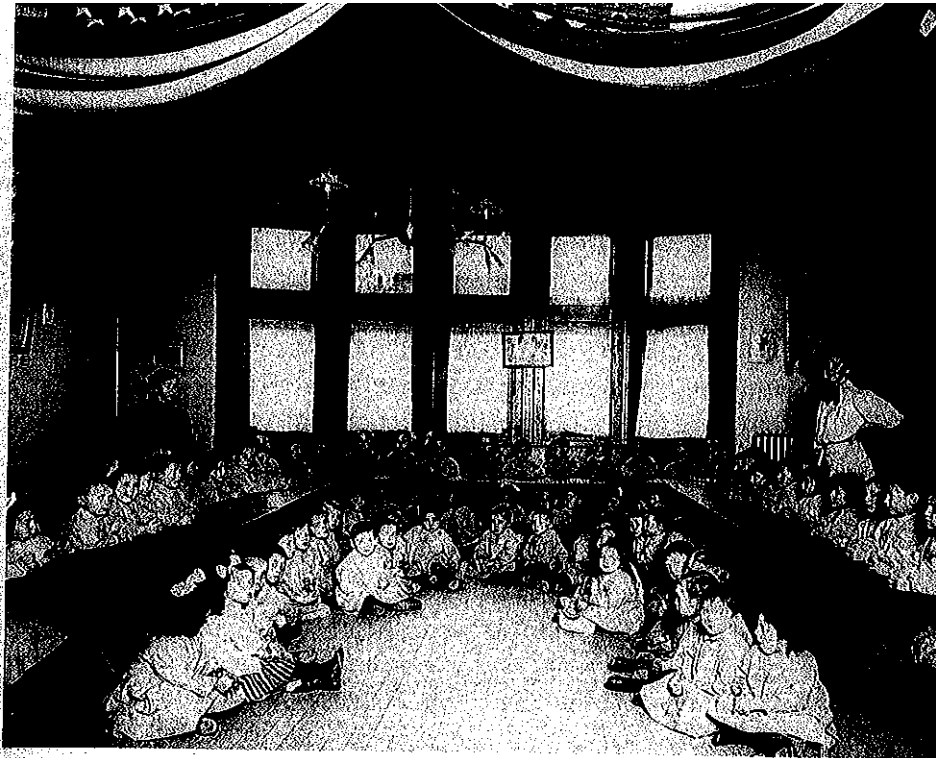
The settlement movement had begun in Britain. Its founders believed that simply giving money to the poor never really helped them. In order to find out what would be most helpful, the young settlers had to live in poor neighborhoods. There they could witness the effects of poverty firsthand.

In 1889, inspired by the British settlement movement, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr bought the run-down Charles Hull mansion in Chicago. They repaired it and opened its doors to their immigrant neighbors. At first, Starr and Addams simply wanted to get to know their neighbors, offering help when needed. Soon they began anticipating and responding to the needs of the community as a whole.

Over the decades that followed, Addams and Starr turned Hull House into a center of community activity. At Hull House, neighbors could attend cultural events, take classes, or display exhibits of crafts from their home countries. The



**VIEWING HISTORY** Some reformers focused their efforts on helping immigrants adjust to life in the United States. This immigrant is learning English. **Analyzing Information** What else is she learning?



**VIEWING HISTORY** Reformers offered help to newcomers by watching over their children while they worked. **Synthesizing Information** What other services did settlement houses offer?

settlement set up child-care centers, playgrounds, clubs, and summer camps for boys and girls; offices to help people find jobs and deal with legal problems; and health-care clinics. It also launched investigations of city economic, political, and social conditions. These actions laid the foundation for many later reforms.

Settlement houses like Hull House sprang up across the country. The Henry Street Settlement, founded by Lillian Wald on New York's Lower East Side, was originally a nurses' settlement to offer home health care to the poor. Its programs soon expanded to resemble many of those at Hull House. Missionaries, too, founded settlement houses, in part to gain converts but also to apply the social gospel in practical ways.

By 1910 there were more than 400 settlement houses. Most were supported by donations and staffed by volunteers or people willing to work for low wages and free room and board. Hundreds of college graduates, especially women excluded from other professions, became settlement workers. Except for leaders, such as Addams and Wald, most workers spent only a few years in these jobs. Many moved on to professional careers in social work, education, or government.

Few ever forgot their settlement experience. "I don't know that my attitude changed," wrote one former settlement worker, "but my point of view certainly did, or perhaps it would be more true to say that now I have several points of view." By helping its workers see social issues in new ways, the settlement houses energized the reform movement while improving the lives of the urban poor.

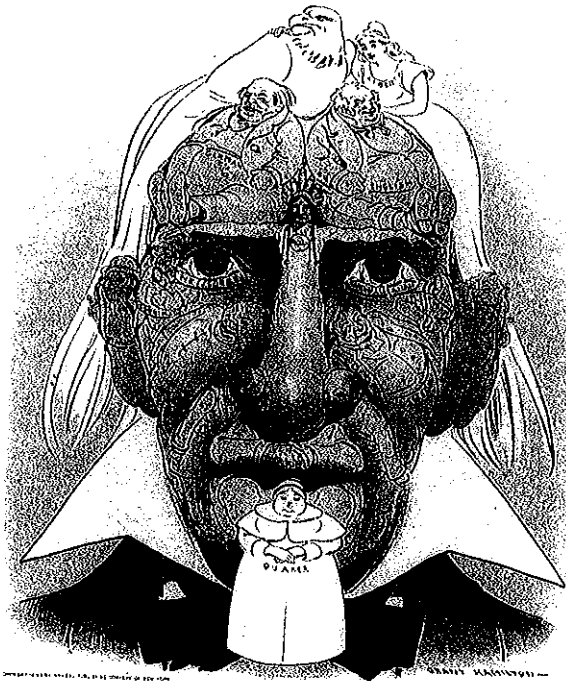
## The Development of Sociology

While settlement workers observed first-hand the problems of the slums, scholars in America and Europe were developing a scientific way of looking at how people lived. Philosopher Auguste Comte coined the term **sociology** to describe the study of how people interact with one another in a society. Sociology is a social science. Like a biologist studying animals, a sociologist collects data on societies, and measures the data against theories of human behavior.

### READING CHECK

What were the effects of the settlement movement?

# Judge



UNCLE SAM IS A MAN OF STRONG FEATURES.

**INTERPRETING POLITICAL CARTOONS** The caption on this magazine cover reads, "Uncle Sam is a man of strong features."

**Recognizing Point of View** What does this cartoon suggest about the artist's view of immigration?

## READING CHECK

Why did nativists oppose immigration?

Sociology provided a scientific counterpart to the settlement houses' practical experience.

Sociologists studied cultures around the world to learn what institutions and practices define a society. The institutions in an American community might include houses of worship, local governments, schools, libraries, and museums. Practices might include the way that children relate to their parents or a community teaches students. In the late nineteenth century, many sociologists studied the effects of industrialization and urbanization on established communities. America's rapidly changing population provided them with many examples.

## Controlling Immigration and Behavior

Many Americans linked the problems of the cities to the new immigrants. By controlling immigrants, they hoped to restore what they believed had been a past of purity and virtue. Groups were formed to pursue this goal. Some sought to keep immigrants out of the United States, while others wanted to change their behavior.

**Nativism** In the 1850s, the Know-Nothing Party had gained many followers by vowing to restrict immigration. Thirty years later this policy of **nativism**, or favoring native-born Americans over immigrants, reappeared. The rise of immigrants to positions of power in the cities helped provoke this new wave of antforeign bias. Passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 showed how politically effective the new nativists were.

Nativists did not oppose only Asian immigration. The American Protective Association, a nativist group founded in 1887, targeted immigrants in general as well as the Catholic Church. It called for the teaching of only American culture and the English language in schools and demanded tighter rules on citizenship and employment of aliens. Members of this secret society took an oath to hire and vote for Protestants alone.

Nativists won a victory in 1885, when Congress repealed the Contract Labor Act. Passed in 1864, the law had allowed employers to recruit foreign laborers. Even after the law's repeal, however, employers often illegally brought in foreign workers to replace striking employees. Such actions only heightened nativist feelings among workers.

There were nativists among the wealthy as well. The Immigration Restriction League was organized in 1894 by some Harvard College graduates. The League hoped to exclude immigrants considered unfit by requiring them to pass literacy tests. Its main targets were immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, whose cultures differed greatly from those of League members.

**Prohibition** Like nativism, another movement begun before the Civil War saw a revival later in the 1800s: the **temperance movement**, an organized campaign to eliminate alcohol consumption. Three groups dominated the new temperance movement: the Prohibition party, founded in 1869, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1874, and the Anti-Saloon League, founded in 1893. These groups opposed drinking on the grounds that it led to personal tragedies. They supported **prohibition**, a ban on the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. One activist, Carry Nation, won fame by smashing illegal saloons with a hatchet in her home state of Kansas.

## Focus on DAILY LIFE

### Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup

The WCTU found a target in the heavily advertised patent medicines that parents bought to cure illness and quiet crying babies. Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup sold very well; it put children to sleep with a mix of alcohol and morphine, a narcotic made from opium. Other childhood remedies based on morphine included Dr. Fahrney's Teething Syrup, Dr. Seth Arnold's Cough Killer, and Carney Common Sense Cure. Although popular, these so-called medicines were addictive and harmful to children's health. The federal government outlawed Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup in 1906.



Prohibition groups also opposed drinking because of what they saw as the links among saloons, immigrants, and political bosses. Immigrant men often used saloons as social clubs, where they could relax and also find information about jobs. Prohibitionists believed that saloons undermined public morals. Some prohibitionists even claimed that saloons formed the center of a movement to take over the United States. "Foreign control or conquest is rapidly making us un-Christian, with immorality throned in power," one prohibitionist wrote in 1908.

At first, progress was slow. Early prohibitionists measured their success by towns and counties that agreed to ban alcohol. By 1890, only three states had gone completely "dry" and embraced prohibition: Maine, Kansas, and North Dakota.

**Purity Crusaders** As cities grew, drugs, gambling, prostitution, and other forms of vice became big business. **Vice** (immoral or corrupt behavior) was not unique to the cities. But large urban populations made vice highly visible and very profitable. Then as now, many residents fought to rid their communities of unwholesome and illegal activities.

"Purity crusaders" led the way. In 1873, Anthony Comstock founded the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. The following year he won passage of a law that prohibited sending obscene materials through the United States mail. Material deemed obscene included descriptions of methods to prevent unwanted pregnancy. For decades the Comstock Law, as it came to be known, slowed the distribution of information about birth control.

Other purity crusaders attacked urban political machines, saying that machine-controlled police forces profited from vice. Police were known to demand payment from gamblers in return for ignoring illegal activities. On occasion, purity crusaders joined forces with other reformers to run for public office. By campaigning on an anti-vice platform, some succeeded in throwing machine candidates out of office. Usually the political machines regained power in later elections by mocking the self-righteous tone of many purists and by arguing that morality was a personal issue.

## Section

## 4

## Assessment

### READING COMPREHENSION

1. What was the purpose of the New York Charity Organization Society?
2. What is the purpose of **sociology**?
3. What was the goal of **nativist** movements?
4. How did **temperance** groups and purity crusaders differ from charity, **social gospel**, and **settlement** movements?

### CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

5. **Identifying Assumptions** How might the anti-immigrant arguments of wealthy nativists have differed from those of less-affluent nativists?
6. **Drawing Inferences** What were two possible reasons for people to oppose purity crusaders?
7. **Journal Writing** Write three brief fictional journal entries from the point of view of a settlement house worker.



### Take It to the NET

**Activity: Creating a Poster**  
Research Hull House and create a poster designed to inform neighbors about the services offered at that settlement house. Use the links provided in the *America: Pathways to the Present* area of the following Web site for help in completing this activity.  
[www.phschool.com](http://www.phschool.com)