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## Ada S. McKinley: A Hidden History of African American Settlement House in Chicago

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### ABSTRACT

Previous research on the history of the settlement house movement and the park and recreation profession has been dominated by celebrations of White social reformers such as Jane Addams. The stories of African American social reformers and their settlement houses have received little to no attention not only from leisure and recreation scholars, but also from the broader academic community. Using historiography and genealogy, we challenge the existing narrative and highlight the biography, activities, and legacy of Ada S. McKinley, an African American social reformer who founded the South Side Settlement House in Chicago during the first half of the twentieth century. A comparative analysis of McKinley and Addams was also conducted to promote a more nuanced understanding of their historical significance. We conclude with a summary of McKinley's contribution to the field of park and recreation and calls for more research on her and other forgotten pioneers of color.

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Ada S. McKinley; Jane Addams; recreation; South Side Settlement House

In September 1889, Jane Addams, Ellen Gates Starr, and Mary Keyser opened a settlement house called “Hull-House” in a poor district of Chicago. Settlement houses were established human service agencies developed purposely in city slums where human service workers provided education, citizenship classes, community development, immigration protection, and recreation; these service workers also engaged in social action on behalf of the poor living nearby (Schram et al., 2020). The residents of Hull-House were the women and men who paid rent to live there<sup>1</sup> and contributed to different activities and services through volunteerism in planning and leadership that they were committed to providing to their neighbors (see Bryan et al. (2019) for an excellent summary of the hundreds of residents that created and developed Hull-House).

Many academics have highlighted the significant contributions of Jane Addams and Hull-House to the development of the leisure profession. When discussing the history

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<sup>2</sup>The difference between a community house and a settlement house is that the latter has a head residents or residents who live in the house all the time while the former does not. Thus, a settlement house can provide service beyond a normal business hours while a community opens only part of the day. A settlement house usually offers more diverse programs than a community house.

of parks and recreation, along with leisure and youth services, many authors identify Jane Addams and Hull-House as the epicenter of the play and recreation movement (e.g., Edginton et al., 2017; McBridge, 1989; McLean et al., 2019; Schwab et al., 2014; Wellman et al., 2008). McLean et al. (2019) distinguished Jane Addams, Joseph Lee, and Luther Gulick as the three most effective pioneers in the recreation movement during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Over 50 years ago, Butler (1965, 1967) made similar claims and argued that Jane Addams was a paramount developer of the recreation movement and created one of the first model playgrounds. Bedini (1995) and later Dieser (2008) suggested that the “play ladies” of Hull-House were some of the first therapeutic recreation professionals in the United States. Jane Addams’ (1909/1972) book, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, is considered a classic in the history of community- and youth-based recreation: Addams delineated the importance of community recreation for shaping the development of morals in youth. In this publication, Jane Addams avowed, “To fail to provide for the recreation of youth is not only to deprive all of them of their natural form of expression, but is certain to subject some of them to the overwhelming temptation of illicit and soul-destroying pleasures” (pp. 102–103). Additionally, Addams argued that “Recreation is stronger than vice and recreation alone can stifle the lust for vice” (p. 20).

Although previous publications are marked by evangelical narratives on the significance of Jane Addams in the field of park and recreation, scant attention has been given to the other settlement houses that existed in the United States during the early 1900s. In fact, Woods and Kennedy (1970) republication of the National Conference of Settlements study from 1911 reveals that there were over 400 other settlement houses in 1911 and many of them focused specifically on social action on behalf of people from different racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, the history of African American social reformers and their settlement houses has received little to no attention not only from leisure scholars but also from the broader academic community. These omissions are troubling because the existing narratives can perpetuate Whiteness in leisure scholarship and continue to marginalize the history of people of color (McDonald, 2009). Indeed, recent leisure studies have advocated for a more balanced understanding of the historical and philosophical foundation of leisure and recreation and have called for more investigation into the contributions made by people of color in the field of leisure studies (Mowatt, 2017; Mowatt et al., 2018; Theriault & Mowatt, 2020).

In support of this on-going effort, this paper provides counter-narratives to the history of the settlement house movement and the parks and recreation movement that have been dominated by the stories of affluent White leaders. Using the concept of historiography (Loewen, 2018b) and genealogy (Foucault, 1998; Hamington, 2005), this study challenges the existing discourse and highlights the biography, activities, and legacy of Ada Sophia McKinley, an African American social reformer who founded South Side Settlement House in Chicago (Figure 1). When McKinley served in the South Side area from the 1910s to 1950s, Chicago went through a series of distinctive historical events such as World War I (1914–1918), the first wave of the Great Migration (1916–1940), the Chicago Race Riot (1919), the Great Depression (1929–1933), and World War II (1939–1945). Throughout these occurrences, McKinley devoted herself to



**Figure 1.** A photo of Ada S. McKinley retrieved from Smith (2002).

providing much-needed support for poor and marginalized groups. Interestingly, Jane Addams' Hull-House (located at 800 South Halsted St., Chicago) and the South Side Settlement House (located at 3201 South Wabash, Chicago) were approximately four miles apart, yet no textbooks in leisure, park, and recreation provide any description to McKinley and her pioneering work.

The rest of this paper is organized into four sections. The first section elucidates the methodologies of historiography and genealogy. The second section presents a biography of Ada S. McKinley and describes her dedication to the betterment of the poor and marginalized groups in Chicago's South Side. The third section offers a brief comparative analysis of McKinley and Addams. Finally, the paper concludes by providing implications for leisure and recreation scholars and a call for more research on McKinley and her activities.

### **Historiography and genealogy**

This study is based on the theoretical and research methodologies of Loewen's (2018b) historiography and Foucault's (1998) genealogy, which opposes the view of history as a chronicle of past events that are linked to positive progress and are often viewed as set-in-stone "facts". Hemingway (2016) stated, "For leisure history to matter, however, historical study must go beyond chronicling earlier activities and their possible connection to later ones ... Chronicling is also limited by emphasis on description over analysis" (p. 26). Historical research needs to go beyond description. Instead, it must rely on analysis and critical thinking, which help readers understand the less favorable aspects of the leisure profession. When this approach is taken, "The work of historians may show us that the past was not what we thought it was ..." (p. 31).

Historiography is a type of historical methodology that is linked to the academic labor of James Loewen (1995, 2018a), who published *Lies My Teacher Told Me* in 1995 and underscored how American history textbooks misrepresent and provide falsehoods about history. Loewen spent two years evaluating and comparing twelve of the most-used American history textbooks at the high school level and concluded that textbook authors disseminate false, Eurocentric, and mythologized views of American history. For example, he explained that American history textbooks cherry-picked the life of Helen Keller to represent the American value of individualism and self-determination and stated that they “... ignore the sixty-four years of her adult life” (Loewen, 1995, p. 10) because they leave out Keller’s opposition to American capitalism, support of the Socialist Party of Massachusetts, and involvement in radical social justice for the poor, trade unions, women’s rights, and advocacy of the ideologies of communism and socialism (Loewen, 1995, 1999, 2018a). Loewen (1995, 2018a) stressed that, when giving voice to past American leaders, American history textbooks do not address the subjects of privilege or external conditions such as social class differences. Instead, they focus on the individualistic-heroification myth nexus. Loewen (1995) wrote:

The notion that opportunity might be unequal in America, that not everyone has “the power to rise in the world,” is anathema to textbook authors ... Educators would much rather present [Helen] Keller as a bland source of encouragement and inspiration to our young – if she can do it, you can do it! So they leave out her adult life and make her entire existence over into a vague “up by the bootstraps” [individualism and self-determination] operation. In the process they make this passionate fighter for the poor into something she never was in life: boring” (p. 24)

*Lies My Teacher Told Me* was republished in 2008 and 2018; more than 1,500,000 copies have been sold, and it has won the American Book Award and the Oliver Cromwell Cox Award for Distinguished Anti-Racist Scholarship (Loewen, 2018a).

According to Loewen (2018b), traditional history is often used in four deceptive ways: (a) as a weapon; (b) a means to dominate (consciously or unconsciously); (c) to support a certain person or group’s point of view; (d) or to encourage particular political or ideological positions. Historiography, which is based on critical thinking skills, unmask these four disguised modes and explores how certain parts of history have evolved and become dominant or accepted while other parts of history have become hidden or forgotten.

Genealogy is a type of historical methodology that is linked to the academic labor of Michel Foucault, who used genealogy to understand differing human service ideologies, such as penal institutions (Foucault, 1977), the concepts of mental illness and madness (Foucault, 1965), human sexuality (Foucault, 1978), and the history of the human sciences (Foucault, 1970). This methodology is sometimes recognized as a form of counter-history because it investigates history, or historical elements, which historians “... tend to feel [are] without history” (Foucault, 1980, p. 139). In genealogy, contemporary events are analyzed historically to discover events that are invisible or masked (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). Essentially, genealogical research underscores that contemporary social and human services simultaneously provide positive and negative outcomes—and that negative outcomes are masked by the constant rhetoric of productive and beneficial outcomes (Foucault, 1980). According to Foucault (1998), genealogy contains three processes: (1) it is parodic, or directed against common-sense reality; (2) it is

dissociative, or opposed to history presented as a continuity or representation of a tradition; (3) and it is sacrificial, or directed against commonly held truths and views. Genealogy is based on Nietzsche's criticism of history, which gives voice to versions of history that acknowledge injustices and question suprahistorical perspectives that present the progression of knowledge as an unbroken continuity and advancement (Foucault, 1998).

To date, both historiography and genealogy have gone largely unnoticed by leisure scholars. Two notable exceptions are Hunnicutt's (2006) critique on the knowledge formation of leisure and Dieser's (2005) interrogation of the White Euro-North American individualism embedded in the U.S. therapeutic recreation certification framework. Despite the lack of research interest, these two concepts explain that history is almost always value-laden and seldom presents an objective and fair perspective. Thus, historiography and genealogy can serve as powerful methodological tools for historical revisionism (Krasner, 2019). They are particularly effective in disrupting hegemonic and well-established historical interpretations and centering our attention on hidden and marginalized voices. Accordingly, the present study utilizes the two concepts to reveal concealed aspects of the leisure profession and its body of knowledge on how leisure textbooks emphasize Jane Addams, a privileged White social reformer, but give no voice to Ada Sophia McKinley, a poorer African-American woman who opened a less exceptional and more modest African American settlement house. To this end, the next section presents McKinley's biographical information.

### **Ada S. McKinley: an African American social reformer**

Ada S. McKinley was an African American social reformer who founded the South Side Settlement House (SSSH) in Chicago. There were 35 settlement houses in Chicago in 1919, yet the SSSH served the largest area and was the only settlement house that was fully staffed by African Americans (Bonner, 1955, August; Mosely, 1939). To date, only a few published materials have addressed McKinley's biography and activities. Those publications include newspaper articles from *The Chicago Defender* and *Chicago Tribune*, Knupfer's (2006) book titled *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism* and two biographical dictionaries, *Notable Black American Women Book III* (Smith, 2002) and *Women Building Chicago 1790–1990* (Schultz & Hast, 2001).

McKinley was born in Galveston, Texas in 1868 as Ada Sophia Dennison. She was the first child of Joseph and Alice Dennison. The family moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, where her parents were employed as a hotel waiter and laundress. Ada Dennison graduated from Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College in Prairie View and Tillotson Missionary College (TMC) in San Antonio. During her study at TMC, McKinley's desire for helping others was solidified (Mosely, 1939). McKinley wanted to partake in a missionary trip to the Sandwich Islands after she graduated from TMC, yet her father disapproved of the idea because he thought that she was too young for such a journey (Mosely, 1939). Instead, McKinley focused more on aiding illiterate African Americans in rural Texas and taught at an elementary school near Austin. In 1887, she married William Buchanan McKinley, a dentist from Tennessee. Although the couple had three children, the diphtheria epidemic that plagued several Texas cities claimed

their lives. Later, the couple moved to Chicago where William had relatives who felt that he would find better opportunities in a large city (Mosely, 1939).

Although it is not clear when exactly the couple moved to Chicago, Schultz and Hast (2001) noted that it was “before 1900” (p. 571). McKinley and her husband lived in the South Side area near the Douglas School at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Calumet Avenue. The South Side was a predominantly African American community known as “Black Belt” since 78% of the city’s Black population lived in this district (Pacyga, 2020). This area was the home for the Black working class and southern migrants but was also an impoverished neighborhood with high crime rates. After her arrival, McKinley noticed that schoolchildren’s lunches usually consisted only of soup, pickles, and candy so they hardly had nutritious meals. Concerned by the lack of nutrition available to schoolchildren, she opened a small establishment to serve hot lunches to the schoolchildren at low prices (Mosely, 1939). In 1907, McKinley’s fourth child, William Rogers Robert McKinley, was born.

In 1918, McKinley volunteered as a hostess at the War Camp Community Service (WCCS) established by the Chicago Urban League. The WCCS assisted Black World War I veterans and southern migrants who were adjusting to urban communities. She developed and directed a recreation program called the “Soldiers and Sailors Club.” The program was designed to provide various recreational activities to local youth to help them build character and prevent crime. McKinley also secured shelter, jobs, and food for Black veterans and migrants and quickly earned a reputation as “a woman of extraordinary abilities” (Schultz & Hast, 2001, p. 572).

In the early 1900s, the Chicago population started to grow rapidly due to the return of WWI veterans and the Great Migration. The African American population sextupled from 44,000 in 1910 to nearly 280,000 in 1940, and its share of the city’s total population grew from 2% to 8.2%. (Drake & Cayton, 1945). The rapid population growth caused overcrowding, scarcity in housing, and fierce competition for jobs. The unemployment rate was also exacerbated by the end of the war because many plants that once thrived on fulfilling war-related orders had to lay off workers. Because of this, many White veterans felt that African Americans had stolen their jobs (Pacyga, 2009).

Gradually, these social conditions led to racial animosity between Whites and Blacks. In 1919, Eugene Williams, a 17-year-old African American youth, went swimming with his friends in Lake Michigan. The lake’s current took the boys into a White-only area near 29<sup>th</sup> Street, and a White man began to throw rocks at them. One hit Williams in the head and made him drowning. When police refused to arrest the White man who was accused of killing Williams, the racial conflict between Whites and Blacks quickly escalated into the Chicago Race Riots in 1919. It is one of the worst race riots in Chicago history, causing 38 deaths and hundreds of injuries (Sandburg, 2005).

During this turmoil, McKinley bravely linked arms with Jane Addams, Mary McDowell, and Harriet Vittum and marched with them through the angry mobs in a demonstration of peace and unity (Smith, 2002). An article published in *The Chicago Defender* in 1955 described this event as follows:

“We’ll show them that white and colored can get along sociably together!” This dynamic statement came from four women during the tragic race riot of 1919 in Chicago. Three of them were white, and the other was one of brown skin whose race could not be mistaken. As the “heat” of the riot raged, these “crusaders” marched down the street arm in arm in

the midst of the fighting mobs... The “Four” were prominent social settlement workers centered in that district. They were: Jean [Jane] Addams at “Hull House” – Mary McDowell, called “Angel of the Stock Yards” because of the beneficent part she took in the great Stock Yards strike of 1906. It was she who persuaded the strikes against violence – Harriet Vittum, a social welfare worker – Ada S. McKinley, the colored woman (Bonner, 1955, August 13, p. 14B).

To further alleviate racial tension in Chicago, McKinley assisted the Chicago Commission on Race Relations in restoring order to the city and arranged for a work pay station to be opened at her settlement facilities (Schultz & Hast, 2001). McKinley and Harriet Vittum became friends, and the two gave public lectures together.

In 1920, the WCCS was terminated when the government’s financial support was withdrawn. However, due to the heavy southern migration and return of Black veterans, South Chicago continued to struggle with serious public health problems, poor housing conditions, and high poverty and unemployment rates. McKinley wanted to continue her service for South Side communities. With a small remnant of War Services funds and the help from Jesse Binga, an affluent banker and realtor, and Mary E. McDowell, the director of the University of Chicago Settlement House, McKinley launched a major fundraising pageant (Schultz & Hast, 2001). Although many well-known performers participated in the event, it did not generate sufficient funding for McKinley. However, she managed to maintain the building with little funding and contributions made by loyal friends and renamed the establishment as South Side Community Service (Schultz & Hast, 2001). The board consisted of McKinley, Jesse Binga, William H. Scott, and M. Blount Jones. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations (1922) described the South Side Community Service as follows:

The South Side Community Service is a re-established organization growing out of the Soldiers and Sailors Club. It aims to provide wholesome recreation and leisure time activities for its neighborhood. At the Community House, 3201 South Wabash Avenue, it serves a number of organizations, arranges supervised dances, dramatic programs and other entertainment for the group (p. 148-149)

The South Side community rapidly expanded during the late 1920s and 1930s, yet so did the hardship from the Great Depression. Approximately 60% of the unemployed men and women in the state of Illinois lived in Chicago, and payrolls in the city shrank by 25% from 1927 to 1933 (Pacyga, 2009). Black Chicagoans suffered the most. By 1932, 40–50% of Chicago’s Black workers were unemployed (Storch, 2007). Congressman Oscar De Priest claimed that Black Chicagoans had lost between 6 to 8 million dollars in bank failures (Pacyga, 2009). McKinley responded to the needs of the communities by initiating numerous programs to relieve economic suffering (Schultz & Hast, 2001; Smith, 2002). In 1926, Harriet Vittum and “a liberal contributor to South Side Community Service” suggested that the Community Service changes its name to South Side Settlement House (SSSH) (Mosely, 1939, p. 20). They believed that the South Side community would be better served if the agency extended its programs to become a settlement house.<sup>2</sup> All members of the organization agreed, and McKinley was appointed as the head resident and served as the organization’s president, teacher, and office worker (Schultz & Hast, 2001). By 1927, McKinley and her program had provided social services to over 25,000 needy individuals in the community (Smith, 2002).

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<sup>3</sup>According to inflation calculators, \$800 in 1949 equals to approximately \$8,530.26 in 2020

In 1929, the SSSH became a member of the Chicago Federation of Settlements. In conjunction with the Chicago Leisure Time Society, Adult Education Program, and the National Youth Administration, the SSSH provided a wide range of services and programs for children, youths, and adults. For example, McKinley maintained a nursery in the SSSH and sponsored an infant welfare station to provide healthcare for approximately 400 children each month (Schultz & Hast, 2001). She also sponsored adult literacy programs along with crafts and trades training and established a Camp Fire Girls club and Boy and Girl Scout troops to provide wholesome recreation for the local youths. Corneal A. Davis, later an Illinois state representative, assisted with Boy Scout Troop No. 545 and served as the city's first African American scoutmaster. McKinley's son, William, was a member of Davis' troop and became the head of the Young Republican Club at the SSSH. He also served as the director of a recreation program known as the Chicago Leisure Time Services. Moreover, several clubs, guilds, and political, labor, and entrepreneurial organizations were formed at the SSSH and regularly held meetings at the facility. Additionally, two periodicals, *The Colored Embalmer* and *The American Life Magazine*, were published at the agency (Schultz & Hast, 2001).

McKinley was also active in several community organizations. She was an early supporter of the League of Women Voters of Chicago and was a Gold Star member of the King's Daughters; she also founded a King's Daughters Lodge and the Texas Club. Additionally, she founded the Neighborhood Club to promote civic awareness, provide a voice in the community to address local problems, and combat political inertia. She operated the SSSH without affiliating with any religious denominations but was a member of several churches. McKinley and others met regularly at the SSSH for prayer and discussion of the spiritual needs of the community. She maintained longtime friendships with many politicians, particularly William L. Dawson, who was the committeeman of the Black 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward and a U.S. congressman.

During the mid-1930s and early 1940s, the SSSH was supported by the Work Progress Administration (WPA), which was a part of the New Deal program initiated by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration (Smith, 2002). The WPA funded courses that retrained the unemployed or underemployed in painting, sewing, cooking, pottery-making, carpentry, and other trades. The goal of this program was to encourage trainees to become employed or self-employed in those areas so that they could contribute to their household incomes. Unlike other settlement houses, the SSSH also worked with residents of the Ida B. Wells Homes, one of the poorest public housing projects in Chicago (Knupfer, 2006).

Despite the aforementioned services and activities, McKinley's agency was a small organization and constantly struggled with limited funding and resources. Although community residents, Black sororities, and local, state, and national politicians supported McKinley's efforts to improve the condition of the South Side neighborhood, the agency only had a few volunteers, limited financial support, and a small salaried staff. Due to the lack of funds and organization, no official record of the agency service was kept until it started to record a summary of its weekly activities in December 1934 (Mosely, 1939). The agency was unable to make much progress (Bonner, 1955).

However, a significant turning point was made in the late 1940s. In 1949, the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), which was located near the SSSH, began a community

renovation project, and the settlement house was going to be demolished due to its deteriorating structure. The IIT took an active interest in the need for a new settlement house in the area. Through the school's negotiations with other agencies, the SSSH was recognized by the Community Fund and the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago (Bonner, 1955). IIT faculty members and their spouses joined Clara S. Langston, the president of the Women's Guild at the settlement house, in raising funds to construct a new building; their effort netted a profit of \$800<sup>3</sup> (Bonner, 1955; Schultz & Hast, 2001). Subsequently, the SSSH board of directors renamed the organization as the "Ada S. McKinley Community House" to honor McKinley's dedication to the welfare of the South Side. Although she had retired as the head of the house at that time, she mentored graduate social work students. Students from the Atlanta University School of Social Work, the University of Illinois School of Social Work, and George Williams College were placed at the house to gain experience in community service (Smith, 2002). In 1950, the Community House was united with another agency, the Good Neighbor Society. Eventually, enough funding was secured to develop a new building at the corner of 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Michigan Avenue.

On August 24, 1952, a ceremony for the new building's construction was held, and a corner-stone was dedicated at the vacant lot. McKinley made a speech and was "so overjoyed" and "very much excited" by witnessing her many years of commitment finally come to fruition (Bonner, 1955, p. 14B). That evening, when McKinley was on her way up to her room, she fell on the stairway and died the next morning at Provident Hospital in Chicago. Her cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage. Her son and husband preceded her in death. The new building opened in 1953. Later, the agency's name was changed to "Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Inc." Today, this agency is one of the largest human service organizations in the US and serves more than 7,000 people annually in over 70 locations (Ada S. McKinley Community Services, 2019).

## McKinley and Addams

Despite McKinley's distinctive contributions to the South Side community, racial relations, and the settlement house and the parks and recreation movements, her life story and activities have received surprisingly little attention from academics and the American public in general. To promote a deeper understanding of McKinley, this section juxtaposes her background, activities, recognitions, philanthropic support, and legacy with the same aspects of Addams' life and work. Table 1 provides a summary of the comparison.

One of the most distinctive differences between McKinley and Addams lies in their activities and recognitions. Like other like-minded people concerned with social justice, many of whom were wealthy or grew up in affluent and privileged homes (e.g., Louise de Koven Bowen, John Dewey, Florence Kelley, Julie Lathrup, Alice Hamilton, Helen Culvert), Addams and the Hull-House residents pioneered human services and recreational programs from 1889 to 1935 by developing a myriad of "firsts," or novel

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<sup>3</sup>Ida B. Wells was a leader of civil rights movement during the early 1900s and founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

**Table 1.** A comparison of McKinley and Addams.

	Ada S. McKinley	Jane Addams
Background	Middle-class	Upper-class
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteered War Camp Community Service in 1918</li> <li>• Established South Side Community Service in 1920.</li> <li>• Helped the Chicago Commission on Race Relations after the Chicago Race Riots in 1919</li> <li>• The head resident of the South Side Settlement House in 1926</li> <li>• President of Citizen Community Center</li> <li>• A founder of a King's Daughters Lodge</li> <li>• Mentored graduate students of social work from different universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established Hull House, the first settlement house in Chicago in 1889</li> <li>• Established first public playground, public baths, public gymnasium, and public swimming pool in Chicago</li> <li>• Established first little theater and first citizenship preparation classes in the United States</li> <li>• Established first college extension course, first free art exhibits, and first Boy Scout troop in Chicago</li> <li>• Developed first sociological investigations and programs in Chicago regarding: sanitation, truancy, typhoid fever, children's reading, cocaine use, tuberculosis, infant mortality, and the social/recreational values of saloons</li> <li>• Played a significant role in the creation and enactment of the first factory laws in Illinois</li> <li>• Chicago Board of Education (1905)</li> <li>• Vice-president of the Playground Association of America (1906)</li> <li>• Chairperson of the School Management Committee (1908)</li> <li>• Executive member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1909)</li> <li>• Vice-president of National American Woman Suffrage Association. (1911)</li> <li>• Founded Women's International League for Peace (1919)</li> <li>• Authored 12 books</li> </ul>
Recognition	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four honorary degrees</li> <li>• Nobel Peace Prize (1931)</li> <li>• American Education Award (1935)</li> </ul>
Philanthropic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community Fund of Chicago</li> <li>• \$10,000 grant from The Wieboldt Foundation in 1950</li> <li>• Contributions from loyal friends</li> </ul>	Extensive support from many wealthy friends and acquaintances
Legacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ada S. McKinley Community Service, Inc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane Addams Hull House Association (Bankruptcy in 2012).</li> <li>• Jane Addams Hull-House Museum</li> </ul>

services, such as American citizenship classes and playground services (Elshtain, 2002). Addams was also active in political activities that focused on improving human rights and held leadership positions in various organizations such as the Playground Association of America, the School Management Committee of Chicago, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National American Woman Suffrage Association. She founded the Women's International League for Peace in 1919, which resulted in her becoming the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 (see Davis, 1973; Elshtain, 2002). Addams was also a prolific writer. Her published works include more than five hundred essays, speeches, editorials, and columns, along with 12 books. In contrast, McKinley's activities and recognition seem

quite modest. McKinley was involved in several organizations, yet she was more of a regional figure since most of her activities focused on addressing poverty, hunger, education, recreation, housing projects, and public health issues in the South Side community. Although more information about McKinley must be discovered, the existing published materials indicate that she did not receive many official or formal recognitions for her devotion to the welfare of the local community. In the realm of the settlement house and the parks and recreation movements, McKinley's life-long human services seem to be overshadowed by the more public attention and prestigious awards that Addams received.

However, it is important to understand the significant financial gap between McKinley and Addams. We argue that the differences in their activities and recognition can be partially attributed to their different socioeconomic backgrounds and the amount of monetary support they received. McKinley came from a middle- or working-class family, and her parents were employed in a hotel as a waiter and laundress. Addams was born in a privileged and wealthy family; her father, John Huy Addams, was a successful businessman, helped establish the Republican Party, was close to the president of the United States (Abraham Lincoln), was an eight-term Illinois state senator and "... had become the wealthiest man in Stephenson County, Illinois" (Schultz, 2007, pp. 10–11). Addams inherited approximately \$50,000 when her father died in 1881, which is equivalent to \$1.34 million in 2019, and she rarely experienced financial difficulty during her life (Berson, 2004; Linn, 2000). Additionally, because of her father's background, Jane Addams had already established extensive networks with many extremely wealthy White people and politicians in Chicago and throughout Illinois (Bryan et al., 2019).

Similarly, the philanthropic support that McKinley and Addams received are hardly comparable. McKinley constantly struggled to fund her agency and programs even though she had received government funding and donations from loyal friends, community leaders, and politicians. She used her own money to subsidize her agency and never received a salary (Mosely, 1939). In 1950, McKinley received a \$10,000 grant from The Wieboldt Foundation, yet there is no record of any other major donations that were made to the agency. Bonner (1955, August 13) documented that, in 1954, the Ada S. McKinley Community House's total income came from contributions, corporations, associated groups, earnings, and the Community Fund of Chicago and amounted to \$37,004.08, while the cost of the land, building, and improvements totaled \$73,659.26 and the operation expenses came to \$34,612.60. Throughout her life, McKinley struggled with limited monetary resources and was unable to galvanize her agency and programs effectively, yet she somehow found ways to support the South Side. When Addams established Hull-House in 1889, she was able to pay for the rent of the building, building repairs, new furniture, and most of the operating costs (Berson, 2004; Linn, 2000). Helen Culver who earned and inherited large sums of money from her uncle, Charles J. Hull, donated her uncle's house to Jane Addams (Hull-House) and donated well over \$5,00,000 by 1906 (the equivalence of \$14 million today) to support Hull-House's services (Bryan et al., 2019). Jane Addams' philanthropic network was extremely wealthy and ubiquitous (Bryan et al., 2019). Although Addams' pioneering accomplishments are nothing short of remarkable, a fair assessment is that she leveraged her considerable wealth and social and cultural capital to enter the social circle of wealthy Chicagoans, publicize Hull-House and its programs, and establish herself as an influential figure (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** A photo of the South Side Community Services retrieved from Chicago Commission on Race Relations (1922).

It is also important to note that leisure writers and historians have mainly praised Jane Addams but have been mysteriously silent about her mistakes, human errors, and ethical decision-making. For example, many credit Addams for the creation of the West Polk Street School Playground (also known as the Hull-House Playground), the first public playground in Chicago, yet she built the playground by rendering poor and immigrant families homeless (Dieser, 2020). The land was owned by William Kent, a U.S. Congressman, and he provided a ten-year land lease to Addams so she could address the unsanitary condition of the property. Addams chose a rather radical and aggressive method to solve the issue. She sold three tenement houses on the land occupied by poor immigrants, earned \$300, and used the money to create the playground. She also razed other tenement houses to create space for the playground. Jane Addams (1910/1981) explained the difficult process of how she had to evict, by legal means, poor immigrants from their tenement houses to build the West Polk Street School Playground in the following manner:

... when we decided that the houses were so bad that we could not undertake the task of improving them ... we finally submitted a plan that the house should be torn down and the entire track turned into a playground ... so the worst of the houses were demolished, the best three were sold and moved across the street under careful provision that they might never be used for junkshops or saloons, and a public playground was finally established ... the dispossessed tenants, a group of whom had to be evicted by legal process before their houses could be torn down, have never ceased to mourn their former estates. (p. 169)

Bukowski (2003) argued that eliminating tenement houses was detrimental to poor immigrants since living in unhealthy conditions was better than removing their housing completely, which resulted in homelessness. Kent (1950) was disappointed that Jane Addams had failed to create a better solution for the renting problem he had wrestled with and stated that “The outcome was that the houses were torn down, the piece of ground cleared, and the first public playground in Chicago was opened” (p. 95). With the \$300 that she made by selling tenements houses, coupled with donations (including her own contribution of \$700), Addams built the West Polk Street School Playground/Hull-House Playground (Bryan et al., 2019). Leisure writers and historians have outlined the altruism and pioneering leadership of Jane Addams in creating the first model of a playground but have not discussed the unethical and controversial aspects of her leadership and decision-making.

Finally, another noticeable difference between Addams and McKinley is each of their legacies. As mentioned previously, the Ada S. McKinley Community Service is still in operation and considered to be one of the most successful human service organizations in the US. However, Jane Addams’ Hull-House failed to secure stable funding sources in the twenty-first century and ceased operations in 2012 due to bankruptcy (Thayer, 2012, January 19). The prosperity of the Community Service and the closure of the Hull-House are great historical ironies given the differences in support and attention that McKinley and Addams received during their lifetimes.

In summary, our comparative analysis offers a distinctive counter-narrative to the existing historical interpretations that are filled with heroifications of Addams. First, we illustrated Addams’ considerable wealth and McKinley’s constant financial struggles. This information provides a reasonable explanation of the disparity between their activities, accomplishments, and recognitions. Furthermore, our analysis revealed Addams’ insensitivity to the lives of poor immigrants, which was exemplified when she built the first public playground in Chicago. This anecdote provides a more nuanced representation of Addams’ renowned devotion to the underprivileged and powerless. Collectively, these findings portray McKinley as a humble welfare worker who emerged from the masses while Addams was a wealthy social reformer who descended from the noble class.

## Discussion and conclusion

Using the methodologies of historiography and genealogy, we have challenged the dominant narrative that surrounds the history of the settlement house movement and the parks and recreation profession, which are marked by celebrations of and tributes to affluent White social reformers such as Jane Addams. To this end, we have illuminated Ada S. McKinley and her South Side Settlement House to provide a counter-narrative and promote a more holistic and nuanced understanding. After she moved from Texas to Illinois, McKinley dedicated her life to supporting needy individuals and other African American migrants. She was a beacon of light and hope in the South Side community, which was one of the most congested, impoverished, and crime-ridden areas in Chicago. Today, McKinley’s altruism and humanitarianism continue to exist in the Ada S. McKinley Community Service, yet an extensive literature review suggests that no

leisure or parks and recreation journals have ever published an article about McKinley or the SSSH. Moreover, our comparative analysis underlined the vast financial gap between Addams and McKinley and revealed that Addams rendered poor immigrant families in three tenement houses homeless to generate the capital to build the first public playground in Chicago. These findings provide a striking contrast to leisure researchers' historical interpretations that are filled with heroifications of Addams.

Although our findings provide a unique counter-narrative, it is worth noting that the present study might just scratch the tip of the iceberg. There are many avenues for conducting additional historical studies, comparative analyses, counter-narratives, historiographies, genealogies, and the re-writing of the history of leisure services. For instance, future research could build on the National Conference of Settlements study from 1911 that Woods and Kennedy (1970) published and investigate other settlement houses and their founders. Three such settlement houses include the Calhoun Colored School and Settlement located in Calhoun County in Alabama, the Frederick Douglas Center established in Chicago, and the Colored Social Center settlement house in Buffalo, New York. Drawing on a pamphlet published by the Calhoun Colored School and Settlement in 1904, Woods and Kennedy (1970) posited that this settlement house, established in 1892 by Mabel W. Dillingham and Charlotte R. Thorn, was located "... in the midst of 30,000 plantation Negroes" with a goal to "... make a natural center for community life" and "To change the crop-mortgage renter into a small farmer, with land and home of his own" (p. 7). Similarly, the Frederick Douglas Center, a settlement house established in 1904 by Celia Parker Woolley, had a mission to "... promote a just and amicable relations between white and colored people" (p. 50). The Colored Social Center settlement house was opened in 1910 to act as a place where "... colored men, women and young children might congregate for social and industrial improvements" (p. 171).

Future researchers could also examine how leisure textbooks or historians have inadequately represented the history of leisure services and exclusively focused on the contributions of White and wealthy individuals. In other words, new historical research could challenge the history that seems rock-solid to unmask its complexities and nuances. Few, if any, leisure researchers have examined Jane Addams' proposition of race, while race scholars outside of leisure studies often hold mixed views of how Jane Addams interacted with racial topics and policies. Hamington (2005) provided a case study on the exchange between Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells<sup>4</sup> regarding their social justice work and the issue of lynching, which appeared in the *New York Independent*. Addams condemned lynching yet assumed that Black victims of lynching might be guilty of the crimes of which White mobs accused them. Wells criticized how Addams' presumption reinforced the racial stereotypes of Black criminality and inferiority. Upon her exchanges with Wells, Addams became a strong advocate of African American Civil Rights and later became a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Why is there so much information about Addams and other White social reformers while the stories of people of color are virtually nonexistent in mainstream American culture and academia? Why are the existing historical narratives heavily skewed to the "good news" of White leaders? Whose histories have we as leisure researchers learned and taught to the next generations? The concepts of historiography and genealogy

suggest that the existing historical interpretations perpetuate White hegemony; they idealize White leaders and celebrate their accomplishments while trivializing people of color as if they seldom made meaningful contributions in our society or as if they were always nurtured and subjugated by Whites. In their critiques, Mowatt et al. (Mowatt, 2017; Mowatt et al., 2018) lamented the invisibility of people of color in the formation of leisure studies and explicated the importance of building a racially and ethnically more inclusive foundation for the field. It is poignantly clear from our investigation that there is a serious need for leisure researchers and the broader academic community to reevaluate the history of the settlement house movement and the parks and recreation profession that have been dominated by triumphalistic stories of White leaders. To achieve greater fairness and justice, McKinley and other forgotten pioneers of color must be brought into a sharper focus.

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