Learning Legacies
Robbins, Sarah Ruffing

Published by University of Michigan Press

Robbins, Sarah Ruffing.
Learning Legacies: Archive to Action through Women's Cross-Cultural Teaching.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/52722

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=1999520
CHAPTER THREE

Collaborative Writing as Jane Addams’s Hull-House Legacy

“What would Jane do?”
—Todd DeStigter, Jane Addams in the Classroom, p. 27

“We see ourselves as a connecting agent in the city.”
—Lisa Junkin Lopez, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM) interview

“One evening, as I entered the reception room, Miss Addams called me into the residents’ sitting room and asked me to join a class in English composition . . .”
—Hilda Satt Polacheck, I Came a Stranger, p. 77

Writing as Teaching

Hull-House as a social settlement on Halsted Street in Chicago—as led by Jane Addams and her numerous partners in progressive education—shut its doors long ago.1 But Hull-House as an aspirational model, as a practice of democratic vision, still thrives. It lives now, primarily, through writing as a form of teaching and a pathway to learning. Addams’s own writings about the settlement, along with many other texts documenting its work in her day, embody and thus promote collaborative storytelling about activism. This chapter revisits that legacy of communal writing about Hull-House and demonstrates how self-conscious heirs to that heritage are following its lead.

For Addams herself, some settlement compositions involved group research and reporting, with coauthorship directly designated, as in the Hull-
Sometimes, though, we must look within narrative descriptions to find details of a collaboration that, over time, produced stories for a communal archive. As one example, in “Women’s Conscience and Social Amelioration,” Addams described how a determined band of Hull–House Woman’s Club members spent months investigating the high death rate of children in their neighborhood. Club members divided up their ward into sections and documented cases where the city’s refuse department was failing to pick up garbage. They compared those findings with figures on death and disease, then disseminated that data to campaign for enhanced sanitation service. This was a memorable case, Addams noted, of group commitment to “moral vigor and civic determination” succeeding via “not very pleasant” on-site research three times per week, followed by political action (fixing the garbage pick-up shortcomings) that was achievable only through team effort (257). Addams’s characterization of the club’s shared research-and-writing project in this case was affirmed more broadly by one of its most enthusiastic immigrant members, Hilda Satt Polacheck, who wrote in her autobiography that “the Hull–House Woman’s Club was Jane Addams’s pet activity,” carried out as “a real venture in democracy” by virtue of its ongoing collaborations (Polacheck, I Came, 101).

Along related lines, Addams often described specific elements in the settlement’s educational program as reciprocal endeavors, providing as much learning for the middle-class “residents” of Hull–House (herself included) as for their immigrant “neighbors.” Such stories presented evolving settlement projects as cross-cultural bridge-building, thereby deemphasizing whatever individual leadership role she might have played to enable a program. So, for instance, over several pages in her best-selling Twenty Years at Hull–House, Addams recalled a particular moment of reflection that led her to the concept for the Labor Museum, but she then identified, as more crucial to its launch, the contributions of “a Syrian woman, a Greek, an Italian, a Russian, and an Irishwoman.” In her claim that “we prize it [the Labor Museum] because it so often puts the immigrants into the position of teachers” (140), Addams not only marked the need to recognize collaborations behind her print-text story; she also underscored how visitors to the settlement often learned the most about its work through interchanges with those immigrants-turned-educators. If Addams herself was admittedly the guiding light for Hull–House in her day, her framing of this anecdote suggested that she nonetheless wanted readers to recognize its shared energy and, implicitly, to see all its community members as settlement program coauthors.
Yet the precise learning legacies of Hull-House, cast in such terms, remain difficult to codify. Why? For one thing, the settlement's original projects—its reading clubs and citizenship classes, its political interventions around labor issues and its innovative outdoor playground-building, its coffee house and its summer camps—formed such a diverse array of activities that to articulate a unifying vision becomes challenging, even for Addams herself. Similarly, Hull-House's stories have been told through so many voices, representing so many different perspectives, that the very capaciousness so treasured by Addams and her contemporaries has at times obscured the shared features of its diverse collaborations. What, overall, did Hull-House aim to teach? How can we best apply its lessons? Given the rich complexity of the Hull-House enterprise across the decades of Addams's 1889–1935 personal leadership, I aim in this chapter to follow her lead by foregrounding writing, broadly conceived, and supported by shared civic engagement, as the main Archive of the settlement's learning legacy and a means to extend its teachings into social action today.

To claim that writing, and especially collaborative writing, held a privileged place in the work of Hull-House is, on one level, easy to do, given the sheer quantity of texts produced by Addams and her colleagues to form an interconnected web of discourse. Chapters in The Autobiography of Florence Kelley, for instance, echo Addams's repeated invocation of settlement colleagues in her own publications to underscore how all stories about the Chicago settlement can, and probably should, be viewed as collaborative. Still, in the context of my Learning Legacies project here, merely to follow verbal threads across these narratives is not sufficient. After all, an assertion that Hull-House writings embody a heritage of shared composing has significant implications for teaching in the liberal arts today, leading us, for instance, to consider how and when to structure collaborations among our students, particularly those involving production of text. Similarly, if we emphasize Addams's efforts to build community connections as a key element in her education program, what are ways we can borrow from her example to create productive partnerships today? What does the Hull-House Archive, in these terms, demonstrate about the benefits of storytelling itself, done collaboratively or at least informed by collaborations? And what unfinished business of the settlement should we try to address through these interconnected strategies of cultural pragmatism?

To address these questions, I have needed both to revisit my own original connections with Hull-House and to put that earlier inquiry in dialogue with more recent study. Doing so has led me to examine my evolving
standpoint as a white woman scholar-teacher immersed in Addams’s authorial archive and in the cultural work of Chicago-based educators who’ve been drawing on her example in their own work.

My starting point for this chapter’s study of Addams and Hull-House coincided with my own transition from K-12 schoolteacher to university-based teacher-scholar. I first visited Hull-House in the early 1990s, while doing dissertation research in the Jane Addams Memorial Collection at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The museum seemed an essential stop for a pilgrimage to supplement the hours I was spending in the archive—turning creaky microfilm reels and squinting at Addams’s tough-to-decipher handwriting. Crossing the campus, I set out to explore what remained of the original home base for her work: one lone relic from what had been a conglomerate of bustling settlement spaces. To help make room for the urban university at UIC, almost all of Hull-House’s buildings had been sacrificed.4 Decades earlier, Hull-House had included everything from a gym to a theater, from meeting rooms for clubs and a kindergarten to an art gallery, as well as living quarters for both college-educated residents and working girls. But in the early 1990s, the home Charles Hull had built in the 1850s was all that remained open from what had been America’s premier settlement. The single “house” where Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr had launched their progressive experiment had been maintained, so their visible legacy had not been erased entirely. Yet, clinging to the edge of the sprawling urban campus, that constricted version of the previously vibrant settlement conveyed only limited appreciation of their work.

During my initial 1992 research trip, I could see that the university library’s preservation of the Jane Addams Papers did signal a wish to honor her. Yet scholars’ patient recovery process, which would eventually lead to numerous editions of her writings and analyses of her influence, had not yet borne substantial fruit.5 And the museum at the other end of the campus seemed more a poignant memorial than an active affirmation of her heritage. Wandering through the quiet facility, at first the only visitor, I was eventually joined by a slender, elderly man who spoke wistfully about his own youthful experiences as an immigrant taking part in Hull-House clubs. We chatted briefly about how he had benefited from those settlement-sponsored classes. But our talk felt more melancholy than invigorating, since the museum presented itself, on that occasion, as more static landmark than living legacy. In the built environment of its surroundings, in the distant-seeming verbiage of its display labels, and in the very absence
of communal activity on site, this space spoke a tale of loss: lost energy, lost voices, lost stories.6

So my stay at the museum then was brief, because I didn’t sense much of Addams’s presence there. A better source for delving into her teaching seemed, at that point, to be in the textual archive held in the special collections. I pored over her scrapbooks, looking not only at what she had clipped and saved from decades of periodical articles but also her margin notations. I scoured the handwritten narratives she’d crafted to describe her own learning experiences at Rockford Seminary. I reviewed the many pieces of publication-related correspondence—ranging from brief notes sent by different publishers who rejected “A Modern Lear” as too incendiary, on one extreme, to effusive “fan-mail” letters from appreciative readers, on the other. I waded through stacks of photographs, still only loosely catalogued. I read copies of the bulletins, seeking Addams’s own voice at a remove in the careful third-person language advertising for classes across a range of topics (like literature, politics, and history) and skills (such as cooking, sewing). That early archival research helped me identify continuities between her self-conscious collaborations with other students at Rockford Seminary and her partnerships with Hull-House residents later. Yet I didn’t then know enough about the rich impact of Addams’s multidecade publication enterprise to see how her writing processes—particularly her continual repurposings of texts for different venues—interacted with her cultivation of interpersonal relationships to support her own and others’ learning. Thus, though I frequently taught Twenty Years at Hull-House (in American literature classes; in courses on immigrant life) and occasionally ventured into using other publications (such as Peace and Bread in Time of War and her women’s college speeches in Gender Studies courses), I held back from producing additional scholarship on Addams. Her deepest thought on teaching and her most strategic use of rhetoric were too elusive to capture. She was a role model whose influence I constantly felt but could never adequately explain.

Finally, for this Learning Legacies project, I simply could not leave Hull-House out of the picture. So, intrigued by signs of curators’ substantial engagement with her writing when I dipped into the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum website, and called to rereading Addams by conversations with UIC-based teacher educators, I reimmersed. The collaborative writing I saw coming out of both these enterprises—the revitalized museum and the gradually developing essays being shepherded by Dave Schaufsma and Todd DeStigter for Jane Addams in the Classroom—led me to distin-
guish, at last, Addams’s productive use of counter-narrative rhetoric. I fi-
nally grasped how she employed a communal vision of that genre to en-
gage with ever-unfinished business, forge collaborative connections across
cultural divides, and embrace story as a mode of writing-to-learn and
writing-to-teach about the settlement. So this chapter represents both my
new appreciation of Addams in a cultural rhetorics framework and an in-
vitation to others to extend application of her Archive. Understanding Ad-
dams, I’d now maintain, requires us to examine her own and her settlement
contemporaries’ writings as purposefully interconnected to do shared cul-
tural work. And understanding Addams-linked writings as a learning legacy
also demands that we take into account the ways scholar-educators today
are utilizing Hull-House texts (broadly conceived to include an array of
expressive forms) to address current social issues.7

Revisiting Hull-House Heritage

In my second, 2012 visit to the Hull-House site, twenty years after the
first, I found much had changed. The settlement’s vision and productivity
had been recuperated through new cultural work at the museum, by then
clearly reconnected to its heritage. The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum
had again become a pulsing hive of activity informed by research and re-
flection conjoined to civic engagement. The museum itself had been re-
made, as forecast by the description I had seen on its website:

The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum serves as a dynamic me-
memorial to social reformer Jane Addams, the first American woman
to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, and her colleagues whose work
changed the lives of their immigrant neighbors as well as national
and international public policy. The Museum preserves and devel-
ops the original Hull-House site for the interpretation and continu-
ation of the historic settlement house vision, linking research, edu-
cation, and social engagement.8

In the interim since my own first foray into Addams’s archive, traditional
print research on the settlement leader herself had also exploded. Multiple
biographies had appeared.9 Scholars from diverse disciplines had claimed
Addams for an array of purposes. Treatments of Addams ranged from re-
covering her role in the formation of social work as a field to repositioning
her intellectual relationship with John Dewey as an educational theorist;
from tracking her views on the settlement movement across decades of authorship to examining her role in Progressive Era political agendas, including immigrant acculturation and juvenile justice projects, and labor union and peace movement organizing. Researchers had been revisiting everything from Hull-House’s gendered programs and intensely personal relationships to its theater productions’ playful, purposeful aesthetics. Multiple factors have stimulated this escalating interest in Addams and the settlement: feminist recovery efforts; a reenergized commitment, at universities, to public history and community partnerships; an impulse to seek strategies for responding to our current wave of immigration; and an awareness that, more broadly, issues of urban life addressed by the Progressive movement still need our attention.

Assessments of Addams during her lifetime reflected drastically different perspectives across time (from “Saint Jane” characterizations in the settlement’s early years to excoriations during Addams’s peace movement connections, to a reassertion of positive views after her receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize). The twenty years between my original exploration of Addams and my new research for this chapter witnessed similar shifts. If some treatments as part of an initial recovery stage of women’s history were overly enthusiastic, then a backlash of sorts, reflecting emphasis on white women’s relatively more powerful social positions in American culture, may have overcompensated. At least, research by twenty-first-century biographers such as Jean Bethke Elshtain has suggested as much. For example, in oral histories Elshtain gathered for her influential Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy, she found strong indicators that some of the Hull-House immigrant “neighbors” had grown quite tired of critiques of Addams as patronizing and of settlement programming as imposing dominant culture values.

Accordingly, Elshtain’s report of a four-hour conversation she held with Ruby Jane Delicandro (née Gorglione) and Marie Thalos (née Bagnola) emphasizes their intense appreciation of Addams and the settlement’s middle-class residents, who, they insisted, “treated us on an equal basis” and provided “a rich environment” in which Delicandro and Thalos freely chose to participate (9). Further, Elshtain says they declared, “Hull-House enlarged but did not supplant the world of their immigrant community,” since activities at the settlement purposefully honored their home cultures while offering up a range of cross-cultural opportunities (10). Thus, Elshtain argues, evaluations of Hull-House need to honor perspectives like these. They paint, she notes, a portrait of Addams as having “respected
people’s traditions’” rather than inculcating simplistic assimilation (11) and
as opening up countless prospects for personal growth among Hull-House
neighbors that would otherwise have been unavailable (12–13). These ben-
efits included cross-ethnic exchanges that, said Ruby and Marie, “taught
us to respect each other’s traditions” (13). Elshtain herself has clearly been
persuaded by such informants that a more balanced assessment of Addams
and her work is needed. Therefore, she calls on her own readers to es-
chew “a stance of condescension or ahistorical present-mindedness” that
can actually impede productive “civic culture” work today. Instead, she asks
interpreters to cultivate “keen, responsible criticism” (14), acknowledging
Addams’s commitment to “human empathy” as expansive enough “to wel-
come” to Hull-House “[a]ll those who were, in one way or another, alien
or foreign” (254).

This newer body of research like Elshtain’s certainly informed the
Hull-House museum’s revitalization in the early 2000s. Creative leader-
isty by museum director Lisa Yun Lee and her colleagues—acting them-
selves as self-conscious feminist educators—reformulated its activities and
associated public discourse, just as I was returning to Hull-House study
myself. That is, both in the writing they did to present Addams to the
public (in display objects and labels, on the website, and, more broadly, in
their exhibit concepts and designs), as well as in their published writings
about their work as curators, the Lee-led team worked to pass along Ad-
dams’s learning legacy from a stance of critical empathy. I credit much of
my own enhanced understanding of Hull-House’s heritage to connecting,
beginning in 2012, with the museum educators then guiding the JAHHM’s
community-building agenda. By visiting with the staff and collaborating
with exhibition curator Heather Radke to prepare conference presenta-
tions, for example, I gleaned energizing insights into the group’s practice
and their self-conscious study of the settlement’s rich archive.

On a parallel track, I was tracing the generative process of Addams-
informe activist scholarship led by teacher education faculty at UIC,
which now virtually surrounds the Hull-House museum site. David Schaa-
isma, Todd DeStigter, and their teacher-researcher colleagues carried out a
sustained reading of Addams’s published legacy. Then they extended their
inquiry through collaborative writing about their applications of her ex-
ample in diverse classrooms around the country. In turn, by studying story-
telling within these sometimes-overlapping projects—the re-presentation
of Hull-House at the JAHHM and the creation of Jane Addams in the
Classroom—I have identified core strategies from Addams’s collaborative
teaching practice that are still applicable today. In this chapter, I am setting this storytelling by museum leaders and teacher educators in dialogue with the archive of Addams’s own writing, particularly from late in her career. As in other learning legacies throughout this book, when we dig into this Archive, we find that women educators’ counter-narratives from the past can continue to do relevant intercultural work for our current time. Like the Spelman founders’ archive as it is maintained now at the Atlanta college, Hull-House’s counter-narratives offer a pathway to inquiry into past cultural interventions, and that inquiry produces resources for cross-cultural community-building today. Crucial among these adaptable tools, in Addams’s case, are several themes: embracing learning and associated social justice interventions as perpetually “unfinished business”; cultivating interpersonal relationships and shared authority as avenues to knowledge; and storytelling itself as a method for doing intercultural work and for reporting on that process.

Jane Addams’s Stories of Learning

From her early days as a student at Rockford Seminary (which became a college just in time for her to claim a full-fledged degree), Addams had an intense awareness of her capacity to mine cultural resources and then to disseminate that knowledge. She was virtually obsessed, while a student, with maintaining records of her own liberal-arts-oriented learning, as if confident, even in youth, that her personal archive would have long-term value. Thus, in the UIC Special Collections Library, generations of scholars, myself included, have been able to revisit her notes from school debates on the relative importance of women’s literary authorship versus their sponsorship of social activism; pore over her essays for Rockford’s student newspaper; and reread her commencement speech on graduates’ becoming “Breadgivers” through gendered leadership, not just bread-makers within the home. Addams would continue this practice of saving records of learning throughout her career. She would also draw on that ever-growing personal archive as a source for writing about the settlement’s educational agenda. Accordingly, by turning the pages of scrapbooks holding newspaper stories about Hull-House, it’s possible to identify recurring ideas (such as women’s civic housekeeping as a rightful extension of domesticity) in quotes she gave reporters. We can catch echoes of those same terms in internal settlement publications and in her speeches; see her invocations of those same phrases in periodicals ranging from *Ladies Home Journal*
to the *Century*; and track still more reiterations in longer narratives like *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. Skilled at crafting what today we’d call a “sound bite” when being interviewed, Addams was equally adept at remixing her own reflective commentary back into various internal settlement texts. She would then recirculate those stories to broader readerships. Multifaceted in its venues and in the audiences she addressed, the vast body of Addams’s own writing—along with the parallel texts she helped other settlement women create—forms a uniquely rich archive aimed from its very inception at shaping future generations.

One feature cutting across all these texts is a commitment to *story* as an avenue to teaching. For Addams, such a text-making approach represented a conscious counter-narrative strategy, since her publications appeared at a time when university and corporate emphases on “hard” sciences, professionalized male leadership of social enterprises (including obsession with efficiency as measured via the “Taylorism” model), and expository discourse reflecting scientific methods all flourished. Now, through recovery of her learning legacy, we can resist the restrictive epistemologies and exclusionary language often dominating scholarly writing in our own time. That is, adopting these same principles can open an avenue (back) to a humanistic framework too often undervalued in the current climate that overemphasizes (seemingly) quantifiable measurements of learning and reductive versions of teaching content. Therefore, in retracing my own efforts to reconnect with Hull-House’s heritage, I will highlight how the themes of unfinished business, collaboration, and storytelling for knowledge-making have been reanimated, for me, in story-making by JAHHM staff and by the *Jane Addams in the Classroom* project. To explicate these connections, I’ll now revisit collaborative writing from the settlement itself and afterwards underscore links between those narrative practices and the more recent reinvigorations of its heritage.

To illustrate Addams’s own rhetorical model, which embedded teaching within storytelling discourse, we need to carry out an intertextual reading of her last book, *My Friend, Julia Lathrop*. So far, this biography has garnered limited scholarly attention, partly because of the enduring appeal of *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. Significantly, however, these two narratives share notable rhetorical features. One trait evident in both is Addams’s choice to craft an accessible story addressing a broad audience rather than the increasingly discipline-oriented academic readers of her time. In *My Friend, Julia Lathrop*, one subtle vehicle for signaling this affiliation with storytelling for general readers emerges through a reference to Lathrop
herself. Specifically, Addams recalls one of her friend's many speeches for the National Conference of Social Work. Says Addams of Lathrop: “She deplored that, while the Government statistical material is basic, it is unfortunate that the art of popularizing has not seemed of equal importance” (87). Though by this time Addams's penchant for addressing general readers was well established, she was aware that her commitment to broad audiences was distancing her authorial cachet from the increasingly specialized academic texts of university colleagues like John Dewey. So her choice to present Lathrop's defense of “the art of popularizing” was likely aimed as much at asserting her own writer's status as her friend's.

If the legacy of her authorship was understandably on Addams's mind while composing her final book, she was even more intent on affirming the settlement's shared vision than on seeking individual credit.19 Thus, another trait evident in My Friend, Julia Lathrop, consistent with her earlier writing, is Addams's insistent foregrounding of the Hull-House community over her own role as its leader. Addams relegated herself, in Twenty Years and its Forty Years sequel, to a self-deprecating subtitle: with Autobiographical Notes. Similarly, to underscore her commitment to shared authority, Addams often wrote in first-person plural, rather than singular.20 She depicted projects as sustained collaborative endeavors, more than individually conceptualized or led.21 And, significantly, instead of writing in an assertive argumentative mode, she took her readers along, through reflection, to revisit past experience, conveyed in story.22 Via this last strategy, her texts embodied a counter-narrative rhetoric simply by presenting themselves as narratives in an era when expository forms used for scientific, discipline-based study had gained a strong foothold as the authoritative discourse for making knowledge.

Addams drafted My Friend with full awareness that her own life was nearing its end. Though driven by the recent death of Lathrop, one of Hull-House's central figures, the book narrates ways of living in the settlement as a communal experiment in democratic learning. My Friend, in line with its title, repeatedly emphasizes relationships. Along the way, while chronicling reciprocity in action, the text stresses Addams's narrative approach to everunfinished, collaborative knowledge-making. Through individual anecdotes accruing cumulative narrative force, the book also portrays a model of cross-cultural learning for others to follow. Reading Addams's narrative from a participatory stance, we can follow her example of shared civic engagement and her strategies for crafting stories about such work.

Like so many of Addams's books, the My Friend biography evolved from
Figure 3.1. Julia Lathrop. Hull-House Photograph Collection. JAMC 0000 0267 0411. Courtesy of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University Archives.
a periodical starting point. In this case, we can trace the text’s genesis back to Addams’s “A Great Public Servant, Julia C. Lathrop” essay, which appeared in *Social Service Review* in 1932. Here, Addams introduced themes she would develop more fully for the book, including anecdotes from Lathrop’s various social justice projects to illustrate Hull-House methods in action. For one example of this indirect but purposeful rhetoric, we need look no further than that 1932 essay’s first sentence, which would reappear in an early paragraph of the biography’s fourth chapter: “My earliest impressions of Hull-House include Julia Lathrop.”

In linking Lathrop with the settlement, Addams suggested that, to narrate a history of Hull-House, one must focus on its women leaders. Also, in beginning with “My earliest impressions,” Addams connected Lathrop’s ties to Hull-House with her own. After all, “Earliest Impressions” had also been the title for the first chapter of *Twenty Years*, so astute readers could catch the allusion. Additionally, within *My Friend, Julia Lathrop*, as was typical in Addams’s writing, she would revisit “impressions” arising from shared experience—from sustained personal relationships—to assemble a narrative conveying larger principles. So, many of the text’s anecdotes recalled collaborative activities, including animated conversations between Addams and Lathrop about their gendered network in action.

What drove me to reread this text, in fact, was a vague memory of its engaging dialogic moments—a memory stirred up through interviews with the Hull-House museum staff beginning in 2012. Over and over, they referenced conversations with each other as guiding their practice, and they situated those discussions in a kind of imaginative exchange with Addams and other women in her circle. I had long known about the role that the community of women residents and other Hull-House supporters played in the settlement’s success. But I came to better understand the centrality of these bonds by hearing staff members like Lisa Lee, Lisa Junkin Lopez, and Heather Radke describe their own frequent conversations about Addams and her colleagues.

For example, in one dialogue about her role as exhibition coordinator, Radke referenced how the interpersonal network of the settlement in Addams’s day had been shaping her museum projects, quite literally:

> One of the things I think that is most important [about Hull-House] is that it’s not just Addams’ work. It’s actually the work of many reformers and also the immigrant neighbors. And actually in this room right behind you there’s . . . an exhibit about Florence Kelley and
Ellen Gates Starr and [other] women who were here at this place. (Radke, “Interview”)

Describing another exhibit, Radke reflected:

One of my personal interests is in the history of domesticity and the intimate moments of domestic life, and the old feminist trope of the personal is the political. I feel like Hull-House is actually such an interesting example of that because it was about the entirety of these people’s lives. It wasn’t like they went to work and then came home. . . . They lived here. Their relationships with each other were as much a part of their work as going out into the neighborhood. And their relationships with the neighbors also. (Radke, “Interview”)

Lisa Lee, leading the JAHHM at the time of my first interview with Radke, expanded upon the notion of the settlement’s cultivating interpersonal relationships to include the larger community. This emphasis on cross-class and cross-ethnic relations, she said, had carried over into museum programming under her directorship:

There’s an effort these days [in museum practice] toward, what people call shared authority, and for us, it’s one which is so familiar just from looking at Hull-House history. I think its roots are in a notion of solidarity, and the notion that the settlement house movement itself was built in [that]. . . . To sum it up in a nutshell, [the principle] is that you’re not going to be from the ivory tower, standing afar, trying to figure out what the issues are and then coming up with solutions, but you’re going to settle in the neighborhood, figure out the problems and solutions with the people that you are purporting to help. And then, also, you acknowledge that you will probably be as transformed as those people, and so it’s never a stance of service. It is always one of solidarity. (Lee, “Interview”)

To nurture that sense of solidarity, both Lee and Radke explained, entailed engaging in imaginative dialogue with the archive as a starting point. That is, these museum-based teachers would hearken back to Addams’s own language to recapture her vision. Further, they would make material objects through which Addams and the other residents engaged in daily life a direct source of inspiration to guide new partnerships with community members.
and new exhibits inviting such connections. Words and objects originally embedded in Addams's story-making practice could thereby be reanimated through empathetic recovery and dissemination via new stories.

Those dialogues with Addams and her settlement's learning legacies had a clear and purposefully managed parallel among members of the UIC English Education writing team, I discovered. Having the chance to read drafts for *Jane Addams in the Classroom (JAC)* as they were being crafted gave me a window into that collegial writing process as an echo of the Hull–House residents' and neighbors’ shared inquiry. Several of the essays in *JAC*, being revised collaboratively around the same time when I was revisiting the JAMHH, depict the various authors as holding imaginative dialogues with the Hull–House leader. Perhaps the most striking of these is Ruth Vinz’s “Afterword,” which repeatedly locates its author as evoking Addams's own voice, as self-positioning back into Addams's life, and as metaphorically sharing spaces and thoughts with the settlement leader.

Traces of that cross-era connecting also emerged in language from online interviews I carried out with several of the contributors to the *JAC* volume, who, I noted with some initial surprise, had taken to referencing Addams herself as “Jane.” “WWJD? (What would Jane do?)” had become a shared question among this energetic group of educators—a mantra to guide both their teaching and their writing. Todd DeStigter memorably invoked this conversational affiliation by using the “WWJD” question as a header for the final section of his “In Good Company” essay (27). He then answered it in a vivid passage I’d later set in dialogue, myself, with commentary by Native American scholar-writer Diane Glancy on the importance of place visits and analysis of material objects for taking up activist agendas through archival research (see Coda in this book). Here is DeStigter’s anecdote on finding Addams’s grave during a site visit to Cedarville:

Jane’s headstone lay at my feet. . . . I knelt and ran my fingers over the letters. Scattered on the headstone were thirty-four pennies—a nod, I guessed, to the admiration for Lincoln that Jane had inherited from her father.

As much as I was enjoying the moment of reverent solitude, I couldn’t help wondering why I was out there all by myself. I should have been surrounded by admirers and activists. . . . Where were the busloads of progressive pilgrims? By all rights, I should have had to buy a ticket and nudge my way through a crowd to get a glimpse of the final resting place of such an historic figure. . . . Still,
the more I thought about it, the more it made sense that I was out there alone, for anyone who cares enough about Jane Addams to visit her gravesite doesn’t likely have time to linger in homage for long. There’s just too much to be done. Back in Chicago, I knew, were neighborhoods struggling with poverty and violence, streets where thousands of homeless people eat and sleep, and high schools where only about half of the students graduate. I rested for a while in the shade, took some pictures, got on my bike, and headed for home and work. I think it’s what Jane would have done. (DeStigter, “In Good Company,” 28–29)

Years ago, Todd and I shared an office during graduate studies at the University of Michigan, so I can hear his voice in the text, and I can see him, a visible textual presence, in his self-description at Addams’s gravesite. At the same time, partly because we’ve now both read so much of Addams’s writing, I recognize traces of her counter-narrative theory-making in passages like the one above, and in other essays for Jane Addams in the Classroom. In this story, for instance, Todd sets up a subtle verbal interplay between Addams’s grave and his bicycle. Addams’s grave marker, like the Lincoln-evoking pennies scattered over it, prompts his reflections on the meaning of her career. Then, he moves from contemplating the material culture archival resource of Addams’s simply inscribed nameplate (“Jane Addams of Hull House and the International League for Peace and Freedom”) to pedaling back to the city and purposeful civic engagement there. Reading an historical marker prompts a return to action.

As readers, we come to this scene and its implied theorizing through Todd’s storytelling. We should note that he crafted the words later, capitalizing on moments of empathetic analysis to revisit the actual experience of his on-site research and thereby to position his readers, too, within his narrative as cointerpreters of Addams’s richly layered life. Imaginatively visiting the locale with him, we are invited to recall both the powerful mentoring from her father, cast as a Lincolnesque figure in her Twenty Years autobiography, and the centrality of her gendered experience working with other women leaders in enterprises like the League for Peace. But it’s in the culminating image of this scene, where DeStigter forecasts the work that awaits him back in Chicago, that we make the most intense contact with “Jane,” as Todd depicts himself headed into action, biking back to Chicago. In narration that invites empathy with them both, he affiliates his
own commitments with projects like hers: “I think that’s what Jane would have done.”

In writing as well as doing like Jane, Todd runs the risk of having some readers miss the deeply theorized argument contained within such a story. But he gains a potential pathway of imaginative affiliation, particularly among those who have schooled themselves in the inductive approaches to learning through narrative accretion—a route to lived understanding where the arts and humanities excel as epistemological systems. In illustrating his knowledge-building through the daily practice of reflecting, teaching, and writing like “Jane would have done,” Todd also urges us, as readers, to carry out the patient, inquiry-based search for knowledge that learning legacies like hers can enable. Taking a cue from Todd and his JAC coauthors, throughout the rest of this chapter I’ll weave together narratives about Jane Addams in the Classroom and the JAHHM as led by Lee, along with analysis of “Jane’s” storytelling about Julia Lathrop and others, to illuminate the settlement’s Archive. Having tried to enter these narratives by way of self-critical and empathetic connections myself, I can now call on my own readers to join a participatory analysis.

Jane/J.A. and Julia

The regular invocation of “Jane” by the UIC English Education writing team actually has a telling textual parallel within My Friend, Julia Lathrop. There, one rhetorical tactic Addams used to underscore the closeness of her ties to her subject was by recreating conversations where Lathrop playfully references Addams with the nickname “J.A.” Though told in past tense, these scenes bring readers to a participatory sense of shared experience like that in DeStigter’s story, referenced above. Addams’s reconstructed dialogues often include a forceful (if deft) questioning on Lathrop’s part of the settlement’s agenda. Sometimes this challenge involves self-criticism; sometimes it pushes Addams herself to reconsider a particular activity; sometimes it becomes a collaborative evaluation, through conversation, by Addams and her longtime colleague, together. Within such anecdotes, Addams casts herself as the familiar “J.A.” friend of “J. Lathrop” rather than as the revered Nobel laureate or the icon of Progressive Era politics. Individually and together, the anecdotes illustrate how a collaboration bolstered by mutual trust can (and should) include convivial critique. In revisiting her colleague’s leadership as part of a sisterly network that
Lathrop herself called “our precious H.-H. society,” Addams shows how the gendered work of the settlement operated.30

In a 2014 updating of his earlier work on autoethnography as knowledge-making strategy, Norman Denzin emphasized that all biographical narratives require a particularly alert reading stance. Denzin stressed that narrative revisiting of a life always entails reshaping, that rather than being empirically verifiable records of an individual’s or a group’s lived experiences, such texts “are only fictional statements with varying degrees of ‘truth’ about ‘real’ lives.” Thus, he asserted, although they “provide framing devices” for understanding “the lives that we study,” biographical narratives are always “incomplete” literary productions”; they are “narrative arrangements of reality” that give only a partial account of a life, organized to align with a writer’s value system and rhetorical goals (14–15, emphases in original). Such is certainly the case in Addams’s account of Lathrop’s life and its Hull-House connections. To read (as to write) such a narrative calls for self-aware empathy that fills in gaps and positions the story within Addams’s implied theoretical framework, noting still-unfinished agendas and her own place in the storytelling. Addams invites this type of a participatory stance by bringing her readers into an intimate friendship, revisiting recollections of shared experiences.

Actually, Addams’s My Friend, Julia Lathrop was “incomplete” in more ways than Denzin’s description of all life stories would immediately suggest. “J.A.” did not live long enough to revise and edit the text for publication. Finalized by another of Addams’s associates, Alice Hamilton, this last publication itself thereby symbolized the settlement’s ongoing commitment to doing unfinished business through collaboration that takes on multiple forms.

In a brief note appended to Addams’s “Preface,” longtime colleague and, in this case, editor Alice Hamilton outlines how the portrait of former settlement resident Julia Lathrop has been prepared for readers: “After Miss Addams’ death the manuscript for this book was found to be practically ready for publication although she had not yet made the final revision. It has fallen to me to do this and I have carried out the task with scrupulous care, making as few changes as possible. The book is therefore not quite as she would have made it but at least it bears no imprint of any hand but her own.”31

On first reading, that last sentence seems contradictory. How could the book be “not quite as she would have made it” yet, nonetheless, “bear[ing] no imprint of any hand but her own”? The answer lies in the narrative’s
Figure 3.2. Alice Hamilton. Hull-House Photograph Collection. JAMC 0000 0258 0399. Courtesy of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University Archives.
insistent depiction of Addams at work along with Lathrop. Though neither sought credit for her leadership of Progressive causes, both left learning legacies for others to access—a heritage which, Hamilton asserts, we may not be capable of duplicating “quite as [Addams] would have made it,” but which still enables worthwhile cultural stewardship. Hamilton herself shows she has internalized this lesson of how the Hull-House community functioned at its best: foregrounding the work itself, not the leaders making it possible. Self-effacing in this description of her own editorial task, Hamilton positions the book on Lathrop as Addams’s own writing while forecasting one of the text’s core themes: that Hull-House women addressed social problems and made new knowledge collaboratively, eschewing personal credit in favor of achieving results.

Hamilton, a central figure in the Hull-House circle of friends-in-action,32 grasped the importance that the biography of Lathrop held for Addams. Hence, Hamilton’s willingness to prepare an unfinished project for publication, one “practically ready,” on the one hand, but admittedly not yet fully revised. She assured readers that the text was indeed Addams’s own work (an ironic point, given the constant commitment of “J.A.” to crediting others). So, Hamilton described her own process as “carr[ying] out the task with scrupulous care, making as few changes as possible.” Ultimately, Hamilton presented the book’s readers with a narrative on Julia Lathrop both by and about Jane Addams—providing entry into the Hull-House visionary’s retrospective reflections in a summing up that would never have a “final revision” (“Preface,” My Friend, 4). Hamilton’s taking on this task was, meanwhile, entirely consistent with the view of settlement life as she would express it a decade later in her own autobiography: “Hull-House is not an episode of the past; its influence still lives, and it deserves a tribute from one of its devoutest followers” (Exploring/Autobiography, 16).

Reading My Friend, Julia Lathrop for the first time just over twenty years ago, I found Addams’s efforts to honor her longtime compatriot commendable—endearing even. But it was only more recently, when re-reading the account to research Learning Legacies, that I reached a deeper understanding of Addams’s more veiled personal goals for this slim volume. In writing on Addams for my 1990s’ dissertation, I had duly noted her choice to frame Twenty Years at Hull-House as more about the various enterprises of the settlement than about herself. Along related lines, my only previous freestanding publication on Addams, a journal article examining her time at Rockford College as useful preparation for Hull-House, underscored connections between the gendered network of learners she
had helped lead as young student and the similar modes of action that she would undertake at the settlement. In that essay, I interpreted the archival record of her school-based literacy practices to establish that Addams, while still a student, had adopted what I termed a “sororal” brand of leadership (Robbins, “Rereading,” 42). From her days at Rockford, as evidenced in her personal texts from that time, on through her decades-long leadership of Hull-House, Addams used shared literacy practices to guide her thinking and her activism. Through this self-conscious approach, she developed an empathetic stance toward others’ ideas—whether conveyed in print text, conversation, or other expressive forms. Thus, over time, the Hull-House book clubs, which may have initially smacked of imposing high-art texts on neighbors with different interests than the college women running them, morphed into a more expansive version of productive social literacies, including theater, debate clubs, music, and crafts. On a parallel track, Addams and her colleagues learned to welcome wide variations in viewpoint, so that the settlement could “house” dialogues around the most radical political positions alongside far more conservative ones. In the My Friend text, accordingly, with the help of both Lathrop (in remembered dialogues) and Hamilton (as editor) Addams inscribed a closing salute to sisterly relationships shaping shared work.

Reading to Write

Like her interpersonal connections, the imaginative ones Addams forged through reading were a source of knowledge for learning and teaching. For Addams herself, print text remained a special source of pleasure, inspiration, and even day-to-day direction. Writers like George Eliot and Leo Tolstoy represented far more than a pastime: they also provided pragmatic guidance. Books by the women with whom she worked were especially valuable to Addams and the settlement movement. On one hand, and consistent with Deborah Brandt’s concept of “Sponsors of Literacy,” Addams and the Hull-House network can be said to have “sponsored” a number of influential publications over the years—from the Hull-House Maps and Papers (1895) to the Hull-House Bulletin’s collaborative reporting, to the autobiographies of Florence Kelley and Alice Hamilton, to texts by Julia Lathrop herself on work with the Children’s Bureau. Meanwhile, Addams’s constant reading of others’ writings and her attention to their composing processes directly supported her own writing-to-teach.

One example of this communal literacy engagement was pivotal in my
own recent rereading of *My Friend, Julia Lathrop*. As important as her US-based women’s network was to Addams’s career, her transatlantic friendship with Dame Henrietta Barnett held a particularly crucial place in the American writer’s settlement leadership and publishing practices. Addams cultivated a multidecade literacy-linked relationship with Barnett, co-founder with her husband, Canon Samuel Barnett, of the Toynbee Hall London settlement that inspired Hull-House in the first place. Elsewhere, I’ve tracked the various articulations of this friendship in both personal and public writings by Addams and Barnett. 

Here, I want to show how my own “reading” of that relationship led me to a fuller recognition of Addams’s storytelling-to-teach approach in *My Friend, Julia Lathrop*. Specifically, by *reading Addams’s reading* of both Henrietta Barnett, herself, and of Barnett’s principal publication—a biography of her husband, Canon Barnett—I identified purposeful elements I had previously missed in the Lathrop biography. Then, by resituating *My Friend, Julia Lathrop* within a multivalent textual archive of writing, reading, and interpersonal relations from across Addams’s career, I could finally recover this seemingly simple narrative’s strategic call for progressive social action through empathetic collaboration. Like Henrietta Barnett’s use of a biography of her husband to tell her own story, Addams crafted a book about her lifelong friend Julia Lathrop to offer their would-be intellectual heirs a path to follow.

From early on in the text, Addams links *My Friend* with the story of Hull-House and thus, implicitly, with a retrospective account of her own life’s work. While admitting that Lathrop “did not come to live in the settlement the first year,” Addams insists that her colleague’s “sympathetic understanding of its purposes and her co-operating spirit in all its activities . . . became an integral part of it, from the very day of its opening in the autumn of 1889” (16). In attributing both “sympathetic understanding” and a “cooperating spirit” to the young Lathrop, whom she had known since they grew up in Rockford, Illinois, Addams begins to lay out two traits (empathy and collaboration) that she invokes throughout the book to show how Lathrop embodied Hull-House’s vision. At the same time, Addams uses anecdotes revisiting particular occasions of Lathrop’s leadership—very often set within accounts of the two women collaborating—to celebrate the narrative’s purported main subject (Lathrop), while illustrating the settlement’s communal approach. Addams’s strategy here imitates a model she had read quite carefully: *Canon Barnett*, the biography that Dame Henrietta had published to honor her husband, the founder of Toynbee Hall, and, at the same time, to claim a role for herself, beyond
loyal helpmate, in settlement leadership. Addams had described her attentive, appreciative reading of that biography in a letter to Barnett in early winter of 1920, soon after its publication: “I have been asked to review it for various magazines and have accepted the Atlantic and the Yale Review. It has had very favorable notices thruout the country. . . .”37

That Addams regularly used her personal reading to feed her own writing is clear from many examples. In “A Modern Lear,” for instance, she set up a parallel between Shakespeare’s troubled protagonist and George Pullman’s misdirected strike-inducing behaviors in 1894. In her introduction for 1902’s Democracy and Social Ethics, she associated her understanding of lived experience with a brand of empathy gleaned from reading, especially literary texts.38 And in numerous passages within Twenty Years at Hull-House, she used references to reading to elucidate everyday life at the settlement.39

As Barbara Sicherman has explained in Well-Read Lives, “For Addams . . . literature was—or at least could be—a kind of experience rather than a substitute for it” (187). In defending the “reading parties and clubs” that were part of Hull-House from its earliest days, and which, Sicherman admits, have sometimes been deemed an “attempt to impose elite culture on those who did not seek or want it” (174), Well-Read Lives characterizes Addams’s personal approach to authors like Charles Dickens and Emile Zola as mining textual resources to develop her own writing skills (187–88). Therefore, Sicherman suggests, when America’s best-known settlement storyteller describes the powerful impact a particular book by Israel Zangwill (Children of the Ghetto) has had on readers’ ability to grasp his complex subject, “Addams could be describing her own goals and literary practice” (187). Sicherman focuses on how Addams drew on compelling texts to address an “educated audience” and “interpret” for them “the needs and outlooks of her neighbors,” by promoting “imaginative engagement” through reading (Sicherman, 189). Extending this framework, I have tracked how Addams used the content and rhetorical stance of Canon Barnett as a model for My Friend, Julia Lathrop.

Addams’s reading of Barnett’s book built on a gendered bond similar to those grounded in Hull-House collaborations and, like the relationship with Lathrop, enduring for many decades. Addams’s relationship with Barnett had its seeds in the young American’s early pilgrimages to Toynbee Hall and her initial moves to envision a Chicago-based settlement inspired by the London example.40 Although the friendship began with Henrietta Barnett very much a mentor, over time their connection became more
collegial, and in the later stages each of the two women repeatedly drew on the other for intellectual as well as emotional sustenance. This was a friendship—like so many others in Addams’s life—both professional and personal. And one dimension of this sustained transatlantic networking (fed by visits back and forth and maintained through correspondence) rested in each woman’s regularly reading and critiquing the other’s writings in private communications and in published reviews. With these two friends holding major leadership positions in the best-known settlement houses within their respective nations, and with both regularly publishing accounts of their work, it was perhaps predictable that each would frequently reference the other’s oeuvre. And, within this ongoing intertextual exchange, the parallels between *Canon Barnett* and *My Friend, Julia Lathrop* are especially notable.

Dame Henrietta’s 1919 biography of Samuel Barnett predated Addams’s account of Lathrop’s life by more than a decade, but the two books clearly took on parallel rhetorical tasks. If the stance Barnett adopted to portray the relationship between herself and her husband had the effect of downplaying her own crucial leadership role at Toynbee, we might well speculate that she was taking a proverbial page from her friend Addams’s 1910 *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. Further, between the initial publication of Addams’s bestselling memoir and the early 1930s release of the Lathrop narrative, the American settlement leader had experienced a dramatic downturn in her reputation that her British counterpart had sought to mitigate through writing in Addams’s defense. Specifically, Addams had gone from being renowned as a Progressive Era heroine to being vilified as a traitor to her country. That shift in the popular perception of Addams can be traced to her trip to The Hague as a peace movement supporter and an address that she gave in New York in 1915, where she cast World War I soldiers in the trenches as reluctant combatants.41 This bold overstepping of feminine boundaries led, Sherry Shepler and Anne Mattina report, to a rash of verbal assaults in venues like the *New York Times*, countered by Henrietta Barnett’s depiction of Addams in a number of published defenses, including within the *Canon Barnett* biography of Samuel.42 Small wonder, then, that Addams provided emotional support during Barnett’s initial widowhood and, after the release of *Canon Barnett*, helped promote the biography, even assisting with arrangements for Dame Henrietta’s book-tour-type visit to the United States.

Ever the astute reader, Addams clearly appreciated the rhetorical sophistication of *Canon Barnett*. Addams was well aware of Dame Henrietta’s
significant influence on Toynbee and the larger settlement movement, as evidenced in the American woman’s references to Henrietta in publications and in their private correspondence. But she also understood the British woman’s choice to downplay her own role while highlighting her husband’s. Indeed, this was the same strategy Addams had used over the years when writing about Hull-House. Thus, in reading Henrietta Barnett’s account of her spouse as both a celebration of his life and a retrospective analysis of the project they had actually co-led, Addams would have recognized a viable strategy for conveying her ultimate vision of her Chicago settlement at the end of her career. Accordingly, echoing Canon Barnett, and in a more focused way than for her earlier Twenty Years memoir, My Friend, Julia Lathrop used story to show readers that the heart of the Hull-House program lay in interpersonal relationships, that those bonds enabled shared social action, and that there was still unfinished business from the settlement movement for readers to address.

My Friend Storytelling as Teaching Text

Despite an outpouring of celebratory occasions honoring Addams in the wake of her death, My Friend, Julia Lathrop, her last testament on Hull-House, did not garner the broad-based readership of the Twenty Years text. An unsigned June 1936 assessment of the later book in Social Service Review, the same periodical that had earlier published Addams’s seed essay for the biography, may reveal why. While praising both Lathrop and Addams personally, the reviewer took Addams to task as a biographer:

Miss Addams, by the fact of their mutual comfort and aid, on account of their united front against sloth and stupidity, by reason of their common objectives and their common will to press forward to their goals, naturally took Julia Lathrop more for granted than did others more remote from their friendship might be inclined to do. In her biography of Miss Lathrop, accordingly, we have the record of the woman—a thing of infinite value of course—but not the drama of the woman battling against vested interests, social indifference, and emotional lethargy.43

Rose C. Feld—who wrote regularly for the New York Times, The New Yorker, and the Herald Tribune—did offer a more appreciative view. Feld praised key features in the biography as I’ve interpreted it here, that is,
as indicative of the settlement’s shared values and of Addams’s propensity for locating its story within networks of empathetic collaboration. Arguing that “[n]ever did a title more successfully give the essence of the contents of a book,” Feld touted the narrative’s focus on “the relationship of author to subject” and on “mutual labor in the same field of service.” Feld shared several anecdotes from the biography to illustrate Addams’s portrait of Lathrop’s engaging wit; to underscore the author’s linkage between Lathrop’s model of “disinterested virtue” and their shared commitment to social justice; and to assert the important legacy both women had left behind. Feld opened her review by saying, “The last thing that Jane Addams did before her death was to write the final pages” of her book on Lathrop, and Feld’s closing paragraph declares, “The world is a richer and better place for having held these two women.” By framing her assessment of the book as an evaluation of both their lives, Feld invited her own readers to view this text as a record of collaborative endeavors in life and an admirable ongoing legacy (“Jane Addams, Wrote,” BR 4).

Turning to the text itself, we can find multiple examples of how My Friend, Julia Lathrop purposefully performs a rhetorical double-duty: celebrating Lathrop while coupling her self-effacing version of leadership with Addams’s, thereby providing an adaptable collaborative model. Repeatedly, My Friend depicts Lathrop’s commitment to social justice through stories that illustrate what Addams dubs “disinterested virtue,” or “the refusal to nurse a private destiny,” and instead to cultivate “a complete freedom from egocentric preoccupations” (36). One compelling example—seen both in Lathrop’s approach to leadership and Addams’s mode of storytelling about it—depicts a shipboard intervention by Lathrop into the treatment of steerage-class passengers during a transatlantic voyage. This episode, appearing in both the original 1932 Social Science Review article (“A Great Public Servant”) and in chapter 9 of the book, recounts how Lathrop advocated for the “many immigrants” on board a ship she and Addams were taking from France to the United States. The “coarse black bread which was given the immigrant passengers” three times a day “had become filled with green mould,” and was therefore “unpalatable and probably dangerous” (104). Their pleas ignored by the captain, these fellow travelers found an ally in Lathrop, who “secured the promise from the Captain himself that fresh bread should be baked for the immigrants every day” (105).

As the memoir progresses, Addams’s linkage of Lathrop’s portrait with her other Hull-House compatriots establishes the individual biography as, actually, depicting the settlement community. For instance, in the chapter
entitled “Friendship with Florence Kelley,” Addams quotes at length from an article that “Julia Lathrop wrote for The Survey only a few weeks before her own death, revealing as to both of these good friends” (90). Utilizing letters that Lathrop had written to Kelley across multiple decades, Addams’s citation of this article on Kelley prompts readers to see the Lathrop-Kelley intimate friendship’s expressions of mutual support as a model of sustained collaboration. Addams directly alerts her readers that the My Friend reprinting of Lathrop’s 1832 essay is intended to highlight both the designated subject—Kelley—and the original author—Lathrop—by saying that the text is about both “these two brilliant women” at once (90). Accordingly, when Addams presents Lathrop’s assessment of Kelley—“always doing whatever came to her hand, studying, writing, teaching, speaking, always stimulating”—we should also see that Addams is bringing another self-presentation into play: her own. By casting Lathrop’s account of Kelley as being, in fact, about both—“praising and stimulating others, asking nothing for herself”—Addams signals that her profile of Lathrop can be read as autobiography. Like her two Hull-House colleagues, Addams implicitly admits, she “gave herself” to “friends,” so that each of the Hull-House women led “a nobly rich and generous life,” exerting “influence” “far beyond her day” (92).

Along related lines, the final shared project Addams treats in the biography aptly exemplifies the Hull-House practice of accepting that some social justice work will likely go unfinished and will need to be taken up by others. In a chapter entitled “The Last Decade,” My Friend describes Lathrop’s campaign against capital punishment. Addams revisits Lathrop’s support for Russell McWilliams, who had been condemned to electrocution for murder during a 1931 robbery. Addams’s account of a conversation, during the “last time I saw Julia Lathrop,” emphasizes her colleague’s assertion that, by claiming it served as a deterrent, capital punishment advocates actually violated “the findings of science.” Echoing Lathrop’s point, Addams reiterates in her own voice that “the findings of scientific inquiries” refute such views (My Friend, 152).

Addams’s wrap-up for the chapter then reports that, in April 1933, McWilliams’s sentence was finally commuted to 99 years, “a year after Julia Lathrop’s death . . . on April 15, 1932” (153)—illustrating how campaigns for social justice often seem to end, unfinished, but may eventually bear fruit. To underscore that many of the battles they had fought together would have to be won by later generations, Addams presents a Coda of published tributes to Lathrop. Addams notes that the last of these “empha-
sizes the pioneer aspect of her activities” (156). She compares Lathrop’s leadership to women such as Anna Howard Shaw and Susan B. Anthony, who had passed on before achieving their generation’s goals. And she calls on readers to become “a new race of pioneers” building on that example (156). Casting both Lathrop and Addams as leaders in their day (from “the gay nineties” through “fifty years” of “spiritual zeal that never flagged”), this accolade again yokes Lathrop’s life with her biographer’s and portrays both women as leaving work unfinished. Overall, Addams’s closing commentary indicates that her own time is also drawing to a close, and that she, too, must look ahead to visionary heirs.

Sponsoring Immigrant Authorship

As noted above, the interactive relationship between Jane Addams’s authorship and that of other well-educated middle-class women who lived at Hull-House and wrote about their experiences can be retraced by reading their publications intertextually. That process garners support from research documenting Addams’s longstanding practice of learning from her peers, even as she influenced others as thinkers, activists, and writers.44 Equally (if not more) important to this Learning Legacies project, though, is the increasing trend in scholarship to highlight how Addams supported the growth and agency of working-class women. As Maurice Hamington has noted in “Community Organizing,” an essay in Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams, there is still a need to remedy the tendency to depict Addams and Hull-House as “well meaning,” yet “patronizing” in their interactions with working-class and immigrant community members (256). Hamington traces this stereotype to “blatant condescension and sexism” in views of Addams circulated by later male community organizers such as Saul Alinsky. Indeed, Hamington argues, to cast Hull-House and Addams in such terms misrepresents her approach, since “she vehemently contended that settlements were intended to facilitate education and connection, not charity” (263).

Aligned with Hamington’s view, Karen Pastorello points to the example of Bessie Abramowitz Hillman, whose connection with “the community of women reformers at Chicago’s premier settlement transformed” her from “novice working-class” political figure to skilled “labor leader” (98–99). Recalling that Abramowitz and other leaders of the strike against Hart, Schaffner, and Marx “affectionately began to refer to [Hull-House] as the ‘House of Labor,’” Pastorello locates her recovery of Abramowitz’s story in the context of a larger process. She critiques some historians’ sugges-
tions that all “middle-class ‘allies’ [of labor groups] were merely patronizing the so-called ‘girls’ as they pushed their own agendas,” and insists such a stance did not apply at Hull-House (99). She relates Addams’s more supportive position to work by Florence Kelley and Julia Lathrop in the Halsted Street neighborhood. Pastorello also spotlights such writings by Addams as “Trade Unions and Public Duty” and her facilitation of the Jane Club’s founding to provide “cooperative living arrangements to young working women” (104) as forecasting the settlement leader’s active support of Abramowitz during the 1910 strike. Pastorello even traces Abramowitz’s later development as a pro-suffrage writer and speaker back to Addams’s respectful tutelage: Abramowitz, Pastorello indicates, “modeled her skills after Addams, whose clear and confident public speaking demeanor often drew praise” (111). In all, Pastorello maintains, the relationship between Addams and Bessie Abramowitz Hillman should be viewed as exemplifying reciprocal, cross-class learning—a clear indicator that the Hull-House founding figure moved well beyond her initial naïve views about how to make the settlement a site of democratic energy.

Sadly, retrieval of what could be many individual archives growing out of such relationships is unlikely to yield a volume of text equivalent to that created by Hull-House women residents, whose enhanced access to advanced education and professional training gave them far greater ability to publish their writings. Much of the settlement-based authorship of women neighbors in Addams’s day took on ephemeral forms, such as in performance pieces for the theater or compositions created in their evening classes. Fortunately, though, through the strong authorial identity of one such Hull-House student, further supported by her daughter’s determined archival recovery, we have the so-far unique publication *I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl*, by Hilda Satt Polacheck, edited by Dena J. Polacheck Epstein.

Polacheck’s autobiography is doubly interesting as a learning legacy, for it retraces her personal growth from student to accomplished writer and offers up vivid examples of Addams’s respectful teaching. As such, *I Came a Stranger* enacts a counter-narrative response to overgeneralized critiques of “benevolent” teaching interventions associated with Progressive Era settlements. Hilda Satt (later Polacheck) offers up plenty of specific examples of Addams’s attentive mentoring, which gradually but persistently led the young Russian Jewish immigrant to a new self-image, mainly by way of writing- and conversation-enhanced educational opportunities. After feeling trapped in the monotony of sweatshop labor sewing cuffs all
day, at Hull-House Polacheck found that she “came in contact with people from all over the world” (89). For Hilda, Hull-House became an “Oasis in the Desert” (68) of urban life, as she studied poetry and Shakespeare with Harriet Monroe, worked at the Labor Museum, attended lectures by celebrity speakers, and dined at the coffee house (76, 69–70, 66). “For ten years,” she reports, “I spent most of my evenings at Hull-House,” and interactions with Addams were a highlight of that time. Addams, Polacheck avers, “was never condescending to anyone. She never made one feel that she was a ‘lady bountiful.’ She never made one feel that she was doling out charity. When she did something for you, you felt she owed it to you or that she was making a loan that you could pay back” (74–75).

In one anecdote, for example, Polacheck describes Addams’s gentle but irresistible pressure to enroll in a new writing course being offered by Henry Porter Chandler. Though a timid Hilda demurs initially, saying “that I had never written anything,” Addams insists, and Hilda begins a learning journey that becomes one of the major strands in her autobiography (77). Proudly presenting her first composition for this course (“The Ghetto Marker”) in I Came a Stranger, Polacheck takes her own readers along through an empowering series of literacy sponsorship experiences facilitated by Addams. Thus, we see Hilda soon enrolling at the University of Chicago, with Addams having secured the funding to make this momentous event possible (87). Declares Polacheck, in retrospect: “That term at the University of Chicago opened a new life to me,” as “reading the assigned books became a tonic to my soul,” and honing her writing abilities prepared her for new opportunities at Hull-House (88). Then, in the summer after her magical, if relatively brief, time of university study, Polacheck finds herself teaching a Hull-House English class for other immigrants (89). Proud to report that, in later offerings, her “class was always crowded and the people seemed to make good progress,” Polacheck is equally thrilled when Addams approvingly visits the class (91). Polacheck shares affirming memories of teaching, including having a Greek immigrant who had been a professor in his home country take her course, developing creative pedagogical techniques such as using the Declaration of Independence as an instructional text, and successfully preparing her pupils for the naturalization test (91).

Addams’s mentoring of Hilda Satt Polacheck extended well beyond the Hull-House walls. Seeking ways to expand her own learning beyond that miracle university term Addams had made possible, Hilda later benefited from the settlement leader’s “letter of introduction” that led to employment
at “A. C. McClurg & Co., a publishing house and at the time the largest bookstore in Chicago” (93). Still devoting most evenings to Hull-House, Polacheck, with Addams’s backing, soon organized a new “social and literary” group, the Ariadne Club (94). Alternating social events like dancing one week with reading/writing activities the next, Ariadne Club members first generated a wide range of papers on a various social issues and then moved to sponsoring debates and the sharing of book reviews. Under the auspices of the club, Hilda recalls, she read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and wrote a review that generated such intense responses during the group’s discussion session that it spilled over into a second week. Before long, the club even branched out into producing plays, with Hilda enthusiastically immersing in yet another Hull-House-sponsored learning avenue that, she reminisces, was truly “a preparation for life” (95).

Polacheck’s look back at the importance of the Hull-House theater takes on special resonance in the context of learning legacies because this connection provided yet another opportunity for her writing. Addams, inviting Hilda to turn Leroy Scott’s *The Walking Delegate* into a play, coupled that commission with advice on how to earn enough money with a summer waitress job that would allow plenty of off-duty time for working on the adaptation. Once Polacheck had prepared and revised the script under the guidance of the Hull-House Players’ director, preparations for the performances began. Polacheck’s pride in this occasion’s significance—for herself and for Hull-House—is clear in her description of the audience’s “shouts of ‘Author!’” as “the curtain came down on the last act.” Onstage in that self-affirming moment, “there I stood bowing, my heart just too full to say a word” (125–26).

Although the period of the play’s production also marked the time when Hilda Satt married Bill Polacheck and moved to Milwaukee, this transition did not end her commitment to authorship, so effectively nurtured by Addams and Hull-House already. As later sections of her autobiography recount, her married life incorporated writing in a range of public genres. These subsequent experiences included periodical publications such as her reviews of plays for the *Milwaukee Leader* and, in the 1930s, a series of texts for the WPA Folklore Project.46

Given her wide-ranging writing history, Hilda Polacheck was likely disappointed when she was unable to find a publisher for her autobiography. She left multiple versions of the narrative behind at the time of her death in 1967. In a rightful affirmation of the role Hull-House and Addams had played in her writing life, family members gathered to hold their memo-
rial in what remained of the settlement’s physical space, where they read excerpts from Hilda’s manuscript to honor her. Dena J. Polacheck Epstein took up the task of editing the manuscript years later. Using diaries and letters, along with literary and historical sleuthing, Epstein prepared an edition that intermingles personal memory with thoughtful analysis. A crucial contribution to the Archive of Hull-House teaching, especially given its repeated validations of Addams’s efforts to nurture public voices from those too often marginalized, *I Came a Stranger* calls upon readers to listen attentively to such stories. Though “unfinished” at the time of her death, Hilda Satt Polacheck’s narrative—thanks to her daughter’s dedicated cultural stewardship—now stands as a rich learning legacy in its own right.

**Museum Enactments of Addams’s Legacy**

As the primary interlocutor of Hull-House’s many programs, Jane Addams knew well that its work would always be “unfinished,” calling for the kind of “scrupulous care” Alice Hamilton exercised as textual mediator for *My Friend, Julia Lathrop* (4). More recently, a parallel conviction that much of Addams’s vision still remains to be addressed reemerged at the Hull-House Museum. If studying Addams’s archive of writings has led me to reassert the relevance of the settlement’s mission, much credit should go to the museum’s educators during Lisa Lee’s tenure. Actively shaping exhibits and social programs, they also collaborated with communities beyond the landmark itself to reinvigorate its promotion of social justice. By reanimating Hull-House through what museum leaders Lee and Lisa Junkin Lopez termed “radical empathy,” the network of cultural workers there crafted an active teaching site for civic engagement. In drawing on Hull-House’s archive to guide their cultural interventions, the staff, under Lee’s leadership, self-consciously demonstrated how aesthetic and political learning legacies can operate together—and how public scholarship can revitalize those stories.

Though I use past tense in this section of my chapter, I do not mean to imply that, since Lee’s move to a different role at UIC, followed by Radke’s and Junkin Lopez’s relocations to different cities, the JAHHM has abandoned the principles these colleagues brought to the museum’s work. Rather, I want to suggest that the *ethnographic moment* of my multiple visits to the site during Lee’s tenure, and the specific conversations I held with staff members, represent a particular archive of social action. Such archives of collaborative practice are necessarily fluid—adaptable to shifting cir-
cumstances, such as a new museum director. Understandably, with different leadership now in place, adjustments in emphasis may occur, including some reflected in the disappearance of several texts from the museum’s website as indicative of teaching practices during my on-site research. Perhaps, in a book exploring the seemingly stable archives held in facilities such as library collections, but also the more layered and evolving Archive of cultural resources around social agency, to bring two such bodies of material together in one chapter is quite appropriate. Like Addams, Lathrop, and Hamilton from earlier settlement days, Lee and her colleagues Lopez and Radke have left a written record of their own Hull-House practices, as well as material culture markers and conversational accounts of their engagement with the site. In doing so, these new archive-makers built a flexible foundation that others can now extend, continuing to address the ever-unfinished business of cross-cultural teaching.

Thus, my interpretation of a particular group of women museum leaders’ counter-narratives, enacted over several years, also aligns with multiple texts from the larger settlement Archive. These include Addams’s own published writings and personal artifacts, but also elements such as the built environment of Hull-House itself (in Addams’s day and more recently); records of work by participants in the settlement’s daily life (such as Edith de Nancrede, Ellen Gates Starr, and Julia Lathrop); commentaries such as newspaper accounts and magazine features in Addams’s day; and research by other scholars. My major sources for this analysis, however, are colleagues who worked in, and wrote about, the museum over several years of Lee’s leadership.

Those dialogues confirmed that the JAHHM began a major renaissance under Lee’s guidance, from 2006 to 2013, when she became director of UIC’s School of Art and Art History. In this same period, Lisa Junkin Lopez served first as an education coordinator and, after Lee’s shift in positions at UIC, as interim and then associate director, until moving on to the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah. Exhibition coordinator Heather Radke, meanwhile, joined Lee and Lopez as team members whose generative interpersonal approach clearly echoed the feminist network of women from Hull-House’s earlier days. Radke’s transition to MFA studies at Columbia University in New York in the fall of 2015 and her selection as a 2016–17 PAGE fellow for Imagining America echoed Florence Kelley’s transition from the Chicago settlement to New York-based work in that previous generation. Overall, therefore, we could say that the twenty-first-century Hull-House network led by Lee followed the pattern
of their predecessors, leaving unfinished business to do on Halsted Street but also useful roadmaps for others to follow. Likewise, as illustrated by Lopez’s self-descriptions in an interview after her relocation to Savannah, the experiences these educators shared at the JAHHM have remained accessible to them individually as concepts guiding their current work, with Lopez’s vision for new projects at the Low Birthplace (discussed in more detail in the Coda) being just one case in point.

Aiming for the kind of reading-to-listen that Dave Schaafsma, editor of *Jane Addams in the Classroom*, has identified as one of Addams’s own goals,52 I’ve repeatedly studied transcriptions of my interviews with these three staff members about their time at the JAHHM. I’ve drawn as well on published accounts by Lee, Lopez, and Radke, all of whom followed the lead of settlement women authors like Hamilton, Kelley, and Addams by writing about their social justice projects. My intertextual review of these museum educators’ publications and their practices-in-action has revealed a productive interplay between Addams’s strategies for settlement-based teaching and what Lee termed “a form of rhetorical pragmatic discourse” in JAHHM’s work.53

Among all three of these creative cultural stewards, I’ve identified several interconnected curatorial approaches in line with Michel de Certeau’s framework for purposeful use of available space—extending both storytelling and social action beyond the museum walls, partly by bringing into the JAHHM new voices, expressive acts, and shared activities. De Certeau’s formulations for doing productive cultural work within constrained spaces are especially relevant here since, as noted above, the Hull-House of our own time operates in a far more limited physical space than the settlement had during its heyday. As de Certeau has noted in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, our available sites of social action are often constrained ones. At a literal/material level, the reduction of space represented in Hull-House’s diminished physical presence at the edge of the UIC campus is one example. Still, following de Certeau, purposeful deployment of language can exercise a liberatory power. Thus, he argues, “ways of using the constraining order of the place” can emerge in our application of words or collaborative activities or even by adjusting a built environment like a street or classroom, allowing “users [to] carry out operations of their own,” despite the constraints they face. Accordingly, “[w]ithout leaving the place where [they have] no choice but to live and which lays down its law,” astute adapters of place generate “plurality and creativity.” De Certeau explains that, through this artful manipulation—this purposeful “re-use” of any available
room for maneuvering in tight quarters—creative practitioners of everyday life can produce “unexpected results” from an otherwise limiting situation (Practice, 30–31). In that context, with keen awareness of collaborative storytelling as a powerful strategy for countering these limits, Lee and her colleagues positioned their educational initiatives both within and beyond the current Hull-House site. This reclamation of place through strategic use of language at the museum reanimated Addams’s original agenda to promote social justice.

The museum staff’s arrangement of their physical workspace as it was organized during my first interview sessions there in July 2012 embodied their commitment to enacting Addams-informed collaboration through management of physical and discursive space. Perched in a shared office on the second floor of the restored Hull-House dining hall, the team’s cluster of desks formed a circle for conversational planning. Although then-director Lee’s small office was set just to the side of this main beehive of activity, she clearly had an open-door approach. Later, through their interview comments’ echoes of each other, the group repeatedly demonstrated how their ongoing dialogue mined archive-based resources for JAHHM’s execution of its mission. That is, in conversations reminiscent of those Addams, Lathrop, and Hamilton revisited in the My Friend text, this new cluster of Hull-House women was similarly using dialogue to enact and critique their shared praxis.

Consistent with trends in many heritage museums today, the JAHHM under Lee shifted its emphasis from memorializing to community engagement through shared curation. This vision had a sustained impact on everything from topics addressed to the rhetorical pragmatism the museum used to document its work. To capitalize on Addams’s narrative heritage, JAHHM staff purposefully invoked her language to characterize their practices. Therefore, staff members reported, the mission under Lee’s guidance involved reconnecting with the “Unfinished Business” of the settlement, affirming its interpersonal dimensions of knowledge-making, and using storytelling as both art and social intervention.

A recurring theme under Lee’s directorship, “Unfinished Business” was articulated rhetorically in exhibits and in staff members’ written reports about their work. So, for instance, in an interview describing her role as an exhibition coordinator, Radke referenced an “Unfinished Business” project on arts education to exemplify the museum’s commitment “to link the history of Hull-House and the history of the Progressive Era with contemporary issues.” Radke further described the exhibit as “an advocacy piece,”
encouraging visitors to go beyond “learn[ing] the history and what’s happening today in a particular subject area” to embracing “an opportunity for engagement and activism around that” (Radke interview).

Similarly, in their essay for the Schaafsma-edited *JAC* collection, Lee and Lopez reiterated the team’s commitment to “Addams’s most fundamental educational beliefs about the impact of culture in the practice of democracy and furthering social change” (“Participating,” 175). Lee and Lopez directly echoed Radke’s explanation of the “rotating exhibition space” as “devoted to making connections between Hull-House history and contemporary issues while also seeking to unleash our radical imaginations about our collective futures.” Intended to honor ways that “much progress has been made on the issues that Jane Addams and the reformers cared about,” they noted, these projects also underscored how “there is still more to accomplish,” since “the work of creating a more just society continues” (175). For Lee and Lopez, this stance required the museum team to embrace the concept of cultural institutions as “permanently impermanent” (“Participating,” 170).

One example of this principle emerged in a collaboration between the Tamms Year Ten program and the JAHHM to engage museum visitors as supporters of prisoners in solitary confinement. When asked how people outside prison walls could provide solidarity-oriented support, one suggestion prisoners made was to send poems. In response, by setting up a writing station at Hull-House, the JAHHM generated postcard poems from over five thousand museum visitors in 2011–12—a vibrant example of “radical empathy” linked to Hull-House’s legacy. As Lee and Lopez noted, this strategy engaged visitors through “observation, empathy, critical thinking, and participation.” Such projects affirmed “the possibility to participate in history, rather than simply be subject to it,” as visitors became “part of the making of a better world” (“Participating,” 177).

Radke’s leadership in development of another “Unfinished Business” project—on “21st-Century Home Economics”—led to a Brooking Prize from the American Alliance of Museums. In an essay about that exhibition’s execution, Radke explained how interdisciplinary inquiry into historical archives can focus as much on absence as on presence—and how critical engagement with a legacy from the past can both deepen our understanding of history and open up possibilities for social action today:

“Unfinished Business: 21st Century Home Economics” . . . transformed a historic house museum into a vibrant space of inquiry about a pressing contemporary issue, while simultaneously maintaining a
commitment to transformation of the visitor, the community, the nature of an exhibition and institutional structures. This exhibition challenged our most basic conceptions about museum practices, including those around curatorial authority, how to write an effective object label and what makes for a relevant, resonant artifact. It also expanded the horizon of our imaginations and aspirations for the potential impact of an exhibition on social change. (Radke, “Unfinished Business/Economics”)

As Radke indicated, research behind this exhibit included rethinking domestic labor’s role in the original settlement. Specifically, the museum staff realized, the leadership of women like Alice Hamilton, Florence Kelly, and Ellen Gates Starr has long been celebrated. But who was doing the household chores that enabled those well-educated and privileged women to become social leaders? To make the contributions of housekeeper Mary Keyser visible, the JAHHM exhibit emphasized elements in the Hull-House story too long under-acknowledged. In Radke’s words:

Until her death, Keyser ran the household . . . so that other residents could do a wide range of work that made Hull-House a crucial space for democracy. Keyser also actively participated in helping to organize other domestic workers as the head of the Labor Bureau for Women, working as both a domestic servant and social reformer. She made crucial connections in the neighborhood surrounding Hull-House, and brought her knowledge of the needs and lives of the immigrant neighbors into the settlement house project. She was so beloved by the community that upon her death, her obituary ran in several newspapers and hundreds of people attended her funeral. (Radke, “Unfinished Business”)

By spotlighting Keyser, “21st-century Home Economics” extended the historical record of women’s work at Hull-House during Addams’s day. Keyser’s contributions to the Hull-House enterprise were different than those of the residents, a number of whom held jobs off-site during the day and gave time to settlement programs at night—perhaps by teaching classes or supporting clubs—in exchange for room, board, and the chance to participate in an innovative experiment. This exhibit’s recuperation of Keyser’s legacy affirmed the settlement’s practice of enabling a range of collaborative connections to its work, all valuable, if in different ways.
Cultivating Collaboration

Like the “Unfinished Business” of revisiting Hull-House’s learning legacies through a critical lens, a related agenda of the museum leaders I interviewed blended curatorial vision with collaborative social action, as in the Tamms Year Ten project referenced above. Along related lines, for the home economics project, the JAHHM partnered with the Chicago Coalition for Household Workers to investigate issues associated with domestic work today and to promote solidarity and activism.

Still, as Radke acknowledged in her Brookings-award essay, establishing a meaningful collaboration through community curation—a growing trend in the cultural work of museums—can itself be challenging. “One difficulty that can come from community curation,” she noted, “is a false sense of reciprocity.” While community members’ contributions to a particular exhibit—whether personal artifacts or commentary—can give a museum’s presentation a heightened sense of authenticity, ethical practice requires the institution to ask what community partners actually gain from their involvement. As Radke observed: “The process can feel like the re-inscription of a colonialist project of plundering artifacts from a community group so that the museum can display them safely within the sanitized gallery space” (“Unfinished Business”). Decontextualized from actual lived experience, stories presented by community partners may seem more like tokenism than a true partnership.

One resource the Lee-led JAHHM educators used as a model for cultivating reciprocal partnerships was the Hull-House Labor Museum’s engagement with community members during Addams’s time. That turn-of-the-century program was popular with both middle-class visitors and Hull-House neighbors serving as what we’d call community curators today. However, as Lee and Lopez reported in their “Participating in History” essay for Jane Addams in the Classroom, some scholars have raised questions about the degree to which the Labor Museum was coopting the experiences of workers for displays that may have honored their skill at crafts but admittedly did not lead to radical changes in the often-demoralizing factory labor at the time. Nonetheless, Lee and Lopez maintained, the Labor Museum enacted cross-class collaborations meriting our attention. For one thing, as they indicated in their review of Hilda Satt Polacheck’s autobiography, the Labor Museum helped some participants view their own daily work more positively. Setting factory labor within a longer history, the Labor Museum invited participants (visitors and community curators
alike) to make connections between the tasks of daily industry and a craft heritage. For another, Lee and Lopez suggested, although today we might undervalue the Labor Museum’s affiliation with the Arts and Crafts Movement, for Addams and other settlement leaders—both at Hull-House and at its model Toynbee Hall in London—access to artistic production and appreciation was a right as worthy of advocacy as political action. Thus, rather than oversimplifying the recruitment of community docents for the Labor Museum then (or the 21st-Century Home Economics exhibit more recently) as patronizing, we should recognize that such partnerships can be both ethical and enabling, with shared cultural rights being honored on a par with (and potentially even contributing to) political rights. Along those lines, Lee and Lopez have advocated viewing the Labor Museum within a larger context of arts-based learning at Hull-House to make the case for both programs as inclusive and empowering: “Through the Labor Museum and art classes, Hull-House encouraged all people to see themselves as creative and emotive beings and to claim their right to such notions as beauty and truth” (170).

Another rhetorical space Lee’s team utilized to embody this stance was the World Wide Web. Over several years of research, I noted how web-based stories about exhibits and programming enabled off-site access to the museum’s cultural work. “Check It Out,” for instance, a story on the arts lending program, displayed an online description of that initiative, including images of art works that could be borrowed from the museum for three months at a time, through a partnership with Threewalls art center in Chicago. By scrolling through images of art available for checkout, a website visitor could imaginatively associate with the original conception of this project—potentially making a connection between these objects becoming accessible online now and the efforts of the settlement’s Butler Art Gallery (like the Hull-House theater) to locate aesthetic activity within a democratic, broadly accessible space.

So, too, even after the “21st-Century Home Economics” exhibit ended its run at the museum, it had a digital afterlife through a YouTube video, including images of the original exhibit and an explanation of its goals. Also on this page, web visitors could find an audiotape commentary from “Julia O’Grady, a food service worker at the Academy for Global Citizenship, a charter school on Chicago’s southwest side dedicated to a dynamic food curriculum and healthy cafeteria food for all students.” Explaining to listeners that “I don’t like when people call me a ‘lunch lady’” rather than the more appropriate title of “lunchroom manager,” O’Grady’s renaming
of her own social position reinforced the original exhibit’s incorporation of marginalized voices into curatorial conversations. As such, her brief but engaging audio story reasserted the museum’s commitment to multivocal storytelling enabled by community curation.

Hull-House-affiliated programs, both in Addams’s era and under Lee’s mentoring, created opportunities for new voices telling stories to broader audiences. In that context, web-based exhibitions sponsored by the museum applied de Certeau’s call for creative resistance against spatial constraints—in this case, the limited ability of any museum to have people visit a site in person. And “Look at It This Way,” an online-only exhibit created by students enrolled in a fall 2013 UIC course entitled “Collecting from the Margins,” exemplified another advantage of digital curation: providing extra space for display of artifacts along with interpretive context. These students, in fact, were empowered to address questions long reserved only for museum managers: “What makes an object an artifact? Why do we save some things and not others? What can we learn from the things we save?” In response, they created labels (in museum parlance) for such artifacts as a copy of a George Eliot novel (Romola) frequently studied in a Hull-House book club and a milk bottle evoking the settlement’s campaigns for food safety.

Overall, JAHHM’s ongoing use of digitization for teaching reinforced the settlement’s original commitment to democratizing knowledge. Like the Labor Museum and the Hull-House theater in Addams’s day, and in line with her writing for popular venues, the museum’s development of online resources affirmed Hull-House’s vision of education as a public act expanding networks of engagement. Thus, though not every online “story” of community curation that I’ve reviewed remains available through the JAHHM’s website, a number of these collaborations have left other public traces through partners’ online records, thereby illustrating how even the most tenuous of archives may sometimes have compelling afterlives.

Closely aligned with the museum’s collaborative methodology under Lee was a goal of cultivating conviviality and hospitality reminiscent of Addams’s own stance at Hull-House. As Lopez explained in one of our conversations, JAHHM staff sought to “open the doors” to grassroots organizations (Lopez, “Interview,” 2012). For example, one partnership revitalized the settlement’s longstanding work around “Unfinished Business–Juvenile Justice.” This project accentuated connections between Hull-House’s leadership in the founding of the nation’s first juvenile court in 1899 (which Addams chronicled in chapter 9 of My Friend, Julia Lath-
rop) and the museum’s commitment to juvenile justice and prison reform today. This exhibit fostered new dialogues on site, and the partnership also reached into the community in locations such as the Chicago Freedom School. The extra-museum activities were both socially and artistically generative, as seen in an e-zine graphic narrative series representing girls’ experiences within the juvenile justice system today. This project invited readers’ empathetic identification with the authors, thereby merging art with community-building.

Interestingly, UIC itself has been tapping into the settlement’s historical legacy as well. For example, like the Hull-House-affiliated labor organizers of the settlement era, in 2013 the lowest-paid workers at UIC garnered support for a unionizing movement by involving faculty. When over a year passed without a contract negotiated, where did the leaders of this campaign gather to strategize? As Deanna Issacs reported in an online essay for Chicago Reader: “in the campus’s historic Hull-House Residents’ Dining Hall, where the spirit of Jane Addams is as palpable as the wood-paneled walls, the union held a half-day teach-in. The standing-room-only crowd got a crash course on labor activism, along with a free lunch of homemade soup and bread” (“Crunch Time”). And in spring 2014, when full-time faculty at UIC joined the campaign to raise the pay for adjuncts, the Hull-House dining room served as a meeting place. In fostering intellectual, affective, and political solidarity, these gatherings reaffirmed the settlement’s original aspirations for labor equity. More broadly, by opening its spaces to dialogue and collaboration, the museum affiliated with the original settlement’s commitment to community connections.

Reanimating Hull-House’s Stories

Though Lee is no longer directly responsible for guiding the museum, her written accounts of JAHIM teaching remain a valuable archive for others seeking to do similar cultural work. Along with scholarly stories on curation by Radke and Lopez, Lee’s narratives of practice echo Addams’s own writings and add to the settlement’s Archive. An example relevant to this study’s focus on using story to theorize, Lee’s “Peering into the Bedroom” essay reflects on decision-making behind two pivotal exhibits. One of these highlighted the portrait of Mary Rozet Smith along with a participatory space for visitors to propose and counter-propose labeling to best represent Addams’s relationship with Smith. Although their partnership has often been downplayed—sometimes even suppressed—in histories of
Addams and Hull-House, Lee’s counter-narrative argues that encouraging guests to address different possibilities for explicating their bond renders museum practice itself into a participatory ethics. Our own moment carries reminders that terms for describing a life partnership like Addams and Smith cultivated, as well as socially sanctioned avenues for expressing their relationship in public, were often limited in their day. So, Lee’s essay asks, how can a cultural steward like the JAHHM convey the centrality of their connection in Addams’s lifetime, an era far removed from contexts such as the recent US Supreme Court decision on gay marriage? By inviting visitors to address such questions, Lee notes, a multivocal labeling exercise also raised questions about responsible truth-telling, including what the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience terms “restorative truth” (176). For Lee, a tool for confronting such issues resides in the archive: “Drawing inspiration from the history” of the settlement, “where dialogue, dissent and discussion fostered a participatory democracy,” she avers, this alternative labeling exhibit “address[ed] visitors as citizens engaged in the process of creating meaning” (180).

Similarly, in describing the staff’s plans for an exhibit of Addams’s bedroom—including mounting Smith’s portrait on the wall where it hung during their lifetimes—Lee calls for resisting “the bonds of normative distinctions between the private and the public” (182) while honoring Addams’s efforts toward “making the world more just” (184). In explaining curatorial choices she admits could meet with public resistance, Lee affiliates with the tactic of Jane Addams in the Classroom by wondering: “What would Jane do?” In both cases, we see the empowering efficacy of using principles derived from Addams’s own archive as ethical guides for public work today.

So, too, in “Hungry for Peace,” Lee invokes Hull-House’s history of activism to tell a story of “the literal and metaphorical ways that bread manifests itself in different aspects of Jane Addams’s life and work.” The particular public program that Lee revisits in this account is “Re-thinking Soup,” “a modern day soup kitchen, democratic forum, laboratory space, and museum exhibit” that attracted participants to the dining hall once a week to share food and learning. Like the original settlement residents, Lee says, those attending “Re-thinking Soup” programs enjoyed “a collective dining experience that [fed] people’s minds and bellies as well as their hunger for community” (63). Given this learning legacy, it is fitting that the restored dining room is one of only two structures now in place from the previously extensive complex of buildings on Halsted Street.

After all, shared foodways played a central part at Hull-House in Ad-
In line with that tradition, during Lee’s tenure the museum staff utilized the dining room as a staging area for multiple programs (including “Re-thinking Soup”) consistent with the settlement’s conjoining of physical and moral sustenance. For example, during my July 2012 visit, a group of K-12 educators attended an early evening dialogue. After discussing photographs suggestive of a range of social issues, these visitors enjoyed a meal prepared in JAHMM’s kitchen. As the group discussed social justice issues like those Hull-House residents explored at their own group meals, echoes of earlier dialogues reverberated through the wood-paneled hall. With fresh loaves at their tables linking sociable dining and productive dialogue, this meal alerted all of us to a metaphor recurring throughout Addams’s archive: bread as communally significant and figurative “bread-giving” education as cultural work.

In that vein, Lee’s “Hungry for Peace” essay underscores her embrace of Addams’s storytelling approach to explicating pedagogical practice. This
To convey the philosophy behind the Coffee House, Lee (channeling Addams’s writing method) shares an anecdote:

Addams borrowed the money from Mary Rozet Smith’s father to start the Hull-House Coffee House. . . . Julia Lathrop, a Hull-House resident . . . , oversaw it. In addition to being one of the foremost advocates for the health and well-being of mothers and children, and becoming the first head of the Children’s Bureau in 1912, Lathrop was also known as a fabulous cook who made delicious omelets and brown butter oysters at midnight for the other residents. (70–71)

Like Addams in Twenty Years, My Friend, Julia Lathrop, and so many other texts, Lee begins with narrative detail that helps readers see the actual day-to-day work of the Coffee House first. Meantime, Lee adds clarifying brushstrokes to her portrait of Lathrop—whom she has cast as both an administrator of unusual skill and a “fabulous cook”—to show how the invitational stance of sharing food represented a larger social value system of communal knowledge-making. Lee argues that the Coffee House marked a crucial shift away from earlier approaches the settlement had tried for “changing the food habits of immigrants and the working class.” Through “the Diet Kitchen and New England Kitchen (NEK)” earlier in the decade, Lee suggests, the settlement had mistakenly tried to persuade neighbors to “give up avgolemono, pierogi, or ciabatta for flax seed tea, corn starch gruel, mutton broth or Case’s health bread,” items that came out of a home economics movement (69). In shifting to hospitality and shared dining through the Coffee House, “The goal became providing wholesome, hot food to people who lived under conditions where cooking was out of the question,” such as “nearby tenement house dwellers, who might be living without running water and/or heat.” Other patrons, Lee notes, were “the Hull-House Residents who were engaged in the democratic experiment of communal and collective living” (71). Open daily “from six in the morning until 10 at night,” as Lee documents by way of an ad from the Hull-House archive, the Coffee House embodied “artful” collaboration in a “cozy space where people dined, communed, nourished, and sustained themselves and each other” (71–72).

Lee’s story ably adopts Addams’s narrate-to-theorize method for elucidating the settlement to external audiences. Through that approach,
“Hungry for Peace” also enacts a compelling example of moving from archive to action today. Describing “Re-thinking Soup” as grounded in study of the Hull-House Coffee House, Lee’s look back at the museum staff’s progression from scholarly retrieval of Addams’s model to creation of a current-day program serves up an adaptable civic engagement recipe:

“When we decided to re-open the kitchen and the Residents’ Dining Hall in the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum in 2008, we drew upon the “domestic revolution” begun by Progressive Era reformers, re-interpreted for our own day. We started to sift through special collection folders about the kitchen and Coffee House and were inspired by an advertisement for a coffee, bread, and soup program offered by Hull-House to local factory workers. . . . We decided to start a modern-day soup kitchen in the Residents’ Dining Hall. (74)

Lee recounts how the dining hall had originally welcomed such diverse visitors as “Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells Barnett, W. E. B. Du Bois, [and] Eleanor Roosevelt.” Thus, she places her own readers in the historical space where “they met to share meals and ideals, debate one another, and conspire to change the world.” For instance, she recalls, “Upton Sinclair came to eat supper every night at Hull-House while he was writing The Jungle” (74). Such images prompt readers to participate imaginatively in the rich conversations that must have gone on at his table every evening. Through these anecdotes, Lee prepares her current-day audience to appreciate the museum’s “Re-thinking Soup” program, which entailed “a series of community conversations on contemporary issues” including addressing “food as a social issue.”

For “Re-thinking” attendees, Lee’s story shows, “Hull-House history” became “a point of departure” for engaging such current issues as “women’s rights, labor, [and] poverty” (75). Further, for those reading now, narration blended with analysis enables a form of indirect participation, just as the audiences Addams herself cultivated in her own “popularizing” stories could imaginatively come to the settlement through her texts. Using story to depict and explicate cross-cultural teaching practices, both Addams and Lee encourage what I call participatory reading.66 That is, both writers use story to bring readers into the lived experience of Hull-House collaboration. They ask readers to pay attention to narrative illustration as an entryway into theory that affirms inclusive community welfare over individual credit-seeking.
Just so, across the pages of My Friend, Addams marshals narrative examples of Lathrop’s “disinterested virtue” to support her own contention that this trait enabled her friend to achieve a communal moral sense—an empathy free of egoism (36). Addams repeatedly returns to this idea, underscoring specific examples of Lathrop’s ceding credit to others for “accomplishments she herself inspired” (45) and giving generously of her time to social groups like Hull-House’s Everyday Club of “forty civic minded women” who met regularly to strategize approaches for addressing public issues (118). As readers, then, we come to view “disinterested virtue” as a life goal through imaginative participation with these anecdotal illustrations more than through abstract theorizing.

A “Sex in the Museum” essay by Lisa Junkin Lopez, Lee’s museum colleague, invites a similar stance of participatory reading—in this case linked to storytelling carried out along with a too-often-excluded counterpublic. By taking readers along through narrative to revisit a Sex Positive Docu-
mentary Film Series, Lopez, like Lee, stresses their shared commitment “to reframe our understanding of the relationship between historic house museums and the public” (137). She characterizes this project as bringing “diverse communities into conversation and collective action” around a controversial subject. She admits that, in a parallel to scholars’ and teachers’ hesitancy to address Addams’s own deeply significant same-sex relationships, “Counterpublics are rarely considered to be legitimate audiences by museums and other institutions, and so their needs largely go ignored. This means that museums, as so-called neutral institutions and agents of ‘truth’ are often complicit in marginalizing the very publics they should be serving” (141). Resisting such limits on their spaces and programs, Lopez argues, today’s museums should tell previously suppressed stories and welcome more diverse narrators into their spheres of action. This cause, she says, should be a self-conscious goal of the JAHHM, which “centers its values within the legacy of our site” (143).

To embrace this mandate, as this story of the Sex Positive project shows, entails challenges—including the need to avoid an uncritical stance toward Addams herself. In other words, just as Addams determinedly opened the doors of Hull-House to immigrant neighbors’ visits, and just as she boldly welcomed widely divergent political views in settlement-sponsored political debate, so, too, should today’s stewards of that learning legacy open up examination of Addams and her era to topics even she was un-ready to address. Therefore, the documentary series presented during the “Sex in the Museum” project considered how and why Addams’s most profound personal relationships have often been veiled in treatments of her life. But this project also invited critique of the Hull-House founder’s own staunchly conservative positions around topics such as prostitution (articulated in A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil), as opposed to the sex positive movement’s recognition that, for some, sex work can be a valid choice (143). Therefore, Junkin [Lopez]’s narrative itself invites us to see how fully applying Addams’s vision can create “a more inclusive, more relevant and just museum” (147).

Through participatory critical reading of the Hull-House Archive like Lee’s and Lopez’s writing advocates, we can take real steps toward social action. And, if we also adopt the stance of “disinterested virtue” Addams herself attributed to her friend Lathrop (My Friend, 36), we may, like those two self-effacing women leaders, achieve a genuine “capacity [for] humaniz[ing] every social situation” (My Friend, 118).
Storytelling for Jane Addams in the Classroom

In a knowledge-making endeavor grounded in shared reflection, a group of colleagues affiliated with UIC’s English Education program carried out an Addams-inspired collaboration in line with JAHHM’s approaches. Through reading, writing, and research on their own teaching as seen through an Addams-oriented lens, this team, led by professors David Schaafsma and Todd DeStigter, has reconfirmed how vital her legacy can be to teachers today. Indeed, one key element of *Jane Addams in the Classroom* has been to reclaim, for Addams herself, a leadership role as an educator and pedagogical theorist. Noted DeStigter in an interview:

> It’s no exaggeration to say that my “take away” from this project is that I think Jane has a more nuanced understanding of what it means to work for social justice and democracy than any theorist or activist I’ve ever read. Why? Because her philosophical understanding of the work she was doing was deliberately shaped by experience. Even John Dewey—as brilliant as he was—never came close to the level of day-to-day engagement with people and problems as Jane did. Her work is, quite literally, the best example of praxis I know. (DeStigter, “Interview”)

For DeStigter, the value of Addams’s learning legacy is also tied up with her commitment to social action. “She has renewed my faith in American pragmatism and progressivism,” he explained. Unlike “current educational policies . . . driven by classical liberalism’s emphasis on individualism and competition and by neoliberalism’s application of the logic of the marketplace to all aspects of human interaction (including education),” DeStigter maintained, “Jane was different.” Addams, in DeStigter’s view, realized that “in order to understand problems and ameliorate them, you have to operate across a huge range of human interactions. You have to cultivate face-to-face relationships with people, listen to them, enter into reciprocal understandings and courses of action with them.” But, he noted, Addams cultivated such collaborations while also “operat[ing] at a political and economic level” (DeStigter, “Interview”).

Schaafsma made a similar case for Addams in a separate interview:

> I came actually to think of Jane as a better theorist of progressive practice than Dewey. It might have something to do with the fact
that Dewey’s a philosopher and writes like a philosopher. There are whole sections of books that Dewey’s written that nobody talks about really. The long working out of an argument the way that a philosopher does.

For Schaafsma, in fact, one insight that emerged through multi-year collaborative study of Addams was a deep appreciation for her writing—its accessibility for today’s teachers, but also its relevance, achieved through her use of story:

[H]er way of coming to an issue through story immediately appealed to me. English educators are story lovers and storytellers by and large. When I wrote my dissertation, I did not call it narrative inquiry. . . . I didn’t have a niche to put it in. We called it ethnography. Technically speaking, it wasn’t really. Todd DeStigter wrote Citizen Teacher, called it an ethnography. . . . But these are stories about the classroom and educational practice that imbed theory into the stories. And I thought that’s the thing she does so well is “story” ideas. In a way that makes them understandable, possible, portable. I thought people need to know about this. (Schaafsma, “Interview”)

Intriguingly, however, as DeStigter and Schaafsma have reported, both in their interviews with me and in their book’s “Introduction” (2–3), they came to collaborative work on Addams in part by an accident of place. Teaching in the English Department at UIC, with the Hull-House Museum nearby, they nonetheless were only loosely familiar with Addams’s career until Todd happened upon a flyer for a talk biographer Jean Bethke Elshtain was giving on campus. Having attended, he began to colead a reading group with Schaafsma, exploring the settlement educator’s own writings. They started with an eclectic cluster of graduate students “who were eager to engage in conversations about how Addams’s life and work illustrate and advance some of [their] priorities as teachers” (“Introduction,” 3). This group—a fitting echo of the reading clubs Hull-House itself had sponsored—eventually inspired a graduate course taught by Dave. Later, adding new essays to extensions of several papers originally produced for that class, Jane Addams in the Classroom evolved as a communal publication. One strength of the collection is the institutional border-crossing represented by its contributors’ list, which includes two of the Hull-House Museum’s educators (Lee and Lopez), a previous manager of the Jane Ad-
dams Children’s Book Award (Susan C. Griffith), and scholars of narrative inquiry (Ruth Vinz of Teachers College, Columbia University, and Petra Hendry of Louisiana State University).

The core of the book is the learning site designated within its title—the classroom. In stories reminiscent of Addams’s own rhetoric, the coauthors take readers inside today’s diverse classroom communities. Following Addams’s lead—as seen in their repeated engagement with her publications—the contributors offer more than teacher-voiced action research (though this, too, is a valuable contribution): they also exemplify the power of linking a rich humanistic archive to pragmatic pedagogical storytelling.

Professional connections with Dave and Todd through the Joint Program in English and Education at the University of Michigan provided me with a window into their multiyear writing project. While Dave preceded my time in the doctoral program, Todd’s enrollment there overlapped with mine. Interestingly, however, even though all three of us share histories in K-12 school teaching, as well as post-doc work in teacher education through national-level grants, we had never worked together on Addams. Dave and Todd knew of my long interest in Hull-House, though, and they had recommended my previous work on Addams to their doctoral students. When initially envisioning their book, they approached me about contributing. Though I was overcommitted to other projects, I sought regular updates. And once I began Learning Legacies, I reached out to get a fuller picture of their progress. Within those conversations I found another sign of how Addams’s archive could drive significant social action today.

What fascinated me, early on, was the group’s genuinely communal method of knowledge-making, which embraced both the spirit of Addams’s educational practice and her narrative rhetoric. Having participated in several collaborative writing experiences with K-12 teachers in the past, I was aware of such benefits as exchanging drafts and staging presentation occasions to spur texts along. But what seemed unique about this collaboration was its self-conscious engagement with the content of a particular archive—Addams’s learning legacy—as a path to public writing.

To illustrate, let me cite the “To Learn from Life Itself” essay by Bridget O’Rourke, associate professor at Elmhurst College, outside Chicago. Her argument affirms a theme that has run throughout this chapter, indeed this book—that boundary-crossing work done in the past has left a learning legacy held in cultural memory, available for transformative use today. Thus, O’Rourke declares: “Jane Addams insisted that . . . institutional
accomplishments did not define the settlement’s mission. Addams came to define the value of the settlement in terms of the form of its activities—the ongoing expression of a reciprocal social relationship.” So, O’Rourke asserts: “Addams was less concerned with the settlement’s success at having achieved a predetermined end (such as economic unity) than the character of its activity, the collaborative process of its making and remaking that gave rise to diverse and unpredictable forms of expression” (“To Learn,” 33). O’Rourke places Addams’s commitment to community-building in dialogue with current emphases on university-community partnerships, bringing to the analysis a cautious optimism that nonetheless avoids easy confusions between the history of Hull-House and today’s civic engagement agendas. Her organizational sequence of starting with a description of the settlement’s practice and then shifting to potential applications envisions, on the surface, a seemingly straightforward progression from archive to social action. But the careful interrogation of Addams’s ideas in the essay’s closing pages, where O’Rourke emphasizes ways in which Hull-House “put knowledge at the service of the community” rather than exploiting partners as sources of data (40), achieves a nuanced application of JAC’s repeated question: what would Jane do? Stressing that a worthy enactment of Addams’s legacy would aim at “transforming the conflicts and mistakes of the past into meaningful collective action” (41, emphasis mine), O’Rourke echoes Addams’s own calls for shared learning toward democratic ideals. With O’Rourke’s deft guidance, we are drawn into a participatory reading of the JAC collection as attempting a “reciprocal social relationship.”

As O’Rourke suggests, the particular classroom-based projects revisited in JAC explicitly affiliate with Addams’s praxis. Furthermore, the group’s shared writing process and the narrative mode they employ also follow her lead. Collection editor Schaafsma has freely admitted that such collaborative projects, appropriate as they are for responding to the settlement’s knowledge-making role model, do not carry the same cachet in academic circles as the monograph genre—even though anyone who has shepherded such a publication to fruition will testify that the process can be as complex and challenging as writing “alone.” Yet, Schaafsma also opines, a collection, assembling a wide range of voices and perspectives, “It’s what Jane would have done” (“Interview”). If such an assertion seems, at first, to ignore Addams’s own success as writer of many single-author books, it nonetheless rightly affiliates the JAC project with the overarching commitment she made to collaboration, with the pluralistic rhetorical methods adopted
even in her sole-author narratives, and with the many other publications and productions (such as the settlement’s theatrical events) that affirmed shared composing as essential.

As *Jane Addams in the Classroom* demonstrates via its diverse list of contributors and the varying, yet cohesive, ways in which they applied their study of Addams’s own work, her stories of settlement-based learning can helpfully guide the daily intercultural work of teachers now. Schaafsma and DeStigter themselves observe, “We see the legacy of Addams for education not only in the things that she says directly about her schooling; her value to us as educators lies also in the example she set through her actions at Hull-House and in the disposition that inclined and enabled her to enter into new modes of fellowship and action with other people” (“Introduction,” 3). In this regard, it’s worth noting that, too often these days, teachers themselves are being cast as “Others” and classrooms as colonized spaces governed by forces ranging from the standardized testing industry to political figures eager to point fingers at educators, as if such large-scale problems as economic disparity, racism, and learning achievement gaps were somehow the fault of, rather than social challenges being faced by, schools and colleges. In coming together to create *JAC*, the contributors drew strength from their sustained engagement with Addams’s writing—generating intellectual energy and a mutual theoretical vision for dealing with constraints. Consistent with de Certeau’s mandate for managing what he calls “the practice of everyday life” (de Certeau, *Practice*, title/cover), they used language (in this case guided by Addams’s model) to resist the inhibiting spaces where they teach. Shared study of Addams’s archive enabled them to push back against the isolation and frustration classroom teachers confront in the face of underfunded, misguided mandates and public misperceptions about their quotidian professional lives. In stories analyzing the unfinished business of their own work, they followed Addams’s lead by giving readers an entryway into the enterprises going on within their classroom practice, making it public and available for others to analyze and adapt.

Let me cite a few more specific examples from *JAC* before reporting on several interviews with contributors about the impact of this project on their work. Chapters affiliating with Addams’s commitment to the unfinished business of social justice issues include Lanette Grate’s account of her college composition students’ engagement with cases of wrongful imprisonment (60–75) and Jennifer Krikava’s description of balancing mandates for standardized testing with students’ other learning needs in
her public high school (112–26). Similarly, Darren Tuggle analyzes the multifaceted collaboration between his students at Kelvyn Park High (an “open-enrollment, neighborhood school,” with “approximately 90 percent Latino” population) and preservice teachers from Todd DeStigter’s classes at UIC (“Scaling Fences,” 100). Tuggle draws a parallel between Addams’s account of her postcollege ennui, followed by the epiphany that led her to founding Hull-House, and his own gradual embrace of a teaching vocation. He calls for curriculum that addresses both “objective” and “subjective” needs of learning (102), in line with Addams’s explanations of Hull-House programs in those same terms.

Like the commitment to unfinished business and collaboration that they clearly share with Addams and with her heirs at the Hull-House Museum, the teacher-writers of JAC are united in their vision for—and skill in—storytelling. For these writers, like Addams, story creates counterpublics joined in cooperative cultural work. Just so, Erin Vail’s “Surveying the Territory” chapter “stories” (to invoke Schaafsma’s verb form) her quest to reconcile private school teaching at Chicago’s Marist High School with public work: “where,” she wonders, do privileged “middle-class students fit into the notion of educational democracy. In other words, what role do they have in promoting equality and social justice?” Capitalizing on her careful study of Addams’s exploring “a similar disconnect in the ‘snare of preparation,’” and, by implication, Addams’s awareness of her own class-based privilege (127), Vail’s story demonstrates how her teaching of films like The Pursuit of Happyness is informed by the settlement author’s efforts to balance the family and the social claim. Invoking such resources as Addams’s “A Modern Lear” application of Shakespeare to situate a public battle within a domestic frame (131), Vail follows Addams’s model of embedding analysis within storytelling.

Beth Steffen adds yet another layer to the JAC collection’s demonstration of how Addams-inspired storytelling can enable teacher-scholars’ examination of classroom life. In “Student Stories and Jane Addams,” Steffen references Democracy and Social Ethics to advocate for empathetic, reciprocal learning in public school classrooms like hers in urban Wisconsin (80–82). She taps The Long Road of Woman’s Memory to call for students’ right to teach each other (and their teachers) via concrete experience (89), and she reads Peace and Bread in a Time of War to find hope that such society-wide challenges as racism can one day be overcome (97). By describing how she scaffolds students’ narrative-writing and by excerpting vibrant passages from their compositions, Steffen foregrounds their personal storytelling.
just as Addams placed the cultural productions of neighbors at the heart of her accounts of settlement pedagogy.

In academic publishing, once we hold a book in our hands, we’re too often already so deeply immersed in the next project that the particular strategies we’ve employed to create our hard-earned knowledge may fade from memory. For the multiple authors involved in JAC, however, learning from Addams and from their collaborative processes is still unfinished business. Like the community curators who enthusiastically described their personal takeaways from collaborative Hull-House work, participants in the JAC project are still reflecting on ways that studying Addams’s work and writing about it together continue to guide their praxis. Steffen, for instance, says she draws on Addams’s example to navigate discouraging contexts of public education today, including assumptions that good teaching can be “quantified” and packaged. For Steffen,

Addams’s perspectives—on working with immigrants, their families, bureaucrats, managers, political radicals, the poor, benignly-intentioned and civically-aware business people and philanthropists, educated reformers—reveal the complexity of human systems. ... Working with students, I am more effective when the complexity of human experience is acknowledged and brought to bear in our reading, writing, and talking. Addams has helped me there. (Steffen, “Interview”)

Bridget O’Rourke suggested in an online interview that her study of Addams has made her hopeful about her future writing and reinforced many of her long-held values as a teacher, while also setting a high bar for cultivating a professional identity. O’Rourke avers, “I don’t feel like I live up to Addams’s model, if anyone ever could. Like Todd DeStigter, I’ve often asked myself, ‘WWJD?’ (‘What would Jane do?’). I lack the moral courage to live up to her example.” Still, O’Rourke finds solace in Addams’s propensity to learn from failed experiments and to embrace uncertainty:

The Jane Addams I love is not the beloved Jane Addams (though she is lovable); it’s the despised Jane Addams (post-Bayonet speech).73 When she wrote that her isolation made her begin to question whether she was right, my heart could just burst. I love her for her willingness to engage with the perplexity of her being, of her knowing, as subjective and conditioned. (O’Rourke, “Interview”)
For the primary facilitators of JAC, meanwhile, Addams’s example as teacher, writer, and community-builder sustains them. For both DeStigter and Schaafsma, doing work on Addams has heightened their awareness of the complicated identity politics within cross-cultural collaboration. But it has also given them hope. As DeStigter notes:

One of the reasons Jane has such potential to be useful to contemporary educators is that I think so many of us see aspects of ourselves in her. According to the most recent statistics, the overwhelming majority of teachers are still white and female and at least middle-class. Also, like Jane, I think we educators are driven by some desire to reach out to other people and to use our gifts and experience to do some good in this world. But what I love about Jane most is that she’s a wonderful model of how—almost despite herself—she had to learn that in order to do this, she had to change the nature of her relationships with other people (make them more reciprocal, mutually influential) and she had to be ready to tackle problems in the political and economic spheres. (DeStigter, “Interview”)

In that context, reflecting on his decision to take on the book project, Schaafsma admits:

I had some hesitations at first because I thought most of the best work was being done by feminists. And I found it a little bit funny that Todd and I were two boys who would take this work on. But I came to like that. It’s usually African American scholars that talk about African Americans; you know, women talk about women. [But] I finally came to think that [my leading a project on Addams] was all right. That it was important. . . . We should all be part of the process of honoring her work, to learn from it.

Schaafsma feels one factor enabling him to assume that role is Addams herself. “She said,” Schaafsma recalls, “I want to hear from everyone here. We’re going to have a conversation here. . . . We’re going to listen.” For Schaafsma, listening to everyone was “possibly her best attribute,” a strategy that he now carries forward in all his work to promote civic literacy (Schaafsma, “Interview”).
Choral Coda

Through my own listening to this chapter’s range of voices appreciating Addams and her settlement’s learning legacy, I can’t help but tweak the JAC team’s recurring question to ask: what would “J.A./Jane” herself say, if she could return to Hull-House for a visit herself, to see the rotating exhibits, and to dialogue with visitors, staff, and community partners? And how would she respond to the compelling accounts of activist teaching in Jane Addams in the Classroom? What aspects of the “unfinished business” of Progressive Era reform would she most push us to tackle? What new opportunities for collaboration would she recommend? What stories would she urge us to tell? I think she would welcome whatever choices we made for projects to develop, as long as we committed to a reciprocal stance and found ways to represent our resultant learning as a communal experience. Thus, I suspect she would direct us to enact one of her own most famous descriptions of the settlement’s brand of collaborative civic engagement:

In a thousand voices singing the Hallelujah Chorus in Handel’s “Messiah,” it is possible to distinguish the leading voices, but the differences of training and cultivation between them and the voices in the chorus, are lost in the unity of purpose and in the fact that they are all human voices lifted by a high motive. This is a weak illustration of what a Settlement attempts to do. It aims, in a measure, to develop whatever of social life its neighborhood may afford, to focus and give form to that life, to bring to bear upon it the results of cultivation and training; but it receives in exchange for the music of isolated voices the volume and strength of the chorus. (Addams, Twenty Years, 125–26)