

**Reflection on Milestones in the Development of Social Work and Social Welfare**

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### **Abstract**

This journal is a reflection of what I learned from the videos “Legacies of Social Change: 100 Years of Professional Social Work in the United States” and “Milestones in the Development of Social Work and Social Welfare”. Development and progression of social welfare work in the US have been involving the sweat and blood of those who sacrificed themselves. Social workers continue to address the needs of society and bring our nation’s social problems to the public’s attention. Today, Americans enjoy many privileges because early social workers took action against social injustice and inequality inspiring others along the way. Many of the benefits we take for granted such as civil rights protection for all people regardless of gender, race faith, or sexual orientation, worker’s unemployment benefit insurance, disability pay, worker’s compensation, social security, Medicaid, and Medicare came about as the result of social worker’s resiliency and determination to achieve social equality.

Keywords: Milestone, legacy, resilience, advocacy, social welfare, public attention

### **Milestones in the Development of Social Work and Social Welfare.**

Social welfare policy and programs in America have roots going back to the early colonial days. 9 notable eras of social work are Colonial and Post-Revolutionary America (approx. 1600-1800), The Antebellum Period (approx. 1800-1860), The Civil War, Reconstruction, and Progressivism (approx. 1870-1914), World War I and the 1920s (1914-1929), The Great Depression (approx. 1930-1940), World War II and the 1950s (approx. 1941-1955), The Civil Rights Era, The War on Poverty, The 1970s and beyond.

Beginning with charitable work done by local churches and communities in an effort to fulfill the needs of the poor, the social work profession in the United States dates back to the late nineteenth century. Early social work interventions focused on addressing populations' most fundamental needs and placed significant importance on offering families and communities support, and resources. The age of the progressive movement began at this time. During the rise of the industrial revolution, many progressive-minded people started to raise issues of social injustice. Taxation was kept to a minimum in many large cities to entice enterprise. This left very little or no money for social services for the poor.

Jane Addams is one of the significant figures in American history in the Progressive Era, the 1890s to 1920s era of broad action and reform. Her notable achievement was the Hull House she founded in 1889 in Chicago. Hull-House was a successful settlement house located in an area that was largely populated by poor working immigrants. Residents of Hull-House were provided with multiple services including daycare and kindergarten for children, a library, art classes, adult literacy courses, music, and various other facilities. We should note that she focused on education.

Watching, the milestone and timeline of social welfare history gave me a great opportunity to see social work in action in a wider context. We need to always remind ourselves that social work's core idea is to help others who are less fortunate than we are. There are many ways of helping others in everyday life, by ordinary people, such as random acts of kindness, community service, donation, letting people know they are appreciated, active listening, showing compassion, volunteering, and mentoring or teaching.

I believe what drives social work and welfare legacy and progression are advocacy, resiliency, and determination. We should all be greatly appreciative of the hard work put in by those advocates and as a future social worker, I should strive to carry on their legacy.