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PRESERVATION DETECTIVES

activity book

Jane Addams
Hull-House Museum

UIC COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE & THE ARTS
Have you ever wondered about the people who lived in your home before you? Or why cities are a big mash-up of old and new buildings? Or why there might be carpet over the hard wood floors in your home? Who decided to do that? Well, buildings are much more than bricks and mortar, walls, windows, doors, and floors. They tell us a lot about our society—who lived where, how they lived, and why they lived the way they did.

Sometimes a building is chosen for preservation—to be saved and protected—because it reveals something special or important about history and culture. Hull-House is one of those buildings. Today, you will look closely at different parts of this 150-year-old house to discover amazing things about the people who lived here.

Explore Hull-House history hidden in the most unexpected places!

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**An historic preservationist is someone who cares about the stories that buildings, landscapes, and other places contain. They work to maintain these spaces and ensure that they continue to tell their stories over time. Often historic preservationists use detective skills to explore buildings and uncover the clues that lead to the larger story. By the time you finish this activity book, you will be an historic preservationist. Now you can investigate what has been preserved or should be preserved in your own community!**

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Charles Hull builds a home for his family.

Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr move in, name the building “Hull-House” in honor of its first owner.

Jane Addams renovates Hull-House and adds a third floor.

The University of Illinois at Chicago is built and Hull-House is restored to become an historic house museum.
BRICK

What color are the bricks on the exterior of Hull-House?

What color are the bricks hidden behind the walls of the library?

When Charles Hull first built this house in 1856, he used bricks of a purple-red color. Later, Jane Addams renovated the home in 1895 and made some changes to the brick façade. When the building became a museum in 1965, the house was restored to its original appearance in 1856. But a few choices were made that differed with the original, including a decision to clad the house with orange-brown colored bricks.

Bricks have been used as building materials for almost 10,000 years. The earliest bricks were made from mud in the Middle East. Bricks are strong and fire-resistant. They are a good building material in large cities like Chicago that want to avoid disasters like the fire of 1871.

(keep) THINKING
If the building is considered to be important because Addams lived here, then why was the building restored to how it appeared when Charles Hull lived in it? Would you have made the same decision?

(keep) LOOKING
Use your fingernail to tap on both examples of bricks and mortar.

Which is softer?

Why do you think that is?

Compare these to the pavement blocks in the Mapping the Neighborhood exhibit.

What do you think they are made of?
Find a room that is covered in the wallpaper shown above. This wallpaper, located in ___________'s bedroom, is a reproduction of an 1883 design by Morris and Company. This company was founded by William Morris, one of the most influential designers of all time.

By the late 1800s, everyday items were mass-produced by machines. Morris responded to this Industrial Revolution by reminding people of the value of making objects by hand. He was a leader in the British Arts and Crafts Movement, a group of artists who practiced crafts like metalwork, bookbinding, woodworking, and ceramics. The Movement spread to America and Hull-House. Residents taught crafts classes and hung wallpaper designed by William Morris throughout the Settlement Buildings.

Look out the window. How does the floral wallpaper contrast with what you see outside? With what Jane Addams would have seen outside?

One day, our historic preservationist found a tiny fragment of wallpaper that was hidden behind some trim. It was one of the only pieces remaining from when Jane Addams lived at Hull-House. If you live in an old building, you can look for bits of wallpaper behind radiators, on the edges of mantelpieces, and in other hard-to-reach places. You might find a preservation gem! (No digging around without permission, please!)

If someone looked into your bedroom 100 years from now, which of your decorations would stand out? Draw them here. What would they say about you?
Some of the trim in this house is original and hand-carved. Some of it was added in the 1960s and made to look original. Look closely at the trim near the model to find both types. How can you distinguish the reproduction trim?

A book from 1893 says that the Hull-House trim was “carved by convict hands.” What could that mean?

Charles Hull, first resident of this home, spent part of every Sunday with inmates at state prison and encouraged them to pursue their interests. It is likely that some of these inmates trained in wood-working and were recruited to contribute to his new home.

It used to be that the stories of builders, servants, or slaves were overlooked or not thought to be important when it came to historic preservation. This trim reminds us that historic houses tell the stories of many people, not just those who lived in them.
How many mantelpieces are in the house? 

Why would this have been an important feature in a 19th-century home?

The mantelpieces at Hull-House continue to be a mystery. They are original to the home built by Charles Hull, but several unanswered questions remain:

Where did the mantelpieces at Hull-House come from? Why are their designs different throughout the house? Who is ARTHUR, the name carved into the mantelpiece in the Reformer room? (can you find it?) And, why does one of the mantelpieces look like one in the Lincoln bedroom of the White House?!

Can you spot three differences between the mantelpieces? Look in the room with the model, then circle the differences in the photos below.

Our historic preservationist believes that the fireplaces at Hull-House were intended to burn coal, instead of wood. Look at the fireplaces. What clues might lead to this theory?
In the early days of electricity, lights were often made to use both gas and electricity. At home, look for other examples of old and new technology used together. Hint: start with your stereo.

Historic house museums are often full of anachronisms. Look for examples of modern technology throughout the museum.

Within your lifetime, what changes have there been in light bulbs? In the way that machines are powered?

Find a chandelier that resembles the one in the photograph above. The chandeliers in this museum are reproductions. They run on modern electricity but were made to look like the original, gas-powered one.

In Jane Addams’ day, wealthy neighborhoods often received new technologies and services before lower-class neighborhoods. Before the 1880s, homes were lit by gas instead of electricity, but many of the homes surrounding Hull-House did not have access to gas lines. This meant that people had to use woodstoves, candles, and oil lamps for heating, cooking, and light. When electricity replaced gas, only the wealthy neighborhoods of Chicago were outfitted with power lines.

Hull-House was an early user of electricity, and the residents made power available to their neighbors at fair rates. The Hull-House Boys’ Club offered classes in electrical wiring twice a week.
Lead is no longer used in paint made in the United States, but it is sometimes still used in other countries. What are some other ingredients found in products or food that may be harmful for our health?

Today, paint is made with alternatives to lead, including titanium dioxide, which is also found in toothpaste and sunscreen.

What room has the brightest wall paint in the house? Read the PAINT label in that room to find out why this color was chosen.

House paint used to be made with lead. This gave it a bright white color that was mixed with pigments to produce vibrant colors. But lead is toxic to people, especially children.

Hull-House resident Alice Hamilton conducted some of the first research on lead poisoning. She discovered that the most common way to contract lead poisoning was by breathing air containing its toxic particles.

Lead paint can be found in many buildings built before 1978 and poses a challenge to anyone looking to renovate their home. When lead paint is sanded to remove it from the walls, small particles become airborne. When the museum renovated in 2010, the painters were careful to seal off each room and wear protective respirators and clothing so that lead particles wouldn’t pose a health risk.
ANACHRONISM
something that is or appears to be out of its appropriate time period.

ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT
a movement in architecture and decorative arts in England and the United States from about 1870 to 1920 which celebrated simple design, hand-crafted objects, and the use of local materials.

BRICK
a rectangular block of clay baked in the sun or in a kiln. Used as material in buildings and pavement.

CHANDELIER
a light fixture, often decorative, suspended from a ceiling and bearing multiple lights.

CLAD
clothed or covered (in).

DIY MOVEMENT
stands for “do it yourself,” a contemporary movement to save money and reuse materials by making crafts, learning home repair, and more.

ELECTRICITY
a form of energy made available by the flow of electric charge through a conductor; used to power machines, lighting, and more.

EXTERIOR
the outside or outer part, as opposed to the interior or inside.

FAÇADE
the front of a building.

HAND-BLOCK
the process by which a design is drawn onto a woodblock and then pressed onto paper or fabric to transfer the image.

HISTORIC PRESERVATIONIST
someone who cares about buildings and works to ensure that buildings, and the stories they tell, are saved and protected.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
economic and social changes caused by the shift of production from hand or physical labor at home or in small workshops to mechanized systems in large factories, as in the weaving of textiles, especially in England in the 18th century.

LEAD
a soft and heavy metal, and poisonous when ingested or inhaled.

MANTELPIECE
a wooden or stone frame around the opening of a fireplace.

MASS-PRODUCED
to manufacture or produce a lot of something, especially in a factory by assembly line methods.

MORTAR
a material made from lime, sand, and water and used to hold bricks or stones in place.

PAVEMENT
a hard surface for a road, driveway, or sidewalk.

PAINT
a substance used as a coating to protect or decorate a surface.

PRESERVATION
the act of preserving or saving something from loss or damage.

RENOVATE
to put in good condition by repairing, remodeling.

REPRODUCTION
a copy of something.

RESTORE
to return to an earlier or normal condition or to bring back into use or existence.

TOXIC
poisonous.

TRIM
a decorative strip of wood or plaster that frames doorways and windows.

URBAN
of or having to do with a city or town.

WALLPAPER
a decorative, paper-like material used to cover the interior walls of buildings.

WOODWORKING
carpentry, or making things out of wood.
CREDITS

Portrait of Jane Addams sitting in profile, JAMC 0000 0006 1557, Special Collections, University Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, pg. 6

Fragment of Hull-House wallpaper, photo by Weston Davey, pg. 6

Lincoln Bedroom in the White House, 1889. Library of Congress, pg. 10

W.C. Vosburgh Manufacturing Company, Ltd. building, from “The Electrical Age,” vol. XIX, no. 8, 20 Feb 1897, pg. 13

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