

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded annually and the first woman to win this prize was Baroness Bertha Felicie Sophie von Suttner in 1905.

In fact, her work inspired the creation of the Prize.

The first American woman to win this prize was Jane Addams, in 1931.

However, Addams is best known as the founder of Hull House.

Jane Addams was born in 1860, into a wealthy family.

She was one of a small number of women in her generation to graduate from college.

Her commitment to improving the lives of those around her led her to work for social reform and world peace.

In the 1880s Jane Addams traveled to Europe.

While she was in London, she visited a 'settlement house' called Toynbee Hall.

Inspired by Toynbee Hall, Addams and her friend, Ellen Gates Starr, opened Hull House in a neighborhood of slums in Chicago in 1899.

Hull House provided a day care center for children of working mothers, a community kitchen, and visiting nurses.

Addams and her staff gave classes in English literacy, art, and other subjects.

Hull House also became a meeting place for clubs and labor unions.

Most of the people who worked with Addams in Hull House were well educated, middle-class women.

Hull House gave them an opportunity to use their education and it provided a training ground for careers in social work.

Before World War I, Addams was probably the most beloved woman in America.

In a newspaper poll that asked, "Who among our contemporaries are of the most value to the community?", Jane Addams was rated second, after Thomas Edison.

When she opposed America's involvement in World War I, however, newspaper editors called her a traitor and a fool, but she never changed her mind.

Jane Addams was a strong champion of several other causes.

Until 1920, American women could not vote.

Addams joined in the movement for women's suffrage and was a vice president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

She was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and was president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

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Her reputation was gradually restored during the last years of her life.

She died of cancer in 1935.