Poverty, Philanthropy and Social Conditions in Victorian Britain

Discover what life was like for the poorest communities in Victorian Britain, and explore the social reform and philanthropic efforts of charitable institutions that sought to alleviate poverty.
INTRODUCTION

This digital resource documents the interactions between government policy and public philanthropy in Victorian and early twentieth-century society, tracing developments in welfare reform and the social tensions surrounding poverty.

The resource offers rich opportunities for both teaching and research, covering a breadth of topics including workhouses and outdoor relief, health and medicine, disability, housing, sanitation, and education.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

This digital resource brings together content from three unique collections of material:

- The **Family Welfare Association Library** contains a wealth of rare contemporary printed sources, gathered by the pioneering Charity Organisation Society, founded by Octavia Hill and others. Its library covers a huge range of social issues from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

- Unique material from **The National Archives, UK** focuses on the Poor Laws and the workhouse system, providing access to the correspondence of the national Poor Law Commission and Inspectors. This incredibly rich material provides insight into the conditions of workhouses and the ‘outdoor relief’ system.

- Sourced from **The British Library**, periodicals and annual reports from a range of Settlement Houses provide a fascinating insight into the University Settlement Movement, a reformist social movement with the goal of getting rich and poor to live closely together in an interdependent community.

KEY THEMES

- Charitable Institutions and Friendly Societies
- Education and Children
- Health, Medicine and Disability
- Manufacturing, Technology and Trade
- Race and Immigration
- Sanitation, Slums and Housing
- Social Order and Discipline
- Social Reform and Welfare
- Socialism and Political Movements
- The Poor Law, Workhouses and Outdoor Relief

MATERIAL TYPES

- Correspondence
- Newspaper clippings
- Pamphlets
- Periodicals
- Registers
- Reports

SOURCE ARCHIVES

- The National Archives, UK
- The British Library
- Senate House Library

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