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## JANE ADDAMS

**1860-1935**  
REFORMER

Her father, a banker and businessman, had been a friend of Abraham Lincoln's. She would become a friend of Theodore Roosevelt's. The first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize came into adulthood an aimless heiress, but after a trip on which she watched poor Londoners lining up to buy rotten produce, she returned to Chicago intent on starting a settlement house—an experiment in communal living and community organizing intended to ease the way for immigrants and their children, who made up 78 percent of the city's population in the late 1880s. "Of course there was always present the harrowing consciousness of the difference in economic condition between ourselves and our neighbors," Addams wrote. She soldiered on, funding her experiment with donations from her well-to-do contacts and creating a template for some 500 settlement houses around the country.

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## EDITH WHARTON

**1862-1937** GILDED AGE NOVELIST

Born to privilege in New York City, she wrote in bed, flipping finished pages to the floor for her secretary to retrieve. While she spent her most productive years in France, her best work cast a sharp eye on the exclusive American society in which she was raised. *The Age of Innocence*, her 12th novel, examined the hypocrisy, shallowness and scheming that lay beneath the fine manners of New York's Gilded Age upper crust. In 1921, it won her the Pulitzer Prize for a novel—the first for a woman. Wharton thought it was an odd choice. The rules for the award, administered by Columbia University, specified that it honor an American novel "which shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life." Had the committee misunderstood her book? Wharton wondered. To fellow novelist Sinclair Lewis (who she felt deserved the prize instead), she wrote, "When I discovered that I was being rewarded—by one of our leading Universities—for uplifting American morals, I confess I did despair."

# EDITORS' CHOICE

## OPRAH WINFREY

**1954-**  
MEDIA MOGUL

On the streets at age 14, on the *Forbes* list of billionaires at age 59. A landmark moment came in 1988, when she became the first woman to own and produce a talk show. The show made daytime TV matter in ways it hadn't before. Twenty-five years' worth of afternoons ended in 2011, but the media and philanthropic ventures are unceasing. In terms of influence, she may still be coming into her prime.

