

The pre-industrial phase of the development of social work includes the period from the formation of Canada up to the 1890s. Evangelia, the first settlement house in Toronto, was founded in 1902 by Libby Carson and Mary Bell with the support of the Toronto YWCA. The Poor Law of 1601 and its reform in 1832 carefully distinguished two types of indoor relief: one for the elderly and sick who could receive relief in almshouses or poorhouses, and one for the able-bodied poor who were made to work for relief in workhouses, the purpose of which was to make public assistance cruel and demeaning. As its founder Canon Barnett explained, the settlement idea was simple: "to bridge the gap that industrialism had created between rich and poor, to reduce the mutual suspicion and ignorance of one class for the other, and to do something more than give charity.... They would make their settlement an outpost of education and culture" (Davis 1967, 6). Many were explicitly associated with religious organizations, and it was religiously motivated individuals working through these organizations who became the early social workers. The explanation by James Leiby of the development of charitable activity in the United States provides some insight into similar development in English Canada as well: The early institutional responses to urban poverty came from people who had religious interests and motives. Carson had founded several other settlement houses, including Christadora House in New York in 1897.