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"Science" of Eugenics?

Madonna Spann

**Dr. Thomas Thibeault
Honors 499**

"Science" of Eugenics?

It has been said that too much money is spent on special education students. More money should be spent on gifted students and not wasted on Seeing Eye dogs and interpreters for the deaf in classrooms. What is the point in educating the developmentally delayed? More money will just have to be spent on sheltered workshops for them when they become adults. And what can they contribute? In the animal kingdom, such specimens would not survive. Only the strongest, fastest, and ablest would survive and reproduce. Humans should take note of this!

Ah, but animals sometimes eat their young! These sentiments are not new, but where in the world did they originate? A famous philosopher once said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Are we really to believe that the survival of the fittest in the animal kingdom is a desirable model for humans? The less-than-perfect among us should be eliminated or at least not allowed to reproduce? Where would the line be drawn between fit and unfit—deaf or just hard-of-hearing; blind or just near/far-sighted; Intelligence Quotient 70 (not 69) and above? This line of reasoning has been used extensively for centuries, and fitness has been defined and redefined by the ruling class of the time.

The first English settlers brought their Elizabethan Poor Laws with them, which were an early delineation between fit and unfit. The Poor Laws held that some of the poor were deserving while some were undeserving. Deserving poor included widows, orphans, and the crippled. The deserving poor might find

shelter and food of sorts in return for their hard labor in poorhouses. The undeserving poor were able-bodied men, or women with out-of-wedlock children. These folks were viewed as morally deficient, lazy, and generally inferior persons. Any offspring of undeserving poor were likely to be wretched persons as well. They begged or they starved (Segal & Brzuzy 18.)

In 1859 British naturalist Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, in which he developed a theory of evolution based on “natural selection of inherited variations that increase the individual’s ability to survive and reproduce” (Webster, 353.) The wealthy and powerful in America believed that Darwin’s “survival of the fittest” theory explained social and economic inequalities. The privileged, more affluent families in society considered themselves more well-bred than their less fortunate counterparts. By the turn of the century, however, the working class was gaining ground. Not only were they organizing, but also their numbers were growing.

According to Allen E. Garland’s Social Origins of Eugenics (3), the age of industrialization brought economic and social challenges that invited increased government involvement—the philosophy of progressivism was born. Science and scientific management were the darling of progressivists. University-trained scientists revealed the new science of genetics that spawned the new science of social engineering—eugenics.

Eugenicists showed obvious bias from their very beginning. Since the ruling class in the early 1900’s was white and from northern and western Europe, naturally the best blood ran in those families. Their genes contributed to New

England's reputation for conscientiousness and love of learning and culture (1.) Conversely, the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe had less desirable traits. If the Germans were "thrifty, intelligent, and honest," unfortunately the Italians had a "tendency to personal violence." As progressivism revered scientific management in business, eugenicists became the scientists with "a special expertise in the solution of perennial social problems. Whereas charity and state welfare had treated only symptoms, eugenics promised to attack social problems at their roots" (1.) "By linking undesirable traits with specific racial and ethnic groups, eugenicists scored a significant impact on social policy with the passage of restrictive immigration laws in the 1920's (3.) Science had, then, put a respectable and rational stamp on racial and ethnic prejudice that would lead the young nation into some of its most shameful and reprehensible acts.

Both foundations and individuals in America financed the popularization of eugenics. J. H. Kellogg, of the breakfast cereal Kellogg, founded the Race Betterment Foundation in Battle Creek Michigan. The Foundation produced a series of educational conferences in 1914, 1915, and 1928. As early as 1910, the Eugenics Record Office was supported by endowments from Mrs. E. H. Harriman under the supervision of Davenport and Laughlin. Mrs. Harriman and her wealthy peers deplored class struggle, political radicalism, and noisy labor unions. They correctly associated this distasteful social rabble with immigrants from southern Europe. The eugenicists produced "scientific evidence" that the problem was genetic and therefore a threat to good breeding in America. The

solution, of course, was selective immigration restriction and sometimes sterilization.

In 1914 Harry Laughlin of the Eugenics Record office published a “Model Eugenical Sterilization Law” that proposed to authorize sterilization of the ‘socially inadequate’—people supported in institutions or ‘maintained wholly or in part by public expense’,” according to Paul Lombardo in his essay Eugenic Sterilization Laws (1.) The law included the “feeble-minded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf; deformed; and dependent”—including “orphans, ne’er-do-wells, tramps, the homeless and paupers.” But by this time, 12 states had already enacted sterilization laws. Lombardo states that by 1924 about 3,000 people had been involuntarily sterilized in America, 2,500 in California alone (2.) That same year Virginia passed a Eugenical Sterilization Act inspired by Laughlin’s Model Law. The purpose of this law was to lower the number of souls that were housed in the public facilities and thereby decrease the burden on taxpayers. Since those in power believed that feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, and criminal tendencies are hereditary, they reasoned that enforced sterilization would reduce these undesirable traits in the general population. They tended to emphasize physical and mental challenges in the populace as a menace to society. A parallel can be drawn to legislators today who strive, at their constituent’s behest, to balance budgets and lower taxes by reducing funds to human service programs that help those in need. Eugenicists used the cover of science to blame the victims for their own problems (Allen, Social, 5).

The first victim of Virginia's law was Carrie Buck, a 17-year-old girl from Charlottesville. Carrie had an illegitimate child, and her mother resided at the Virginia Colony for the Epileptic and the Feebleminded. At her trial, witnesses gave evidence of Carrie's inherited "defects" and those of Emma, her mother. Colony Superintendent Dr. Albert Priddy stated in court that Emma Buck had "a record of immorality, prostitution, untruthfulness and syphilis." Dr. Priddy further testified, "These people belong to the shiftless, ignorant, and worthless class of anti-social whites of the South" (Lombardo, 4.) Another person was found to testify that Carrie's own child was "not quite normal."

The judge ruled that Carrie should be sterilized to prevent other "defective" births. This decision was appealed to United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who himself studied eugenics. Lombardo quotes Justice Holmes' now infamous words:

It is better for the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind... Three generations of imbeciles are enough (5.)

These cold, arrogant words and the supercilious social attitudes that produced them resonate with the same self-righteous tone that spurred early colonists to rebellion from England. This very sentiment motivated civil rights activists from the 1960's to the present to extra vigilance in protecting the inherent rights of individuals—including the right to reproduce.

Buck vs. Bell established a precedent for the sterilization of nearly 8,300 Virginians. In 1933, using Laughlin's Model Law, the Nazi government of Germany enacted legislation that was responsible for the sterilization of more

than 350,000 people. Harry Laughlin published a translation of the *German Law for the Prevention of Defective Progeny* in the *Eugenical News*. In 1936 the University of Heidelberg awarded Laughlin an honorary degree for his contribution to “the science of racial cleansing.”

People in American institutions for the mentally ill and mentally retarded continued to be inflicted with involuntary sterilization through the 1970's. At one time or another, 33 states had statutes under which more than 60,000 people endured the forced procedure. The Buck vs. Bell precedent allowing sterilization of the so-called “feebleminded” has never been overruled.

Eugenics lent credibility to already existing restrictions on interracial marriage. Lombardo's essay on Eugenic Laws Against Race Mixing relates that the new “science” enumerated the supposed biological danger of mixing the races. Eugenicians such as the influential writer Madison Grant orated that racial mixing was a “social and racial crime.” He said racial intermarriage would lead to “racial suicide” and the inevitable end of white civilization. Grant wrote a popular book *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) which stated, “The cross between a white man and an Indian is an Indian; the cross between a white man and a Negro is a Negro...When it becomes thoroughly understood that the children of mixed marriages between contrasted races belong to the lower type, the importance of transmitting in unimpaired purity the blood inheritance of ages will be appreciated at its full value” (2). This kind of fear is very much alive today. It is interesting to note that today in America children of mixed races are legally

Hitler and his propagandists used almost exactly the same words.

given the race of their fathers. The distinction of “lower racial types” or “higher racial types”, like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder.

Grant was not alone in his dire warnings to the nation. The Eugenics Record Office, lead by Charles Davenport and Harry Laughlin, also issued proclamations on the perils of race mixing. Davenport particularly, in his role as director of three institutions located at Cold Spring Harbor (Eugenics Record Office, The Biological Laboratory, and the Carnegie Institute of Washington’s Station for Experimental Evolution) was influential in promoting the theory of eugenics. Twenty-eight states had declared marriages between Negroes and whites invalid by the year 1915.

White supremacist Earnest Cox wrote *White America*, another book that foretold grim consequences for the white race if mixed with other races. John Powell, pianist and composer, founded the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America, forerunner of the Ku Klux Klan and dedicated to the ideal that the white race is the superior race and should not be tainted with other, lesser ones. Walter Plecker used his position at the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the Virginia Board of Health to distribute pamphlets and propaganda on the “public health issue” of racial interbreeding to engaged couples. These three men consulted with Laughlin and Grant to enact legislation leading to Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924. As law, the Act required racial registration certificates and strict definitions of the qualifications to be classified as “white.” It included a “scientific” race assessment and declared:

It shall hereafter be unlawful for any white person in this State to marry any save a white person, or a person with no other admixture of blood

other than white and American Indian...the term "white person" shall apply only to such person as has no trace whatever of any blood other than Caucasian; but persons who have one-sixteenth or less of the blood of the American Indian and have no other non-Caucasic blood shall be deemed to be white persons... (5.)

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Alabama and Georgia eventually copied the Virginia law. The US Supreme Court unanimously overturned the Racial Integrity Act and its ilk in 1967.

The government of Nazi Germany also adopted similar laws banning inter-ethnic marriages. The Nazis passed a "eugenics" law in 1933 called the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring." It was the first and only time in history that a government actively pursued a eugenics program, and they used it for eight years. The results were the death of over six million people—Jews, handicapped persons, and those who did not agree with the Nazis. The world called the experiment The Holocaust (WAY, 2.)

The T-4 program systematically exterminated people with severe mental & physical disabilities.

The horror of the Holocaust did not end the concept of white supremacy in America. White supremacists have web pages that are accessible on the Internet. The language has toned down, perhaps. White supremacists no longer cite the public health issues of interracial marriages, but rather promote the concept of love of one's own race. If one loves one's own race, one is entitled to defend and protect it in America, is one not?

The "science" of eugenics was prevalent in all layers of American education and culture during the '20's and '30's. Secondary school and college textbooks included chapters on eugenics. Entire courses on eugenics were offered in such prestigious universities as Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and Brown. E. L. Thorndyke and Leta Stetter Hollingworth instructed generations of future

classroom teachers on the glory of eugenics. Students were taught eugenic policies of immigration restriction, sterilization, and racial segregation (negative eugenics.) The American Eugenic Society sponsored essay contests and other competitions encouraging young people to espouse these skewed policies. The Society bestowed awards to the pastors who preached sermons echoing their racist and twisted exclusionary platitudes. The *Eugenical News* brought together scientific and philanthropic leaders to popularize their views.

The American Breeders Association (ABA) reinforced the philosophy of the Eugenics Society. The ABA formed a committee to investigate the presumed hereditary differences between human races, and promoted the idea of breeding superior stock (positive eugenics) and discouraged the cross breeding with “inferior types”. The American Breeders Association emphasized the need for recording and controlling human heredity. Some parents today still teach their children--you never see a cardinal crossing with a blue jay. Nature teaches that Whites should never marry Blacks. Take a lesson from nature. The lesson presumes, of course, that human races are also different species.

Jan Witkowski, who is a scientist at the present-day Cold Springs Harbor Laboratory, in his paper Traits Studied by Eugenicists relates how researchers gathered flawed data or misinterpreted the conclusions of such data to support the popularization of eugenics in America. For example, shiftlessness was believed to be one of the inherited traits that contributed to pauperism, the tendency to be poor. Eugenicists reported that two shiftless parents produced virtually shiftless children; the marriage of a shiftless and an industrious person

produced about 10 percent shiftless offspring (5). Eugenacists also assumed that there were inherited tendencies to alcoholism, sexual immorality, and feeble-mindedness that contributed to "criminality."

Davenport and his contemporaries failed to recognize that not all familial traits are biologically inherited, and even traits that are inherited can have complex causes. "This, coupled with an evangelical commitment to create a society molded in their own image, led the eugenacists to make simplistic and unsupportable claims about human heredity" (7).

Independent analysis of eugenics research was underway during the mid 1930's. The American Neurological Association reported, "The definitional problem invalidates the earlier work which comes from Davenport, Rosanoff and the American Eugenics School located at Cold Spring Harbor" (Allen, Flaws, 8). An external visiting committee assembled by the Carnegie Institution of Washington elaborated, "Some traits such as 'personality' or 'character' lack precise definition or quantitative methods of measurement; some traits such as 'sense of humor,' 'self respect,' 'loyalty' or 'holding a grudge' could seldom be known outside an individual's close friends and associates...Even more objective characteristics, such as hair form or eye color, become relatively worthless items of data when recorded by an untrained observer" (Allen, Flaws, 9).

The Carnegie Institution withdrew its funding and permanently closed down the Eugenics Recording Office in December 1939.

Steve Selden, in his essay The Popularization of Eugenics, concludes, "While eugenics was indeed popular, it was poor science and it was rejected on

scientific grounds. However, the hereditarian social attitudes that supported popular eugenics remain in the public consciousness to this day." From news stories about 'novelty-seeking' genes, to supposedly academic tomes on intellectual 'bell curves,' to 'reawakened' racist interpretations of American history, the social seeds for resurgent eugenics are still alive. If we are not to repeat the errors of the past, we will need to examine modern eugenic visions with intellectual rigor" (7).

America is a nation that is still developing and growing. Sterilization laws, marriage laws, restrictive immigration laws and all other attempts to maintain control, power, and racial supremacy must have made sense to those in that time and context. The nation's history, indeed the world's history, is a most valuable textbook or tool with which to forge the future. One clear lesson emerges for modern citizens: in our shared humanity, diversity is strength. America is the world's ^{*}melting pot. Constant vigilance must be maintained to protect the rights of all—the gifted, the fit, the challenged, the poor, the rich, the racially unique—lest the whole lesson have to be learned all over again to the detriment of all.

* 'melting pot' implies that all are spatially baled down to a somewhat homogeneous lot. Some prefer the metaphor of a salad. However, 'salad' may not sound as academic.

This is a very fascinating topic and you covered some very interesting aspects of the topic.

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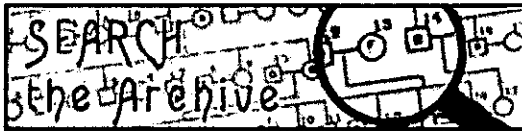
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Image Archive on the American Eugenics Movement

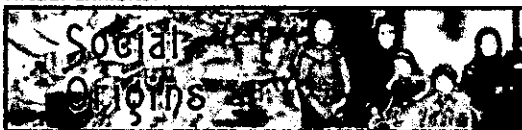
Dolan DNA Learning Center
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory



Click here to enter the Archive image database.

Virtual Exhibits

The buttons below link to essays (using the *Flash Player* plugin) that introduce the key events, persons, and social conditions that contributed to the development of eugenics. We suggest you visit these exhibits before searching the images in the Archive. Click here for text-only versions of the virtual exhibits.



Eugenics Archive grows to 2200+ items

Browse 950 new photos, papers, and data – including extensive collections from noted eugenicists. Discover Francis Galton's work



Galton

Davenport

Estabrook

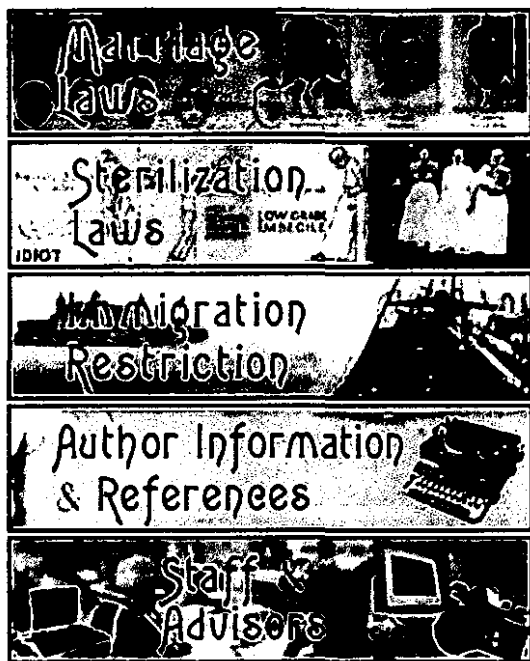
on fingerprint analysis and composite portraiture, and read Charles Davenport's treatise, *Eugenics: The Science of Human Improvement by Better Breeding*, presented in its entirety. Explore Arthur Estabrook's field photos of subjects of his (in)famous studies: *The Jukes in 1915*, *Mongrel Virginians*, and *The Nam Family*. Click the "Search the Archive" button to access the image database.

(New images have ID#s 1255-2320.)

Examine the Chronicle of how society dealt with mental illness and other "dysgenic" traits in the final installment of our website: **DNA Interactive**. Meet four individuals who became objects of the eugenic movement's zeal to cleanse society of "bad" genes during the first half of the 20th century. Then meet a modern-day heroine for an account of mental illness and the lesson it holds for living in the gene age.



The philosopher George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." This adage is appropriate to our current rush into the "gene age," which has striking parallels to the eugenics movement of the early decades of the 20th century. Eugenics was, quite literally, an effort to breed better human beings – by encouraging the reproduction of peo



with "good" genes and discouraging those with "bad" genes. Eugenacists effectively lobbied for social legislation to keep racial and ethnic groups separate, to restrict immigration from southern and eastern Europe, and to sterilize people considered "genetically unfit." Elements of the American eugenics movement were models for the Nazis, whose radical adaptation of eugenics culminated in the Holocaust.

We now invite you to experience the unfiltered story of American eugenics – primarily through materials from the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, which was the center of American eugenics research from 1910-1960. In the Archive you will see numerous reports, articles, charts, and pedigrees that were considered scientific "facts" in their day. It is important to remind yourself that the vast majority of eugenics work has been completely discredited. In the final analysis, the eugenic description of human life reflected political and social prejudices, rather than scientific facts.

You may find some of the language and images in this Archive offensive. Even supposedly "scientific" terms used by eugenacists were often pervaded with prejudice against racial, ethnic, and disabled groups. Some terms have no scientific meaning today. For example, "feeble-mindedness" was used as a catch-all for a number of real and supposed mental disabilities, and was a common "diagnosis" used to make members of ethnic and racial minority groups appear inferior. However, we have made no attempt to censor the documentary record – to do so would distort the past and diminish the significance of the lessons to be learned from this material.

During a two-year review process, involving a 14-member Advisory Panel, this site has developed an editorial policy to protect personal privacy and confidentiality. For this reason, names and places have been deleted from pedigrees, medical documents, and personal photographs.

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Special Online issue



Why Did the Germans Kill People?

What the Nazis Believed

The Nazis believed that some people are better than other people. They believed that the best people were "Aryan" Germans; they believed that other people should serve, be killed or made slaves.

Scientists say that the Nazi belief about "Aryan" Germans was not correct. Scientists say: The Aryans were a group of people who settled in India and Iran, not in Germany; It can't be proved that any nation, group, or race of people is "better" than any other nation, group, or race of people.

But the Nazis-believing some Germans were part of the Aryan race-wanted to improve the race by breeding. Through breeding, the children of each generation of Aryans would get better.

When humans are bred to improve the species, it is called "eugenics." Eugenics means breeding "good parts" into humans and "bad parts" out of humans. The "good parts" and "bad parts" of humans have been defined differently by different people at different times.

History

The first people to be interested in eugenics were the Americans. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, many people talked about it. They talked about keeping people with too many "bad parts" from having children.

In the early 1900's, some people considered deafness a "bad part" of deaf people.

Alexander Graham Bell said that deaf girls and boys should go to separate schools and play in separate groups so that they would not marry each other and become parents together;

Edward Miner Gallaudet said that deaf people should be able to marry each other, but he urged them not to have children.

In 1907, Indiana passed a law to sterilize criminals, idiots, and rapists. Later, Harry Laughlin, a U.S. government worker, wrote that everyone should be sterilized who was stupid, insane, criminal, epileptic, drunk, diseased, blind, or deaf.

The U.S. government never used Laughlin's plan. But the Germans did. The Nazis used it as a model for their own "eugenics" program. They called it the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring."

The Nazis passed the "eugenics" law in 1933. It was the first and only time in history that a government tried to put a plan for eugenics to work.

The Nazis carried out their plan for eight years. The results were the death of over six million people-Jewish people, handicapped people, and people who did not agree with the Nazis.

The world called the experiment "The Holocaust."

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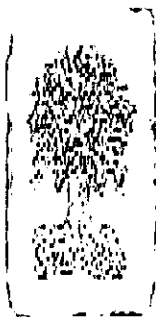
General comments may be sent to: Cathryn.Carroll@gallaudet.edu

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SOCIAL ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

When many people first learn about eugenics, they wonder how intelligent people, including highly educated scientists, could have believed so many seemingly bizarre ideas. How could anyone accept the simplistic notion that complex human behaviors are determined by single genes or that mental tests designated more than three-fourths of all Russian and Polish immigrants to the U.S. as feebleminded?

To understand why eugenics gained such a following in the first three decades of the 20th century, one needs to examine the economic, social, and political context in which it flourished. Science, or what is claimed to be science, is a product of culture – like any other human activity. What seems in hindsight to be naive or absurd, must have seemed reasonable in its own era. This is especially true when scientific ideas are used to explain social problems.



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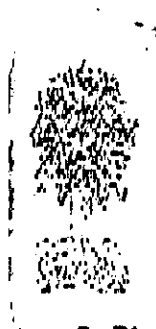
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PAGE 1



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Eugenicists used the cover of science to blame the victims for their own problems (Allen, Social, 5)




SOCIAL ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

American eugenics developed in the wake of turbulent economic and social problems following the Civil War. The rapid growth of American industry, coupled with the increased mechanization of agriculture, created the first major migration away from farms, and cities expanded faster than adequate housing. Wholesale exploitation of labor created militant labor union organizations. Price fluctuations bankrupted many businesses and precipitated a

333




SOCIAL ORIGINS OF EUGENICS
 Carlana E. Allen, Washington University

American eugenics developed in the wake of turbulent economic and social problems following the Civil War. The rapid growth of American industry, coupled with the increased mechanization of agriculture, created the first major migration away from farms, and cities expanded faster than adequate housing. Wholesale exploitation of labor created militant labor union organizations. Price fluctuations bankrupted many businesses and precipitated a series of depressions, starting in 1873, and reoccurring about every decade through the early 1900s. This further fueled labor unrest. The situation was made worse by an ever-increasing tide of immigrants, mostly from southern and eastern Europe, which peaked just before, and again after, World War I.

Social Darwinism had attempted to explain away social and economic inequalities as the "survival of the fittest." However, by the turn of the century, this simplistic idea had



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 A group of immigrants, possibly from southern and eastern Europe, standing in a line outdoors. The image is grainy and has high contrast.



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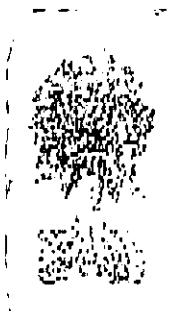
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 A large, multi-story building, possibly a factory or warehouse, with a prominent chimney or tower structure.



PAGE 2



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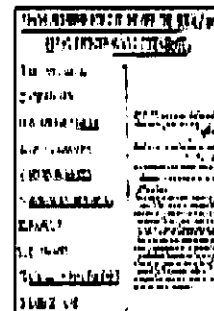
SCIENTIFIC ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

Elof Carlson, State University of New York at Stony Brook

The eugenics movement arose in the 20th century as two wings of a common philosophy of human worth. Francis Galton (960), who coined the term eugenics in 1883, perceived it as a moral philosophy to improve humanity by encouraging the ablest and healthiest people to have more children. The Galtonian ideal of eugenics is usually termed positive eugenics. Negative eugenics, on the other hand, advocated culling the least able from the breeding population to preserve humanity's fitness. The eugenics movements in the United States, Germany, and Scandinavia favored the negative approach (978).

The notion of segregating people considered unfit to reproduce dates back to antiquity. For example, the Old Testament describes the Amalekites – a supposedly depraved group that God condemned to death. Concerns about environmental influences that might damage heredity – leading to ill health, early death, insanity, and defective offspring – were formalized in the early 1700s as degeneracy theory.

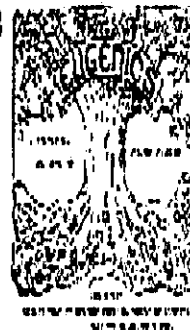
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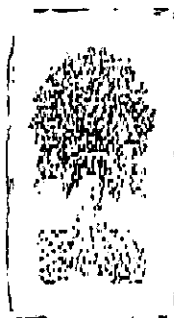


586

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SCIENTIFIC ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

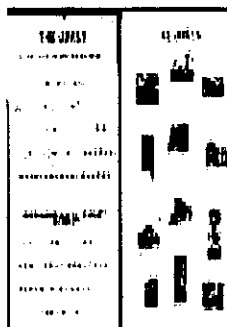
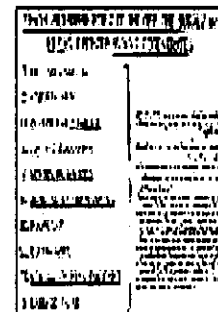
Elof Carlson, State University of New York at Stony Brook

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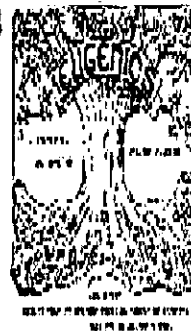
Degeneracy theory maintained a strong scientific following until late in the 19th century. Masturbation, then called onanism, was presented in medical schools as the first biological theory of the cause of degeneracy. Fear of degeneracy through masturbation led Harry Clay Sharp, a prison physician in Jeffersonville, Indiana, to carry out vasectomies on prisoners beginning in 1899. The advocacy of Sharp and his medical colleagues, culminated in an Indiana law mandating compulsory sterilization of "degenerates." Enacted in 1907, this was the first eugenic sterilization law in the United States.

By the mid-19th century most scientists believed bad environments caused degenerate heredity. Benedict Morel's work extended the causes of degeneracy to some legitimate agents - including poisoning by mercury, ergot, and other toxic substances in the environment. The sociologist Richard Dugdale believed that good environments could transform

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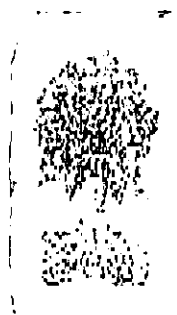
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SCIENTIFIC ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

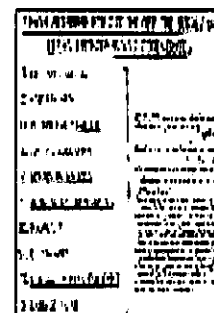
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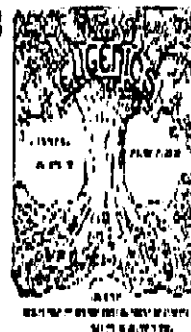
degenerates into worthy citizens within three generations. This position was a backdrop to his very influential study on *The Jukes* (1877), a degenerate family of paupers and petty criminals in Ulster County, New York (586). The inheritance of acquired (environmental) characters was challenged in the 1880s by August Weismann, whose theory of the germ plasm convinced most scientists that changes in body tissue (the soma) had little or no effect on reproductive tissue (the germ plasm). At the beginning of the 20th century, Weismann's views were absorbed by degeneracy theorists who embraced negative eugenics as their favored model.

Adherents of the new field of genetics were ambivalent about eugenics. Most basic scientists – including William Bateson in Great Britain, and Thomas Hunt Morgan in the United States – shunned eugenics as vulgar and an unproductive field for research. However, Bateson's and Morgan's contributions to basic genetics (233) were quickly

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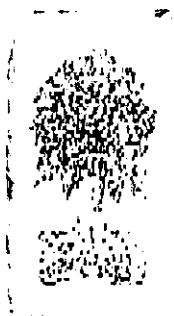
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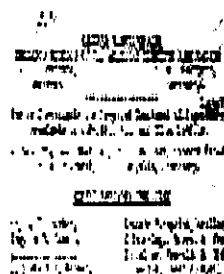
SCIENTIFIC ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

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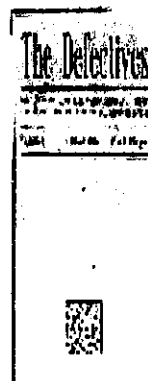
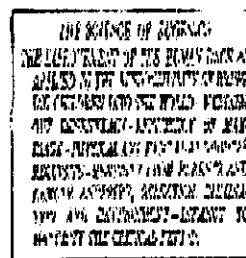
absorbed by eugenicists, who took interest in Mendelian analysis of pedigrees of humans, plants, and animals. Many eugenicists had some type of agricultural background. Charles Davenport and Harry Laughlin, who together ran the Eugenics Record Office, were introduced through their shared interest in chicken breeding. Both also were active in Eugenics Section of the American Breeder's Association (ABA) (534). Davenport's book, *Eugenics: The Science of Human Improvement through Better Breeding*, had a distinct agricultural flavor, and his affiliation with the ABA was included under his name on the title page. Agricultural genetics also provided the favored model for negative eugenics: human populations, like agricultural breeds and varieties, had to be culled of their least productive members, with only the healthiest specimens used for breeding (620).

Evolutionary models of natural selection and dysgenic (bad) hereditary practices in society also contributed to eugenic

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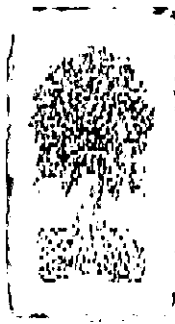
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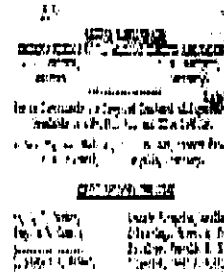
SCIENTIFIC ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

Elof Carlson, State University of New York at Stony Brook

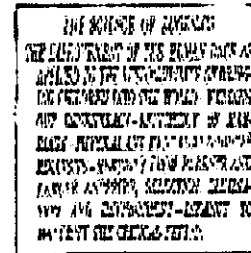
theory. For example, there was fear that highly intelligent people would have smaller families (about 2 children), while the allegedly degenerate elements of society were having larger families of four to eight children. Public welfare might also play a role in allowing less fit people to survive and reproduce, further upsetting the natural selection of fitter people (345).

Medicine also put its stamp on eugenics. Physicians like Anton Ochsner and Harry Sharp were convinced that social failure was a medical problem. Italian criminologist and physician Cesare Lombroso popularized the image of an innate criminal type that was thought to be a reversion or atavism of a bestial ancestor of humanity. When medical means failed to help the psychotic, the retarded, the pauper, and the vagrant, eugenicists shifted to preventive medicine. The German physician-legislator Rudolph Virchow, advocated programs to deal with disease

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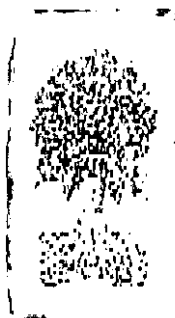
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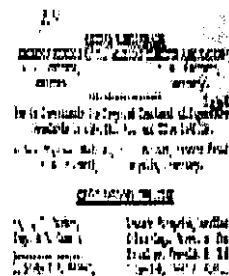
SCIENTIFIC ORIGINS OF EUGENICS

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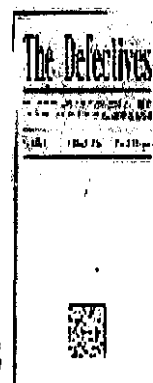
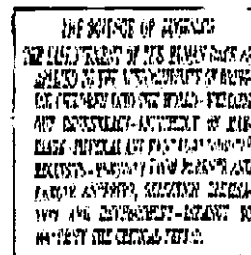
prevention on a large scale. Virchow's public health movement was fused with eugenics to form the racial hygiene movement in Germany - and came to America through physicians he trained.

Eugenicists argued that "defectives" should be prevented from breeding, through custody in asylums or compulsory sterilization. Most doctors probably felt that sterilization was a more humane way of dealing with people who could not help themselves. Vasectomy and tubal ligation were favored methods, because they did not alter the physiological and psychological contribution of the reproductive organs. Sterilization allowed the convicted criminal or mental patient to participate in society, rather than being institutionalized at public expense. Sterilization was not viewed as a punishment because these doctors believed (erroneously) that the social failure of "unfit" people was due to an irreversibly degenerate germ plasm.

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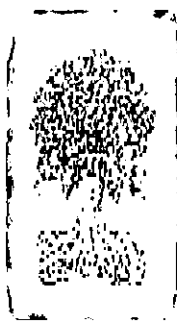


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PAGE 6

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EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

Laws forbidding marriage between people of different races were common in America from the Colonial period through the middle of the 20th century. By 1915, twenty-eight states made marriages between "Negroes and white persons" invalid; six states included this prohibition in their constitutions (676).

676

564

In the early 1900's, the eugenics movement supplied a new set of arguments to support existing restrictions on interracial marriage. These arguments incorporated a "scientific" brand of racism, emphasizing the supposed biological dangers of mixing the races - also known as miscegenation (564). Influential writers like Madison Grant, a leading eugenicist, warned that racial mixing was "a social and racial crime." He said that acceptance of racial intermarriage would lead America toward "racial suicide" and the eventual disappearance of white civilization.

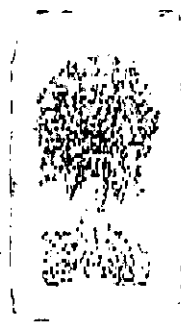
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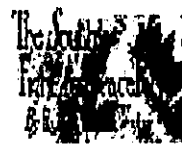
EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo. University of Virginia

According to Grant, the mixture of "higher racial types," such as Nordic whites, with other "lower" races would inevitably result in the decline of the higher race (1005). In his immensely popular book *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) Grant cautioned:

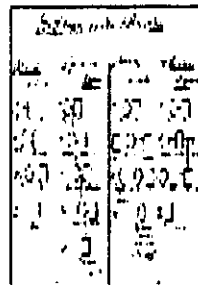
The cross between a white man and an Indian is an Indian; the cross between a white man and a negro is a negro... When it becomes thoroughly understood that the children of mixed marriages between contrasted races belong to the lower type, the importance of transmitting in unimpaired purity the blood inheritance of ages will be appreciated at its full value.

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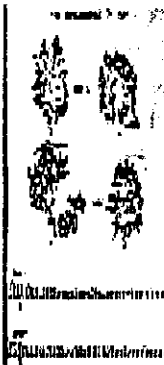


The Passing of the Great Race
by Madison Grant

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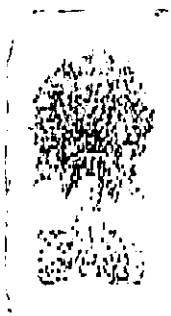
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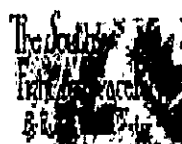
EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

Grant's proclamations on the perils of race mixing mirrored warnings by Charles Davenport and Harry Laughlin, leaders of the American eugenic bureaucracy at the Eugenics Record Office. In turn, American political leaders like Vice President Calvin Coolidge repeated similar sentiments as scientific fact. Said Coolidge: "Biological laws tell us that certain divergent people will not mix or blend."

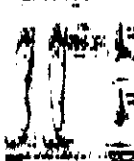
To prevent further pollution of the country's collective "germ-plasm" and a subsequent contamination of the white race, eugenicists argued for even tighter restrictions against racial mixing. Their efforts focused on new legal definitions of who could qualify to receive a marriage license as a "white" person.

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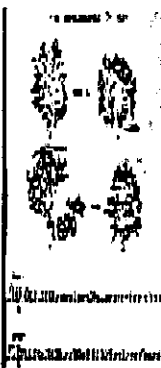
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Eugenics Study	
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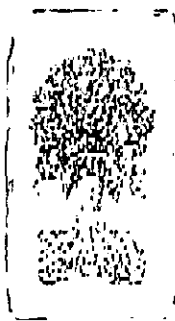
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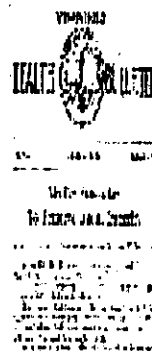


EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924 (436) stands out among anti-miscegenation laws that can be traced to eugenic advocacy. To fashion a successful legislative strategy, three local Virginia eugenicists – John Powell, Earnest Cox and Walter Plecker – consulted with Madison Grant and Harry Laughlin. Powell, a celebrated pianist and composer, was the founder of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America, an elitist version of the Ku Klux Klan dedicated to maintaining "Anglo-Saxon ideals and civilization in America." Like *The Passing of the Great Race*, Cox's book *White America* emphasized white supremacy and the dangers of racial mixing. Plecker was registrar at the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the Virginia Board of Health. His ideas on racial interbreeding as the source of "public health" problems appeared in state-published pamphlets distributed to all who planned to marry.

436



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Men Believed White Were Negroes

Case History, Little Rock, Ark.
Arrested On Charge of
Miscegenation

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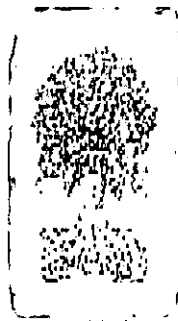
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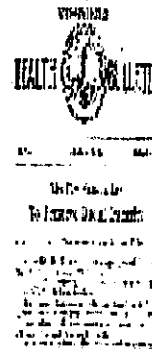
EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

When The Racial Integrity Act became law, it included provisions requiring racial registration certificates and strict definitions of who would qualify as members of the white race. It emphasized the "scientific" basis of race assessment, and the "dysgenic" dangers of race mixing. Its major provision declared:

It shall hereafter be unlawful for any white person in this State to marry any save a white person, or a person with no other admixture of blood than white and American Indian. . . . the term "white person" shall apply only to such person as has no trace whatever of any blood other than Caucasian; but persons who have one-sixteenth or less of the blood of the American Indian and have no other non-Caucasic blood shall be deemed to be white persons. . . .

436



459

Men Released From White Army in Russia

Gen. Miron, killed Soviet
troops in Crimea at
Wassim in 1918

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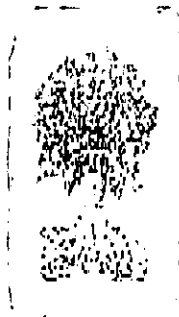
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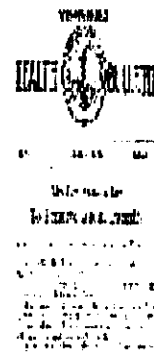
EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

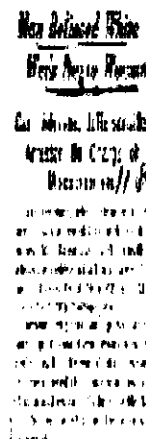
It is interesting to note that at least 16 members of the Virginia General Assembly who claimed to be descendants of Pocahontas objected to the first draft of the law they proposed, because it defined as "non-white" anyone with 1/64 of American Indian ancestry (459). Alabama and Georgia eventually copied the Virginia law. (466) Within a decade, similar laws prohibiting inter-ethnic marriages and attempting to sort citizens by percentage of Jewish "blood" were adopted by the government of Nazi Germany.

The 1958 case of *Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia* initiated a challenge that would eventually overturn the law. That year, Mildred Jeter (a black woman) and Richard Loving (a white man) were married in the District of Columbia. After moving to Virginia, they were indicted for violating the Racial Integrity Act. They pleaded guilty

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PAGE 6



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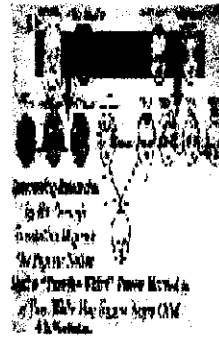
EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

and were sentenced to one year in jail. The trial judge suspended their sentences on the condition that they accept banishment from the state and not return together for 25 years. The judge's written opinion declared:

Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with this arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.

The Virginia Supreme Court upheld the judge's decision, and the Lovings moved back to Washington, D.C. In 1963, another attempt to overturn their convictions in Virginia was unsuccessful. The Lovings finally appealed to the



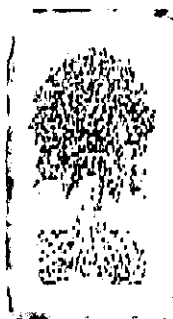
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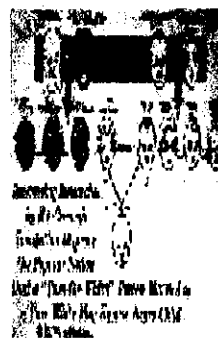


EUGENIC LAWS AGAINST RACE MIXING

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

United States Supreme Court. By unanimous decision, in 1967 the Court struck down the Racial Integrity Act and similar laws of fifteen other states, saying:

[T]here can be no doubt that restricting the freedom to marry solely because of racial classifications violates the central meaning of the Equal Protection Clause . . . Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the state.

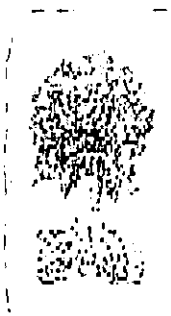


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FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

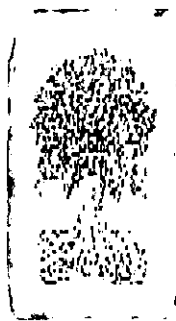
A display organized in 1926 by the American Eugenics Society showed a pedigree chart of guinea-pig pelts, with the caption: "Human Mental, Moral and Physical Traits Are Inherited in the Same Manner as Coat Color in Guinea Pigs" (007). From our vantage point in the 21st century, it is easy to look back and dismiss such claims as naive. But how naive were they in the context of the period 1910-1935? To answer this question, we must look at flaws in eugenicists' research methods, especially when they attempted to study human mental, behavioral, and personality traits.



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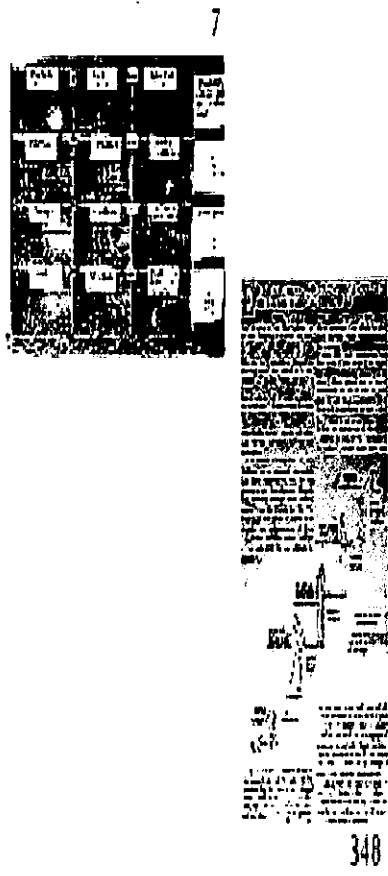
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FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

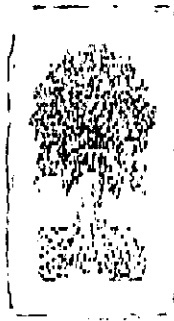
1) **Difficulty of defining traits.** Traits such as eye color, stature, and blood group are easy to define and measure. Eugenacists, however, were most interested in mental and behavioral traits – such as epilepsy, intelligence, manic depression, feeble-mindedness, alcoholism, and criminality. Not only are such traits highly complex, but they are also subjectively defined. This problem was recognized early on by critics, including geneticist Thomas Hunt Morgan, who wrote in 1932: "The main difficulty is one of definition... Accurate work in heredity can only be obtained when the diagnosis of the elements [trait]... is known."



PAGE 2



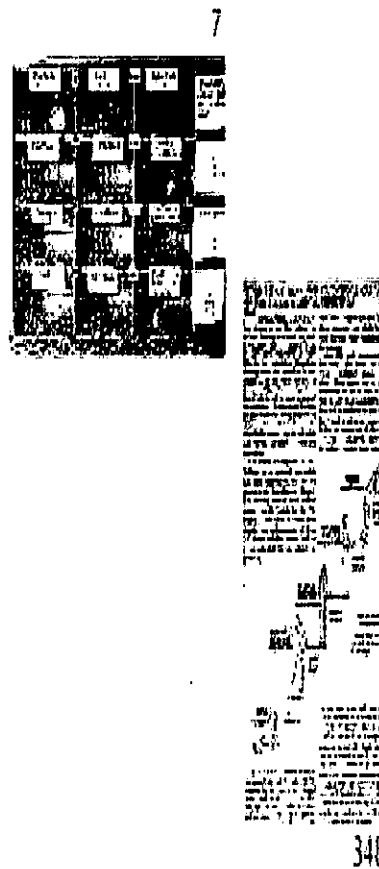
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FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

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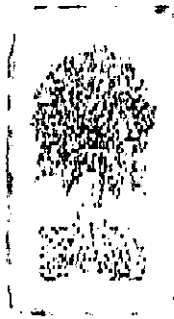
2) Reification is the tendency to treat complex traits - especially behaviors - as if they were a single entity, stemming from a single cause. For example, eugenicists treated intelligence as if it were an innate quality of the brain that could be represented by a single factor. Morgan commented: "It is commonly assumed that there is one, and only one, criterion of intelligence - that we are speaking always of the same thing when we use the word... In reality, our ideas are very vague on the subject." Later experts recognized that there may be many "intelligences" - including mechanical, quantitative, visual/spatial, verbal, and abstract.



PAGE 3



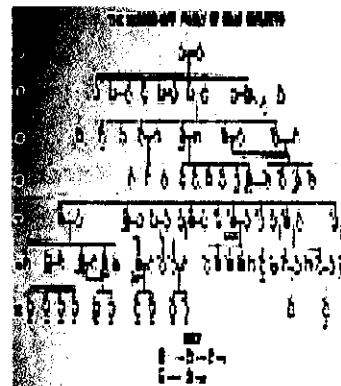
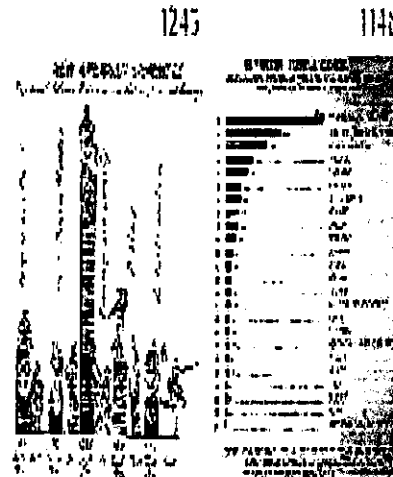
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FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

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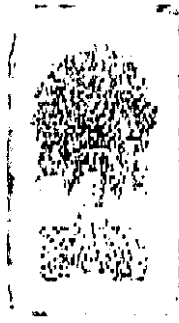
3) **Poor survey and statistical methods.** Seldom was a eugenic researcher able to personally interview family members going back more than two or three generations, in order to determine who showed the trait under study. At the time, few doctors and hospitals kept systematic medical records, so pedigree information often was obtained by second-hand reporting or even hearsay. Harry Laughlin, of the Eugenics Record Office, based many studies solely on information obtained from subjects' own (self-reported) answers on questionnaires. Furthermore, Laughlin's conclusions were typically biased by the manner in which he collected data. For example, in his testimony before the congressional committee on immigration, Laughlin presented data showing that the proportion of southern/eastern Europeans in prisons and mental institutions was far



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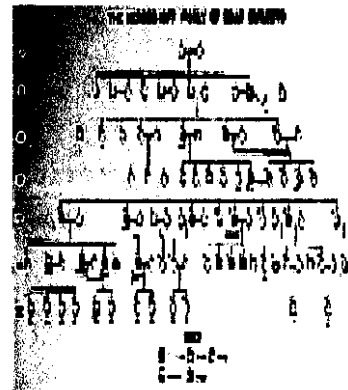
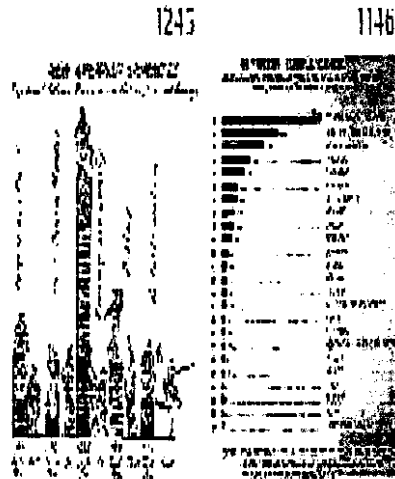
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FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

greater than their proportion in the general population (1245). However, he "creatively" used statistics to falsely exaggerate this claim. The institutional data was collected in 1921, during the peak of southern/eastern European immigration, and primarily from the northeastern states, where these populations were concentrated. However, the general population data was taken from the 1910 census, when southern/eastern Europeans were a much smaller part of the entire U.S. population. Laughlin's use of these and other bogus statistics provided the "scientific" basis for the Johnson Immigration Restriction Act (1924), which severely restricted newcomers from southern and eastern Europe.



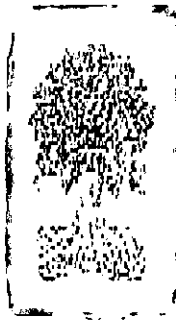
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PAGE 5



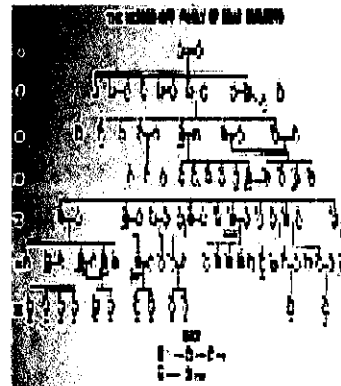
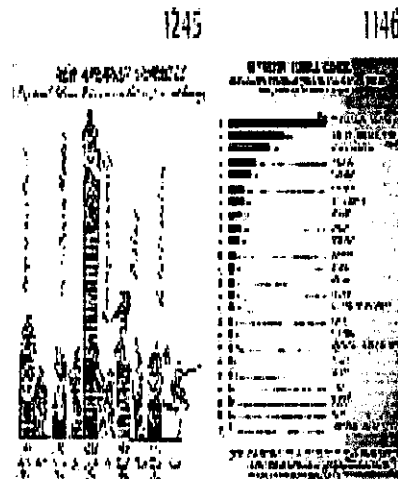
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FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

4) **False quantification** is the assumption that if you can produce a numerical value (such as a score on an intelligence test) then it must be a valid measure. For example, eugenicists argued that IQ tests were accurate and culture-free measures of native intelligence - even though they contained questions that were obviously dependent on cultural background and experience. Tests were given under a wide variety of conditions, often by poorly trained administrators and sometimes even in pantomime when the subjects spoke no English. According to one set of IQ tests given to immigrants by Henry H. Goddard, 83% of Jews, 80% of Hungarians, 79% of Italians, 87% of Russians were classified as "feeble-minded." Although most of these results were later retracted, Goddard's test had dire consequences for immigrants who were returned home and for individuals who were consigned to mental institutions, and sometimes sterilized (1146).



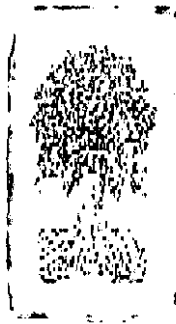
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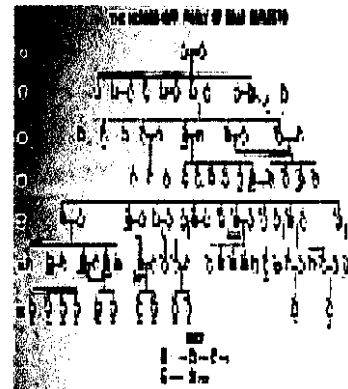
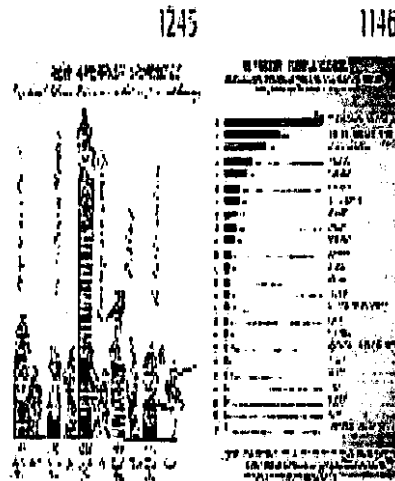
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FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

5) **Social and environmental influences.** Eugenecists sought genetic explanations of complex human traits to the virtual exclusion of other explanations. However, family pedigrees are as much documents of social inheritance as they are of biological inheritance. In addition to genes, families members share customs, life styles, and health practices (including diet) that can greatly affect the development of physical, intellectual and emotional traits. For example, Charles Davenport explained lineages of naval officers in terms of an inherited gene for thalassophilia, or "love of the sea." He neglected the obvious explanation that seafaring fathers had a strong influence on their sons' career choices (290). At the same time, laboratory geneticists were beginning to recognize that most physical and physiological traits are the product of interactions between genes and the



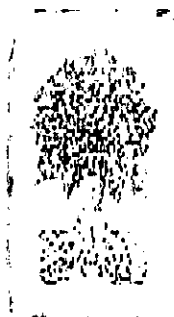
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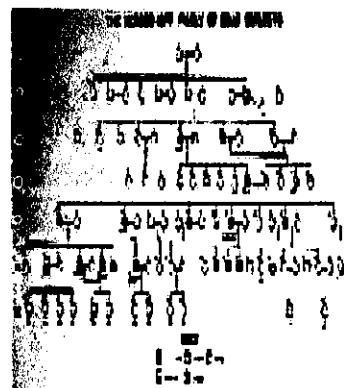
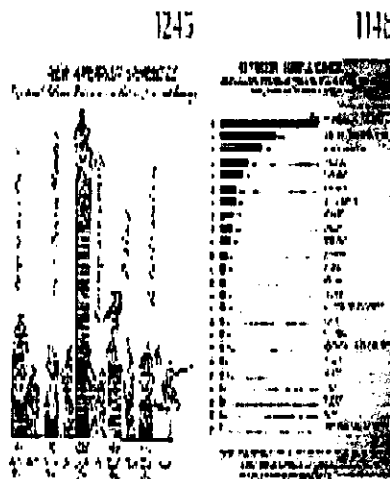


FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

environment. For example, fruit flies of the same genotype showed different phenotypes when raised at slightly different temperatures. Environmental input was recognized as being even more influential on the development of behavioral, personality and mental traits.

By the mid-1930s, eugenics research came under increasing scrutiny, and independent analysis revealed that most eugenic data were useless. A committee of the American Neurological Association reported that "[The definitional problem] invalidates, we believe, the earlier work which comes from Davenport, Rosanoff and the American Eugenics School with its headquarters at Cold Spring Harbor." According to an external visiting committee assembled by the Carnegie Institution of Washington:



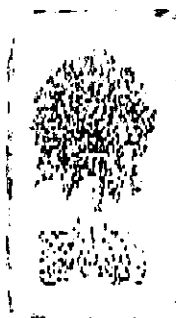
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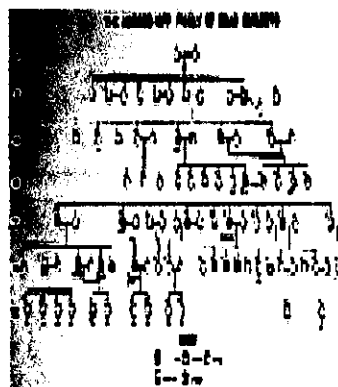
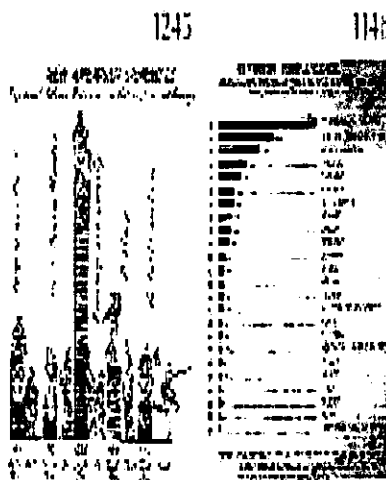


FLAWS IN EUGENICS RESEARCH

Garland E. Allen, Washington University

"Some traits such as 'personality' or 'character' lack precise definition or quantitative methods of measurement; some traits such as 'sense of humor,' 'self respect,' 'loyalty' or 'holding a grudge' could seldom be known outside an individual's close friends and associates... Even more objective characteristics, such as hair form or eye color, become relatively worthless items of genetic data when recorded by an untrained observer."

These critiques, among other factors, prompted the Carnegie Institution to withdraw its funding and permanently close down the ERO in December, 1939.

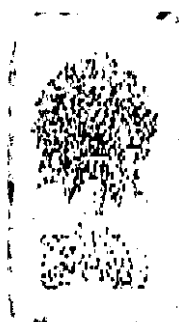


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PAGE 9

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EUGENIC STERILIZATION LAWS

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

While some eugenicists privately supported practices such as euthanasia or even genocide, legally-mandated sterilization was the most radical policy supported by the American eugenics movement. A number of American physicians performed sterilizations even before the surgery was legally approved, though no reliable accounting of the practice exists prior to passage of sterilization laws. Indiana enacted the first law allowing sterilization on eugenic grounds in 1907, with Connecticut following soon after. Despite these early statutes, sterilization did not gain widespread popular approval until the late 1920s (952).

Advocacy in favor of sterilization was one of Harry Laughlin's first major projects at the Eugenics Record Office. In 1914, he published a Model Eugenic Sterilization Law that proposed to authorize sterilization of the "socially inadequate" - people supported in institutions or

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THE EUGENICS ARCHIVE



THE EUGENICS ARCHIVE



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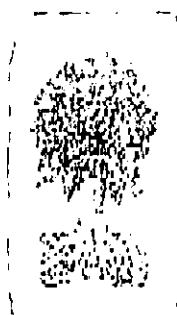


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EUGENIC STERILIZATION LAWS

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

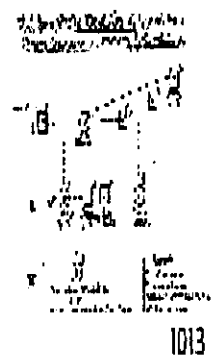
"maintained wholly or in part by public expense. The law encompassed the "feeble-minded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed; and dependent" - including "orphans, ne'er-do-wells, tramps, the homeless and paupers." By the time the Model Law was published in 1914, twelve states had enacted sterilization laws (951).

By 1924, approximately 3,000 people had been involuntarily sterilized in America; the vast majority (2,500) in California. That year Virginia passed a Eugenic Sterilization Act based on Laughlin's Model Law. It was adopted as part of a cost-saving strategy to relieve the tax burden in a state where public facilities for the "insane" and "feeble-minded" had experienced rapid growth. The law was also written to protect physicians who performed sterilizing operations from malpractice lawsuits. Virginia's law asserted that "heredity plays an important part in the transmission of insanity,

952



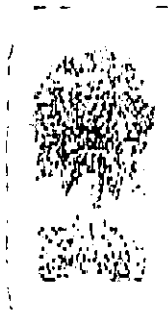
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EUGENIC STERILIZATION LAWS

Paul Lombardo. University of Virginia

idiocy, imbecility, epilepsy and crime..." It focused on "defective persons" whose reproduction represented "a menace to society."

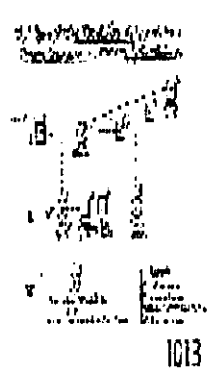
Carrie Buck, a seventeen-year-old girl from Charlottesville, Virginia, was picked as the first person to be sterilized. Carrie (1013) had a child, but was not married. Her mother Emma was already a resident at an asylum, the Virginia Colony for the Epileptic and the Feeble-minded. Officials at the Virginia Colony said that Carrie and her mother shared the hereditary traits of "feeble-mindedness" and sexual promiscuity. To those who believed that such traits were genetically transmitted, Carrie fit the law's description as a "probable potential parent of socially inadequate offspring." A legal challenge was arranged on Carrie's behalf to test the constitutional validity of the law.

At her trial, several witnesses offered evidence of Carrie's inherited "defects" and those of her mother Emma. Colony Superintendent Dr. Albert Priddy testified that Emma Buck had

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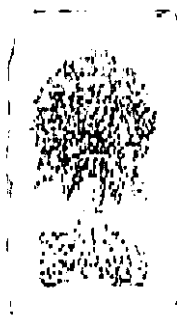
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EUGENIC STERILIZATION LAWS

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

"a record of immorality, prostitution, untruthfulness and syphilis." His opinion of the Buck family more generally was: "These people belong to the shiftless, ignorant, and worthless class of anti-social whites of the South." Although Harry Laughlin never met Carrie, he sent a written deposition echoing Priddy's conclusions about Carrie's "feeble-mindedness" and "moral delinquency."

Sociologist Arthur Estabrook (378), of the Eugenics Record Office, traveled to Virginia to testify against Carrie. He and a Red Cross nurse examined Carrie's baby Vivian and concluded that she was "below average" and "not quite normal." Relying on these comments, the judge concluded that Carrie should be sterilized to prevent the birth of other "defective" children.

The decision was appealed to United States Supreme Court. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., himself a student of eugenics, wrote the formal opinion for the Court in the case of *Buck v. Bell* (1927) (260). His opinion repeated the "facts" in

378



260

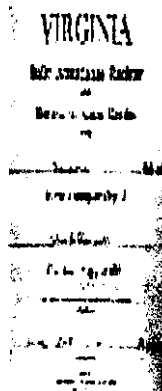
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

No. 26. October Term, 1927.

Plaintiff, *Buck*, vs. Defendant, *Bell*.
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 1, 1927.

Printed under authority of Act of Congress of July 3, 1909.



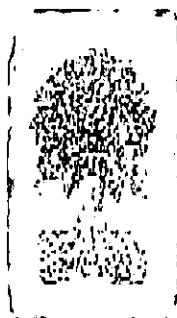
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EUGENIC STERILIZATION LAWS

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

Carrie's case, concluding that a "deficient" mother, daughter, and granddaughter justified the need for sterilization. The decision includes the now infamous words:

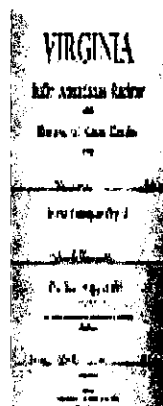
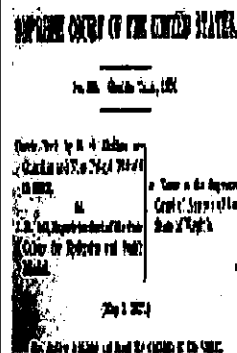
It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind...Three generations of imbeciles are enough.

Recent scholarship has shown that Carrie Buck's sterilization was based on a false "diagnosis" and her defense lawyer conspired with the lawyer for the Virginia Colony to guarantee that the sterilization law would be upheld in court. Carrie's illegitimate child was not the result of promiscuity; she had been raped by a relative of her foster parents. School records also prove that Vivian was not "feeble-minded." Her 1st grade report card showed that Vivian was a solid "B" student, received an "A" in deportment, and had been on the honor roll. (1232).

378



260



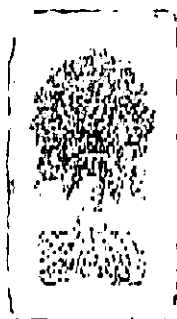
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EUGENIC STERILIZATION LAWS

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

Nevertheless, *Buck v. Bell* supplied a precedent for the eventual sterilization of approximately 8,300 Virginians. Borrowing from Laughlin's Model Law, the German Nazi government adopted a law in 1933 that provided the legal basis for sterilizing more than 350,000 people. Laughlin proudly published a translation of the German Law for the Prevention of Defective Progeny in *The Eugenic News*. In 1936, Laughlin was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Heidelberg as a tribute for his work in "the science of racial cleansing" (1223, 1229).

The second Supreme Court case generated by the eugenics movement tested a 1935 Oklahoma law that prescribed involuntary sexual sterilization for repeat criminals. Jack Skinner was chosen to test the law's constitutionality. He was a three-time felon, guilty of stealing chickens at age nineteen, and convicted twice in later years for armed robbery. By the time his case was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court, in 1942 some 13 states had laws specifically permitting sterilization of criminals.

1223

1229

6 Americans Honored
At Heidelberg's Fete

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Parson's Magazine
Vol. 11, November 1, 1911, No. 11

Hereditary Criminality
and its Certain Cure
by Wagnon R. Foster

90



PAGE 6



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EUGENIC STERILIZATION LAWS

Paul Lombardo, University of Virginia

The opinion striking down the sterilization law in the case of *Skinner v. Oklahoma* (1942) was written by Justice William O. Douglas. He highlighted the inequity of Oklahoma's law by noting that a three-time chicken thief could be sterilized while a three-time embezzler could not. Said Douglas: "We have not the slightest basis for inferring that ... the inheritability of criminal traits follows the neat legal distinctions which the law has marked between those two offenses."

Despite the *Skinner* case, sterilization of people in institutions for the mentally ill and mentally retarded continued through the mid-1970's. At one time or another, 33 states had statutes under which more than 60,000 Americans endured involuntary sterilization. The *Buck v. Bell* precedent allowing sterilization of the so-called "feeble-minded" has never been overruled.

1223

1229

6 Americans Honored
At Heidelberg's Fete

19 Europeans Get 60th Ann
iversary Dishes

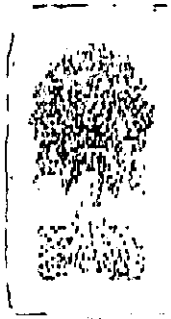
Parson's Magazine
Vol. 11 November 1911 No. 5

Hereditary Criminality
and its Certain Cure
by Wagnon A. Foster



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EUGENICS POPULARIZATION

Steve Selden, University of Maryland

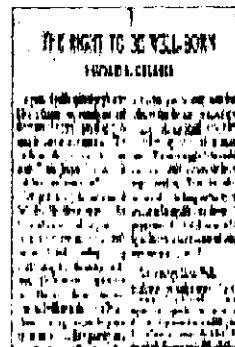
Eugenic ideology was deeply embedded in American popular culture during the 1920s and 1930s. For example, on Saturday night, high school students might go to the cinema to see "The Black Stork" - a film that supported eugenic sterilization. In church on Sunday, they might listen to a sermon selected for an award by the American Eugenics Society - learning that human improvement required marriages of society's "best" with the "best."

On a field trip to a state fair (14) with their hygiene class, students might sign up for a eugenic evaluation at a Fitter Families Exhibit - hoping to win a medal (31) claiming, "Yea I Have A Goodly Heritage." Back in school, these same students might open their biology textbooks to the chapter on eugenics - which recommended the eugenic policies of immigration restriction, sterilization, and race segregation.

14



31

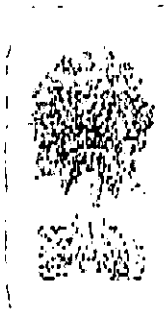


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EUGENICS POPULARIZATION

Steve Selden, University of Maryland

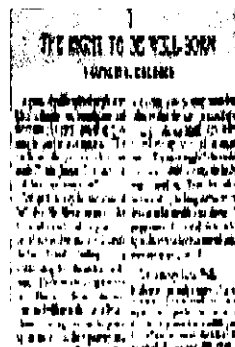
Eugenics traces its roots to Britain in the early 1880s, when Sir Francis Galton coined the term to mean "well-born" (351). Galton thought that biological inheritance of leadership qualities had determined the social status of Britain's ruling classes. In his view, nature was far more important than nurture in human development. Early in the 20th century, eugenics had landed on American shores. The American Breeders Association (ABA) devoted itself to investigating issues that would have interested Sir Francis Galton. With a committee focusing on the presumed hereditary differences between human races, the ABA popularized the themes of selective breeding of superior stock, the biological threat of "inferior types," and the need for recording and controlling human heredity.

Financial support for the popularization of eugenics

14



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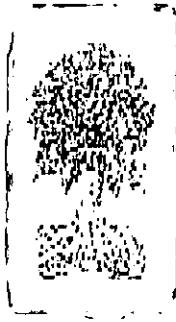
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PAGE 2



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EUGENICS POPULARIZATION

Steve Selden, University of Maryland

came both from individuals and foundations in America. In 1906, John Harvey Kellogg created the Race Betterment Foundation in Battle Creek Michigan, which sponsored a series of conferences at its sanatorium in 1914, 1915, and 1928. Beginning in 1910, the Eugenics Record Office propagandized eugenics with financial support from Mrs. E. H. Harriman and the leadership of Charles Davenport and Harry Laughlin (1225).

By 1918, a group of socially prominent and influential men organized the Galton Society. Reflecting its namesake's interests, the Society was concerned with presumed human racial differences and policies of differential breeding. Under the direction of eugenicists such as Davenport and racist authors, Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard, the Galton Society brought together scientific and philanthropic leaders to popularize eugenics through a newsletter, the *Eugenical*

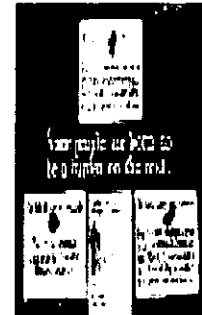
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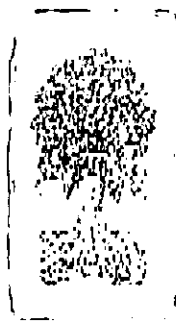
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PAGE 3



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EUGENICS POPULARIZATION

Steve Selden, University of Maryland

News. Eugenics was also popularized through a series of International Congresses of Eugenics held in 1912, 1921, and 1932 (1058). After the second of these meetings, the American Eugenics Society (AES) was formed. The AES organized several committees devoted to popularizing eugenics: Cooperation with Clergymen, Religious Sermon Contests, Crime Prevention, Formal Education, and Selective Immigration.

The AES also organized Fitter Families Contests (23) and eugenics exhibits at state fairs at locations as varied as Topeka, Kansas and Springfield, Massachusetts throughout 1920s. Typical of the tone of these exhibits, the 1926 display in Philadelphia (8) warned that "some Americans are born to be a burden on the rest." The display used flashing lights to emphasize the supposed dire consequences for America's prosperity if the reproduction of inferior persons was not controlled.

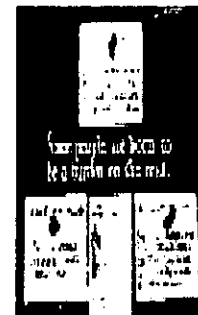
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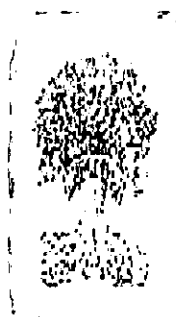
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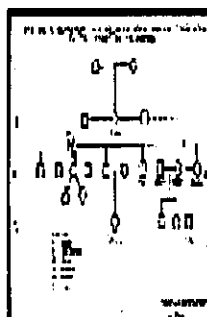
EUGENICS POPULARIZATION

Steve Selden, University of Maryland

Eugenics also had the support of leaders in academia. E.L. Thorndike and Leta Stetter Hollingworth popularized eugenics to generations of prospective classroom teachers. Using flawed racial interpretations of the intelligence test data after the First World War, psychometricians such as Carl Brigham and Robert Yerkes added to eugenics' unjustified luster in the public eye.

At the same time, the popular authors Henry H. Goddard and Edward A. Wiggam recommended policies of controlled breeding for American citizens. Traveling across the country with lantern-slide presentations, they warned of a "rising tide of feeble-mindedness" (957) and demanded a "new decalogue of science" - a modern ten commandments based upon eugenic principles.

957



CO. THORNDIKE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
The City

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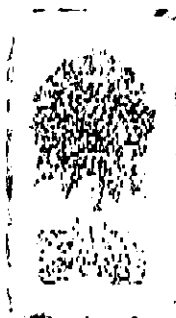
THE JOURNAL
OF
EUGENICS
OF THE
ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICAL OFFICERS
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
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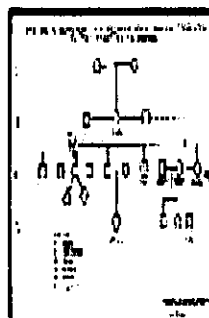


EUGENICS POPULARIZATION

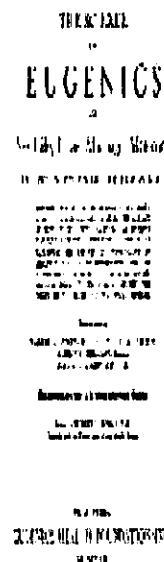
Steve Selden, University of Maryland

While eugenics was indeed popular, it was poor science and it was rejected on scientific grounds. However, the hereditary social attitudes that supported popular eugenics remain in the public consciousness to this day. From news stories about "novelty-seeking" genes, to supposedly academic tomes on intellectual "bell curves," to "reawakened" racist interpretations of American history, the social seeds for resurgent eugenics are still alive. If we are not to repeat the errors of the past, we will need to examine modern eugenic visions with intellectual rigor.

957



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EUGENICS

USING THE 'FIT' ALGEBRA

The Story

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PAGE 7

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