The Evolution of American Eugenics in the Twentieth Century: Mentalism, Xenophobia, and Racism.

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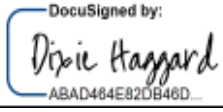

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ABSTRACT

The American Eugenics Movement occurred within several decades of the twentieth century, and the perception of it as a solely race-based movement has been generally accepted. However, while eugenics utilized racism later against Black and Brown minorities, other methods of repression were used to alienate groups regardless of race. This thesis will explore the timeline of eugenic theory itself, as well as the socio-political movement behind it, to prove an evolution occurred. Three distinct eras of change in eugenic philosophy took place during this period. Mentalism, or Sanism, was first used in eugenic ideology before the 1920s and targeted the mentally ill and disabled. Nativism and xenophobia became popular during the late 1910s and early 1920s. From this point until after World War II, policies were enacted that labeled Southern and Eastern European Immigrants as "feebleminded" and barred their entry into the United States. The final era consisted of sterilizations on African Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities using racism linked to socio-economic status and enrollment on welfare rolls. The evolution of eugenic philosophy and policies occurred as new threats to the status quo emerged. While this (then) scientific theory was not rooted in racism when created, it relied heavily on classism in an effort to improve the human race. Throughout this period in the United States, the upper classes were the primary participants in eugenics. Many members were white and held classist, racist, and nativist views. These individuals altered eugenic philosophy and policy as needed to prevent national genetic stock from degrading. This was why the American Eugenics Movement evolved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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DEDICATION

For my family, especially Mallory. Everyone has been a beacon of love and hope, but you my love have never left my side nor shown me an ounce of anger (even when I deserved it).

INTRODUCTION

The 20th century was one of the most influential eras in American history, and during this period several movements contributed to fundamental changes in our society, political policies, and culture. While most of these events are heralded as moments of progress and improvement to the nation, not all can share this title. The American eugenics movement was one such crusade. Its existence in our history has been a stain many have preferred to see fade, something that appears to be slowly occurring outside post-secondary institutions. This socio-political movement supplied the foundation and justification behind scientific racism as well as increased societal division based on intelligence, class, race, and gender within the United States. Eugenics and the American eugenics movement are deeply ingrained elements of American history. Unfortunately, this topic has only slight perceived relevance to the modern population. The effects it had on this nation and the world have largely been forgotten, with few exceptions. This thesis examines eugenic history and historiography to prove several points. First, this philosophy was not solely entrenched in racism, and that classism played a much larger role in its origins. The theory was used in order to determine how improvements should be made to humanity. Second, Galtonian eugenics was fundamentally altered after its arrival to the United States by Charles Davenport and his followers. Third, racial minorities were not the initial targets of American eugenic policies, but rather the mentally ill, deficient, and impaired. Fourth, the evolution of eugenic policies affected multiple groups, increasingly becoming more race-based from the 1910s until it reached a zenith after World War II. This thesis explores the eugenics movement in the United States in an effort to understand how and

why this philosophy evolved from a science intended to improve humanity into a race-based ideology that caused the sterilization and deaths of many throughout the century.

The history and historiography of this ideology have not been given the appropriate attention by the public despite the constant, albeit unknown, interaction with its teachings. Those who have studied eugenics recognize it in society, entertainment, politics, policies, and especially in American history. Despite the considerable impacts made in this country and others, eugenics has an insignificant appearance in current history books. Thomas Cargill's article, "Eugenics in High School History: Failure to Confront the Past" illustrated this point clearly. Cargill analyzed nine textbooks published by the top three K-12 publishers (McGraw-Hill, Pearson, and Houghton Mifflin) and determined that less than half included any information on the American eugenics movement. When it was mentioned, it was only around a paragraph in length and was primarily in relation to the immigration policy of the 1920s. Cargill stated that beyond this, "none of the reviewed textbooks includes a broad-based discussion of eugenics in the United States."[1] Most of these editions have been in publication since the late 1990s and material has been recycled in the newer versions as well. This reveals that teaching about eugenics before the college level has largely been neglected for decades. Because of this, public awareness concerning the depth this philosophy has in society is fading. This work then attempts to uphold this portion of American history, as well as to provide a functional evolutionary timeline based on the works of multiple experts. It is important to note that specific eras in historiography share similar decades with the eras of evolutionary shifts seen in the eugenics timeline. While they are unique, they are also somewhat interchangeable.

Eugenics was originally a British theory, and its creation was based on factors that Francis Galton felt were indisputable. However, once the subject crossed the Atlantic, eugenic

theory underwent a massive transformation in the United States. The shifts seen in the following eras are examples of change in Galton's original beliefs and revealed gradual changes from Galtonian eugenics to Davenport's version. American eugenics transformed from a (then) scientific philosophy to one that alienated and oppressed individuals based on morality and racist rhetoric. Chapter one explains the origins of eugenic theory, how it developed in the United Kingdom, and its migration to the United States. It also discusses the first era of eugenics and its policies in America (as well as the perception of it as an ideology) from 1900 to the 1910s. During that time, Galton's original theory, which had focused on improving humanity through positive practices on upper- and middle-class individuals, became popular among the wealthy. Positive eugenic policies were used to coax these men and women to reproduce more frequently through, among other things, economic incentives. Contrarily, this era also saw the creation and implementation of negative eugenic policies used against the mentally ill or challenged. While Galton's version of eugenics did have roots in classism that favored those in the upper echelons of society, the use of social Darwinism influenced its practitioners greatly and caused it to expand. Although the popularity of his ideas was not as magnanimous in Great Britain as it was in the United States, many socialites supported Galton's work. The first shift in the theory occurred at this time across the Atlantic, but did not take on the darker hue eugenics is known for today. This change revealed that eugenics could be manipulated to serve the interests of society (as long as it had ample support and scientific backing). The nations that implemented similar or more virulent versions of Galton's theory used our perception of eugenics as a baseline from which to build. The differences seen in American eugenics can be associated with the variations in policy and practice seen throughout the twentieth century.

Chapter two will focus on the second era of eugenic evolution which occurred within the late 1910s and 1920s. It will discuss how the major shifts towards race-based eugenic theory and policies began to occur. Throughout this period, immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe became the major targets in America. Eugenicists in the United States began to serve their personal interests with these scientific theories; this increased the popularity of eugenics. The corruption of Galton's theory was caused by men such as Charles Davenport, Harry Laughlin, Madison Grant, and many others. These individuals and their beliefs were supported by scholars largely due to the academic organizations within the eugenics movement. While the first major group targeted during the previous era were those deemed to be burdens on society (because of medical or mental disabilities), this era's burdening group were immigrants. Although eugenicists attempted to use the same criteria implemented in the decade prior, it was clear that personal opinions and external factors, such as xenophobia, economics, and others, influenced the shift in eugenic theory. An example of this was the passing of legislation that specifically targeted immigrants from Europe. The accusations of Laughlin and other eugenicists, backed by the circumstantial evidence supported by some scientists, caused immigration to be limited to those deemed fit or desirable. This also set a precedent that specific groups, starting with immigrants, were genetically and intellectually inferior. Direct legal objectification against these groups existed in the 1920s and ceased by the 1960s, but the next era was just as filled with negative eugenic policies that affected additional groups. The lack of direct objectification mixed with the incorporation of eugenic ideology in society made the next period much more dangerous and complicated.

In the 1930s and 1940s (covered in part of chapter three), eugenics experienced a different type of evolution. This period consisted of massive losses in support of the theory and movement because of the use of eugenic sterilization by the Nazis. Changes also occurred

because of the increased, albeit initially silent, withdrawal of scientists as well as geneticists from the movement; something that began in the late 1910s and 1920s. These two factors threatened the movement with collapse. However, the philosophy's foundation was able to change from a scientific to a moral one, allowing it to continue formally for a short time and ultimately giving it a basis to continue informally for decades. While the movement itself was more or less extinguished after the late 1940s/early 1950s, it continued throughout the century thanks to the efforts of eugenicists who rebranded most organizations and entities associated with it. As part of this change, sanitation of all things bearing the name of eugenics happened as a reactionary measure made in light of the Holocaust and other horrors associated with the Nazis. Eugenics in the United States did continue, and after the war downsizing of the organizations associated with the movement did not have a large adverse effect on its practices. The persistence of the theory happened because of the impact it made on the education of individuals. Eugenic theory had influenced public consciousness by the 1950s and had been implemented in curricula from grade school to college across the country. Many professionals, who had taken college courses during the pre-war years, had been influenced at some level by eugenics, and those in many high schools received foundational instruction in it as well. Various fields including social work, education, and even medicine had interactions with the theory. Those who worked in these sectors based some decisions concerning clients and patients on this knowledge.

The majority of chapter three explores the post-war years, which were much more dangerous regarding eugenic implementation. This was because no real governing body existed to discuss practices and policies or to regulate them. Instead, those in the aforementioned positions acted in what they perceived as their best judgment. This, of course, was subjective on a case-by-case basis, and those who were educated (viewing certain groups

as genetically or intellectually inferior) were more likely to condemn others to sterilization. This was a probable cause as to why sterilizations became much more prominent during this third era of eugenic evolution. Those in areas of the U.S. that had experienced harsher bigotry and racism were hotspots of eugenic policies that targeted minority groups. In addition to this, those working in these sectors were likely influenced by the actions and chaos of the 1960s and 1970s. Eugenics targeted those determined problems in society, or those who were social burdens. This decade, after all, was filled with opinions that civil rights activists were troublemakers and threats to the status quo. Increasing concerns of gluttony and welfare programs, as well as moralistic views on promiscuity, also became factors that influenced these decision-makers. This explained why sterilizations of poor Black women (who received welfare benefits) suffered more sterilizations in areas such as North Carolina. Throughout this third era of eugenic evolution, the most dramatic shift from "neutral" science to race-based philosophy can be seen. By the end of the millennium, eugenics in the United States had affected tens of thousands of citizens of multiple ethnicities. The implementation and augmentation of Galton's original theory not only caused the sterilization of many of these victims, but also influenced the actions of the Third Reich.

The last era of eugenic evolution took place between the 1950s and 1980s. This thirty-year period consisted of sterilizations being performed at increasingly higher rates, and on various minority groups. Unlike the previous decades, eugenic laws and policies did not specifically target these minorities in name. However, due to the vast expansion of American eugenic theory via the movement's organizations, the societal consciousness had been corrupted. Many of those in professional settings, such as councilors, heads of educational institutions, social workers, and those in similar roles had been indoctrinated with the ideas of social hierarchy which aligned with eugenic teachings. In addition to this, a large portion of

American society had reached a comparable point of view to these individuals, and little outspoken resistance to the use of eugenic policies was heard at this time. The implementation of these policies grew, and sterilizations continued. The reason this occurred can be linked to two factors. First, the effects eugenic theory had on the American psyche (caused by the propaganda from the eugenics movement) led to increasingly warped perceptions of dispossessed individuals by the upper- and middle-class white citizens. Second, the nonspecific policies and the continuation of small-scale eugenics after World War II allowed individuals to choose who was unfit. The economic, social, and cultural chaos of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s created an environment for eugenics to continue, especially in the South. Because of these and other issues, poor minority groups became the new targets and were seen as society's new ills.

While secondary education did not emphasize eugenics, the opposite was true at the post-secondary level. Questions regarding eugenic theory, ideological values, philosophical beliefs, and practices associated with it have risen fairly steadily for the last few decades. Since the 1980s, historians have investigated the racism typically connected to the American eugenics movement (at least in finer detail than in previous studies). Although it has never been clear when exactly racism became a fundamental element in eugenic philosophy, attempts have been made to better answer this question. Even if a clear answer does not exist for such inquiries, the results of these examinations have revealed more detailed information on the American eugenics movement and its evolution. The historiography of eugenics was also an area that saw many changes in thought and perception throughout the decades. The investigations of historians and scholars over the last sixty years have revealed a natural progression in understanding how eugenics existed in the past, and how it persists today. Eugenics has been written about in multiple academic fields and has been examined in

varying degrees for a long time. From the investigations of historians and scholars since the 1960s, there has been a natural progression of thought and understanding of what eugenics was, and is. The historiography of eugenics is multifaceted and has often evolved. This is because of its gradual change from an applied science to a social science that began in the 1950s after its fall from grace in the scientific community. [2] After its transition, academics from different fields of study began to delve into what had made it so popular. Through their individual research, these scholars created a historiographical timeline, not of the movement itself but of how its arguments have developed. During the 1960s, the first real historical analyses were written by Mark Haller and Donald Pickens, respectively.

The work of Haller and Pickens established a simple analysis of the eugenics movement, those involved, and how the Progressive Era was its pivotal pushing mechanism. Both books primarily exemplify the breakdown of eugenics and they argue similar points; namely, that eugenics had become the solution to society's problems. The first building block of this historiography comes from Haller's *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (1964). In this piece, he discusses how the evolution of eugenics persisted and morphed from an unbiased scientific method into the corrupted practices remembered presently. He also explains that while its actions did slow during the pre-war years, they never ceased. Lastly, after World War II, eugenics experienced a revival, slowly advanced in the social science field, and continued in popular science as genetics.[3] The continuation of Haller's ideas, as well as additions to them, are also seen in Donald Pickens' *Eugenics and the Progressives* (1968).

The developments in science (genetics, biology, etc.) during the 19th century allowed mankind to explore the roots of human existence and ponder its future. Scientists, naturalists, and botanists of all types began to investigate life on earth, and it was these investigations that

led to the findings of Charles Darwin, Gregor Mendel, and Thomas Malthus. From their discoveries, theories of evolution, genetics, and natural selection were formulated; and the growth of these ideas led Francis Galton to create his own. Galton, a cousin of Darwin, learned from both his relative's work and Mendel's during the middle of the century. He composed methods and concepts that would eventually become the model of eugenics. In its infancy, it was meant only as a method of advancing the human race as a whole through selective gene manipulation (of individual races) to ensure the following generations were improving the health, longevity, and productivity of man.[4]

While most historians agree with Haller, they disagree on what level of acceptance American citizens had concerning eugenics. Adam Cohen, Robert Wilson, and Allen Chase share this opinion. However, they also agree with the belief that racial corruption of eugenics was directly linked to the upper-class individuals who joined the movement during the early 20th century. These three argue this idea in the beginning sections of their respective works. The actions of those in notable positions of society were themselves responsible they explain, continuing the established beliefs of Haller and Pickens. Academics, industrialists, inventors, and scientists who accepted eugenics made the philosophy popular and many considered it to be an intellectual modern marvel. While it is Haller who originally made these two points, Cohen, Chase, and Wilson expanded upon with great detail.

In Cohen's *Imbeciles: The Supreme Court, American Eugenics, and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck* (2016), he argues that the approval of the *Buck v. Bell* case of 1927 was a sign of indirect or silent acceptance of eugenic practices by Americans.[5] This and the few protests by citizens at that time, as well as the decades prior, were what influenced his point. Chase and Cohen both show their support of Haller's and Pickens' investigations, and used them as a platform to contribute their own theories. Chase's work, *The Legacy of Malthus* (1977),

indicated the establishment of general acceptance by the people. The endorsement of eugenics by top Americans has largely been claimed to be because of the racial/racist ideology of those people. Chase claimed that "some of [the eugenics movement's] earliest American adherents were overt racists and elitists," a list that included notable people such as Charles Davenport, Roswell Johnson, and Henry F. Osborn.[6] While he also stated that many non-racists joined the movement, they were not as notable or recognizable. This showed that some of the most influential people who supported eugenics were the most recognized, and, by proxy, listened to by those in society. In contrast, those with less racial motivations were harder to identify, thus less prominent.

A domino effect of sorts can be seen when this point is taken into perspective. Prominent racist individuals were the cause of the growth of race-based eugenics in America. The assertion that these people's views became socially acceptable (as did the movement, thus the evolution/fusion of the two as most understand it today) is supported by historian Robert Wilson. His explanation helps to understand how this happened and why there was so little public opposition. According to Wilson, "our sense of belonging, often deeply, to certain groups – our family, our nation, our people, our species – are all signs and products of our specific social nature".[7] In essence, humans follow patterns, and what popular/influential people do is what most of the remaining population ends up doing as well. It is therefore logical that because of this biological drive, and the influencers of the era, most Americans did accept eugenics to varying degrees. The continuation of Haller's original thesis, as well as an explanation of how this occurred, is evident. However, the debate on when eugenics became race-based in the United States has yet to be discussed.

Donald Pickens, in a combination of agreement with and advancement of Haller's ideas, claimed that the corruption of eugenics did indeed begin at the top with high-class

participants. While his book outlines the same basic structure of eugenics and the movement as Haller's, he magnifies the race control/race-based aspects of eugenics that became popular in the early 20th century. Pickens asserted that the rise of birth control advocacy and sterilization in the U.S. had a direct correlation with the reliance on racism in eugenics; a view Alexandra Stern, Angela Davis, and Johanna Schoen agree with and use in the construction of their own theories. The evolution from Haller to Pickens shows a new direction in the historiography, and it is he who creates the base on which the former three, as well as Edward Larson, Daniel Kevles, and others stand. Concerning investigations made by both Haller and Pickens, racism and eugenics were so synonymous with each other because of the early popular interactions, but pinpointing when racism became a motivator (and how) is another source of debate.

Pickens declares that "the more naturalistic and conservative progressives found merit in eugenics schemes for saving the racial character of the American population", and also that "eugenicists defended the status quo by sterilization, immigrant restriction, and birth control for those…not racially capable of being good Americans."[8] These statements are important in understanding how sterilizations were used, and how they evolved. In this first era, most historians agree that the focus on "feeblemindedness" applied to those who did not fit the model American mold. This included any persons with severe mental disabilities, or lack of intelligence (a point emphasized by later historians). Because of its vagueness, "feebleminded" was a term that was applied to many individuals inappropriately. From the mentally challenged to immigrants, and then finally to African Americans, sterilizations became the method to safeguard the white race.

While there is no definitive date for racial integration into eugenics, most scholars establish that between 1905 to 1915 race-based or nativist eugenic practices began. Although

Larson, Kevles, and Chase jointly agree with Haller and Pickens, the latter two's explanations of how this change occurred were both unique, and the former expanded on the original analyses while giving more context. Larson, Kevles, and Chase point out that the original focus was not on minorities, but instead on whites and immigrants. Kevles explains that because of the rapid influx of "new immigrants … endowed with low intelligence [and] their high birth rates," this group became the initial targets of population control. So much so that "eugenicists in the United States helped restrict immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe."[9] Chase supported this evidence by divulging Davenport's two courses of action in dealing with "genetic enslavement"; First, legislate immigration bans to keep "inferior breeding stock out of God's country," and second, to "subject foreign race polluter[s]… to compulsory sterilization".[10] This was the central motivation, nationally, for eugenics from 1900 to the 1920s.

As Larson points out, in a similar albeit farther direction, the attacking of African Americans and others did not grow nationally until decades later. In a slightly different approach, he claims that eugenics evolved from a mainly xenophobic to a racist focus, but it was not until the end of the Second World War that this occurred. During the early years of eugenics, African Americans were not targeted as much as immigrant groups because of the apathy of whites. The established idea that eugenics focused on improving the white race, particularly after the 1905-1915 period, meant there was no interest in aiding the development of the Black race. Cathy Hajo confirmed this in her 2010 book *Birth Control On Main Street*. Her statement that "…the racial politics of America made it obvious that white [eugenic] activists were uncomfortable with African Americans…" and the "…white women who ran the clinics did not feel responsible for providing charity for [them]…" exhibited Larson's claim 18 years earlier.[11] Larson stated that it was only "after the civil rights movement began

dismantling the machinery by which southern Whites controlled local Blacks, did regional eugenic practices turn against African Americans."[12] In essence, the growth of racial eugenic practices was used in conjunction with Jim Crowism, and afterward became its replacement. While Larson descales the South, his argument is still valid more broadly. If Dixie was not using eugenics to subordinate African Americans until the 1950s, it is logical to assume the rest of the U.S. did not either. The origins of this bleeding into the movement also brings about the next disagreement among historians and scholars – the ending of eugenics/the eugenics movement.

A foundational piece of Haller's thesis discussed how the 1930s and 1940s affected eugenic practices and the movement itself. The movement began to falter and wither during this era, he argues, but he does not say that eugenics expressly ended here. A slight contrast to this argument was made by Ludmerer in 1969. In "American Geneticists and the Eugenics Movement: 1905-1935," he states that the exodus of intellectuals such as geneticists and other men of science aided in the collapse of eugenics in the 1930s. While Ludmerer does not outright say the movement ended, he teeters on the precipice. His analysis of how the movement lost its following due to developments of scientific understanding, combined with the stains from the rising use of eugenics and sterilization by the Nazis in the era, all but illustrated the downfall of its support.[13] These same ideas were discussed at length in Pickens' book the year previous, and the obvious construction of Ludmerer's beliefs obviously derive from his theories.

The claim of declining eugenics during the 1930s is apparent throughout these three works. In 1963, Haller claimed that the Great Depression and Nazism slowed eugenics massively, but the effect of its demise was not harsh. In 1968, Pickens credited the depression and Nazism for decline, but also added that rising faith in genetics removed the intellectual

elites from the group, thus resulting in a serious, near-death status. Finally, in 1969, Ludmerer argued that eugenics was more or less entirely dead/defeated by the mid-1930s, citing the three events used by Pickens. E.A. Carlson even carried this a step beyond in 2001 with his book, *The Unfit: The History of a Bad Idea*. He agreed with those aforementioned, but he also expanded the theory by saying that "since the revelations of the holocaust, eugenics became a taboo topic, and its formal existence was dead…"[14] This may explain why many believe currently that eugenics ended before or during the Second World War, but as Linda Gordon, Angela Davis, Alexandra Stern, and Johanna Schoen have shown, it did not. While Ludmerer, Pickens, and Carlson did not proclaim an end to eugenics in its entirety before WWII occurred, it was heavily inferred. The surface death of the eugenics movement allowed many to believe that it ceased to exist entirely, this is likely why historiographical debates among scholars concerning this period have occurred. Additionally, the writing style and the emphasis placed on the decline of eugenics, explain why this misconception exists presently. Eugenic theory did not die; however, more recent historians acknowledge that it survived and was relatively common.

By the 1960s, eugenics had largely transitioned into a social science while its legacy and practices lived on in the study of genetics and social health. Ludmerer explains that the separation between genetics and eugenics began in the 1930s, rather large shift that ultimately slowed the movement. Eugenics was slowly forced down into obscurity while genetics pushed itself upward as a legitimate science. When this happened, many assumed eugenics to have gone formally extinct, as did E.A. Carlson. However, the investigations of Schoen, Stern, and Davis built on this theory in their respective works. Eugenic societies continued to exist after the war and so did the practices, especially sterilization. Its persistence, and the revived interest in eugenics by social scientists/scholars, was clear evidence that eugenics (in some

form) was alive after WWII. This resurgence of literature and reformation of the ideology during the 1950s can be summed up as "new eugenics".

As further proof that this scientific philosophy and its practices only waned during the 1930s (rather than ending) and remained relevant forty years after its supposed death, a variety of sterilization laws were enacted in this era. These pieces of legislation were passed throughout the early 20th century beginning with Indiana in 1907 and continued until Georgia, the last state to pass sterilization laws, followed suit in 1937. This evidence directly contradicted historians like Carlson, and even to a lesser extent the arguments of Haller, Pickens, and Ludmerer. While this is not to say that eugenics thinking has not diminished, it does show that "for an increasing number of historians, far from collapsing as a result of its association with Nazism, eugenics flourished in new and more acceptable guises," and indeed it did.[15] In addition to this, further contradictory evidence was revealed by Alexandra Stern that, "After World War II…a core group of eugenicists merged their interests in salvaging and retooling eugenics."[16] This renaissance of the movement continued into the 1950s and 1960s.

Evidence of this can be seen in *Preface to Eugenics* (1951) when Frederick Osborn agreed that eugenic philosophy was still alive in the 1950s. He also asserted that since evils associated with it had been revealed during the war (seen even earlier in H.J. Muller's "The Geneticists Manifesto" of 1939), the negative attitudes had been stripped from the new version. Therefore, a continuation of eugenics persisted after WWII and while the movement itself had largely ceased, individuals were continuing both its practices and philosophy. This aligned with the theories of Diane Paul and others during the 1970s and beyond; eugenics continued in some regard through new disguises. Osborn pointed out that "eugenic proposals can now be outlined [in 1951] in terms acceptable both to the scientist and to the layman,"

meaning that the new form was scientifically factual (through the use of genetics) as well as understandable.

According to Osborn, the racism that existed earlier in the movement did not continue after the war. His statement that "the new ideals directed to individual improvement are already in conflict with the old ideals" explained that not only had eugenics continued into the 1950s, but that it had changed to be more acceptable to society.[17] In essence, "new eugenics" emphasized a kinder and more natural philosophy and practice. Carl Bajema's *Eugenics, Then and Now* (1976) also reveals that eugenics continued beyond WWII in America, as theorized by Paul and others. Here, both men argued that the renaissance eugenics experienced in this period was structured after the Eugenic Hypothesis, a guideline established in the late 1930s. This new incarnation did not have the ties to the past (forced sterilization and restrictive practices performed on the "unfit"), but instead was "a wholly voluntary and unconscious process of birth selection [that will bring] the individual's success in his environment"[18]

Unfortunately, this was not the case, and when looking at works published since the 1980s, new eugenics brought with it more devastating consequences during the civil rights era and beyond. Bajema and Osborn's arguments have been thoroughly circumvented by Gordon, Davis, Stern, Schoen, Larson, Ladd-Taylor, and many others. It is important to note that only within the last forty years have counterarguments against Osborn and Bajema been made, and at the time of their respective publications, evidence about new eugenics' ties to coerced sterilizations were still largely unknown. Regardless, the revival of eugenic ideas (as supported indirectly through academic study and the efforts of those prominent individuals still alive) led to a more deplorable system that was largely based on old laws/statutes, using race and promiscuity, as well as mental illness, as an excuse to mutilate. The term "unfit" was still loosely used after the war, but it covered a wider range of people.

The final major point in the historiography of eugenics stems from the sterilizations that occurred from the start of the movement until the 1980s. The evolution of sterilization can be seen in all three eras, especially the last one. Sterilizations originally began during the first twenty years of the eugenics movement. Haller, Pickens, Ludmerer, Bajema, Osborn, Carlson, Cohen, and most of the other historians mentioned here discuss them at various lengths in their respective works. However, the debates about the evolution of sterilization have only recently occurred due to the investigations of Angela Davis and others. Evidence of this can be seen in Garland Allen's statement, "in the period after World War II, eugenics…and its lingering associations with racism, fascism, and elitism, seemed the height of right-wing reactionary politics". [19] Indeed, according to the evidence exposed in the 1980s and beyond, eugenics perpetuated into the latter half of the century through the sterilizations that were occurring across the nation. These operations even happened more frequently than in the pre-war years and specifically targeted minority women.

The first of these investigations were conducted in part by Linda Gordon in 1974 and expanded upon by Angela Davis in 1981. Gordon argues that the political move to conservatism became part of the platform for race-based sterilizations during the civil rights era. Conservatives had sparred with the allocation of funds to those in need, cementing a relationship between eugenics and economics. In other words, eugenicists (who were largely conservative) felt that social welfare programs were supporting those deemed "unfit"; this became the second disguise of new eugenics – economic burdens on the state. In her book, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right* (1977), Gordon asserts that pro-birth control women of the eugenics movement claimed that poor families needed to bear fewer children "because large families create a drain on the taxes and charity expenditures of the wealthy…[for] poor children [who] were less likely to be 'superior'."[20] This anti-poverty attitude carried on into the

post-war era and largely influenced how the sterilizations of poor minority women, during the 1960s and 1970s, were orchestrated.

Wendy Kline expanded on this concept but disagreed with Carlson entirely. In *Building a Better Race* (2001), she claimed that "the 'Golden Age' of eugenics occurred long after most historians claim the movement had vanished."[21] Angela Davis showed evidence that eugenic sterilizations, which largely targeted African American women, had been occurring since the end of WWII. Her work, *Women, Race and Class* revealed that from the 1930s to the 1980s, over 7,500 sterilizations had occurred in North Carolina alone "under the auspices of the Eugenics Commission of North Carolina."[22] This evidence spurred the investigations of Johanna Schoen, Alexandra Stern, and others, creating debate with the arguments of E.A. Carlson and Carl Bajema. Historians from the 1990s onward, however, largely agreed that eugenics beyond the 1940s had undergone changes, and had continued under a new disguise.

By offering sterilization as a solution to those with multiple children (namely minority groups whose population comprised much of this section), eugenic practices continued even after the movement itself faded. In *Eugenic Nation* (originally published 2005, second edition in 2016), Alexandra Stern explains that eugenics carried on in some form through this cloak-and-dagger approach. While the attempt to aid poor women to cease birthing children who were in danger of neglect seemed a just cause, the actions of individuals (who used inherent racist eugenic politics) created a corrupt program. This happened across the United States, especially in California and the South. "Along with the African American women, who constituted 43 percent of all federally funded sterilization patients according to a 1973 survey, Native Americans were heavily affected by this aspect of the war on poverty."[23] These connections were made by most historians who published works in the 1990s to the present.

Schoen's book claims, "class and race background determined…whether they [women] came into contact with state sterilization and birth control programs, how they were treated by the representatives of these programs."[24] Sexuality began playing a large role in eugenics after WWII. Promiscuity had played a role in determining if women had been sterilized during the early 20th century (see Cohen, Haller, and Pickens), but, myths of oversexualized Black women became the focus in new eugenics. [25] As a final addition to the perspectives of historians from this era, Molly Ladd-Taylor summed up perfectly what most scholars had been arguing for the better part of twenty-five years. Eugenics, once sterilizations and other practices to control population began, evolved from a science altered to target and stop the "young white 'sex delinquents'" of the 1920s and 30s, to one that attacked "African American welfare mothers" in the post-war era.[26]

The historiography of eugenics is extremely complicated due to the changing views of society combined with one of the most turbulent centuries regarding science, economics, sexuality, and civil rights. The history and historiography of eugenics show us that throughout the 20th century, Americans had a conflicting relationship with this philosophy, at times embracing it fully and performing practices on thousands to improve the health of the nation. At other times, a majority of Americans denounced it and ignored its existence, allowing others to continue the process through different names. Regardless of the ebb and flow eugenics had on the United States, its history has only been dissected in minute quantities when compared to other social movements, and further research is needed in order to understand its impacts fully. The following chapters are dedicated to eras of evolutionary shifts that took place within the last century. Each section will focus on the history of the eugenics movement and how it used mentalism, xenophobia, or racism to target various groups deemed problematic.

[1] Thomas Cargill, "Eugenics in High School History: Failure to Confront the Past," *The Independent Review* 25 (Summer 2020): 13.
[2] Joseph T. Tennis, "The Strange Case of Eugenics: A Subject's Ontogeny in a Long-Lived Classification Scheme and the Question of Collocative Integrity," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology* 63 (July 2012): 1354.
[3] Mark H. Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 1-7, 177-189.
* A key element that has been discussed in all works aforementioned is eugenic sterilization. This concept ties all three eras of debate together as well as complicates them. Therefore, these events will be mentioned as they are relevant in each section, then discussed again in the conclusion to clarify any misunderstanding.
[4] Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life, by Francis Galton ... With Eight Illustrations* (London: Methuen & Co., 1908), Chapter XXI.
[5] Adam Cohen, *Imbeciles: The Supreme Court, American Eugenics, and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), 2.
[6] Allen Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 115.
[7] Robert A. Wilson, *The Eugenic Mind Project* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 7.
[8] Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 18, 50.
[9] Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Knopf, 1985), ix.
[10] Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus*, 161; Further evidence of this can be seen in *Evolution Genetics and Eugenics*, on page 447. When describing genetic mutations, Russians are alleged to have more than people of color.
[11] Cathy Hajo, *Birth Control on Main Street: Organizing Clinics in the United States, 1916-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 84.
[12] Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 1.
[13] Kenneth M. Ludmerer, "American Geneticists and the Eugenics Movement: 1905-1935," *Journal of the History of Biology* 2 (Autumn 1969): 347-60.
[14] Elof Axel Carlson, *The Unfit: A History of a Bad Idea* (Cold Spring Harbor: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 2001), 362.
[15] Diane B. Paul, "Reflections on the Historiography of American Eugenics: Trends, Fractures, Tensions," *Journal of the History of Biology* 49 (Winter 2016): 650.
[16] Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in America* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2016), 4.
[17] Frederick Osborn, *Preface to Eugenics* (New York: Harper, 1951), 320, 322-23.
[18] Carl Jay Bajema, *Eugenics: Then and Now* (New York: Halsted Press, 1976), 283.
[19] Allen, Garland E. "'Culling the Herd': Eugenics and the Conservation Movement in the United States, 1900-1940," *Journal of the History of Biology* 46 (Spring 2013): 32.
[20] Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 158.
[21] Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 156.
[22] Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 217.
[23] Nancy Ordover, *American Eugenics Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 171-172. Cited in Stern, *Eugenic Nation,* 225.
[24]Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 36.
[25] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 36.
[26] Molly Ladd-Taylor*, Fixing the Poor: Eugenic Sterilization and Child Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 7.

Chapter I:

THE ORIGINS OF EUGENICS IN GREAT BRITAIN & EVOLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

The theory of eugenics was created by Sir Francis Galton during the latter half of the 19th century, and it was built on the principal improvement of humanity as a whole. It was not solely a race-based scientific philosophy, but rather a class-based one. From the 1880s onward, eugenics became more popular in both the United Kingdom, its country of origin, and the United States. As this transpired, Galton's supporters in Britain began to express their opinions on how to efficiently implement and improve the theory in society. This led to the creation of negative policies, which coexisted alongside positive ones. These procedures were designed to fight against degradation in society. By the turn of the century, Galton's theory had traveled to America and taken root through the efforts of supporters like Charles Davenport, Harry Laughlin, Madison Grant, and others. The popularization and implementation of eugenic theory in American society largely left Galton's ideas unaltered during this period. The transformation from a neutral to race-based scientific philosophy occurred within the late 1910s to early 1920s. This evolution of eugenic theory in America was caused by the prominent members of the eugenics movement. Their opinions, similar to those of Galton's followers in the U.K., changed aspects of the theory itself. As the movement grew in popularity, so too did the number of racist and nativist members. The focus of American eugenicists slowly shifted from the mentally ill and challenged to immigrants. Although Galton's theory had formed as a science intended to positively improve humanity as a whole, its introduction in the U.S. caused it to transform into the race-based ideology studied today.[1]

The debate over the inherent racism of eugenics has continued for more than half a century throughout its historiography. Several pieces of evidence exist that support the position that

eugenics gradually became more race-based as the 20th century progressed. Examples of this include the lack of race being a fundamental aspect in Galton's proto-and early eugenic writings, the first targets of eugenic policies being the mentally disabled rather than racial groups, the loose terminology used in eugenic literature (which has lost context), and the implementation of pro-eugenic policies by African Americans in the United States during the early decades of the 20th century. The causality behind why the entire subject of eugenics has been associated with racism can be explained by Wendy Kline in an excerpt from *The Oxford Handbook of Eugenics*. She stated that connections to Nazism, genocide, and "journalistic frenzy…prevented most from integrating the [entire] story into mainstream social history."[2] Kline also argued that the vilification of racist eugenicists by academics since the 1980s has created a one-dimensional view. This, in turn, has contributed largely to the modern perception of eugenics as a philosophy mired in racism. Another reason behind the popular concept that it has always been a solely racist scientific philosophy stems from the application of its policies from the mid-1920s to the 1950s. However, it is important to understand that, by this point, eugenic theory had already changed. The actions that occurred during this period were based on racism and nativism; however, they were not linked directly to the original theory.

Throughout the formative years (1865 to 1883) until the 1920s, two decades after the theory had arrived in America, eugenics was at best a classist ideology. It focused on the improvement of human society through restricting the procreation of the mentally impaired and those believed to be sources of social ills, typically the lower class.[3] In both Britain and America at this time, eugenicists had minimal ties to race as a basis for improvement. Instead they focused on detrimental traits they felt were eroding society. These traits included but were not limited to, alcoholism, promiscuity, pauperism, mental deficiencies (what is termed special needs today), and other factors that were deemed characteristic of mental illness. The supporters of the American

eugenics movement accepted and implemented Galton's theory to improve the upper and middle classes, much like their British counterparts. Unfortunately, the use of eugenics as a solution to societal problems resulted in the targeting of multiple groups who were enveloped and oppressed throughout the century. This occurred because, unlike in Great Britain, class was not the primary factor that contributed to societal conflict. To understand how this evolution of eugenics transpired, Galton's original ideas (as well as those of his precursors) on hereditary science must be analyzed.

Eugenics as a concept had existed for several centuries before Galton coined the term. While ideas surrounding human improvement can be traced as far back as ancient Greece with Plato, a cohesive understanding and outline largely did not occur until the 19th century. As Robert Wilson states in the *Eugenic Mind Project*, "eugenics is the coalescence of a set of ideas – about sorts of people…mental deficiencies, moral and mental degeneration… and proposals for their realization articulated in the late-nineteenth-century['s] fragile sciences."[4] Indeed, during the 1800s, scientific advancements created the environment necessary to facilitate the growth of eugenic theory. Galton's work was based on the investigations of scientists like John Mills and Thomas Carlyle, both of whom examined the inherent nature of animals and their relationship to the environment. Their work influenced both Galton and his cousin Charles Darwin, building theories of eugenics and evolution that would later lead to the study of genetics. In 1859, Darwin hypothesized that the environment caused the evolution of creatures and was, therefore, the cause of improvement in a species. Galton questioned if internal forces were able to recreate similar results, and if so, to what extent. The contribution made by Mills, Carlyle, and Darwin's theories led to the first proto-eugenic ideas written in 1865.[5]

While it is true that belief in a racial hierarchy existed during this era in history, Galton and his theory never called for the removal or extermination of any race based on said hierarchy. Evidence of this can be seen in Galton's article, "Hereditary Talent and Character." In this piece, he

argued that mental, physical, and emotional characteristics were passed on from parent to offspring. This theory was similar to Gregor Mendel's hypothesis on heredity, one which was developed after he studied the reproduction of pea plants in the same year (although this was not known until decades later when his work resurfaced). Galton theorized that improvements in certain characteristics, such as intelligence, were possible for new generations through selective breeding regardless of their race. This idea formed because he had observed that similar intelligence levels and "[traits] of character were found in children, when they have existed in either of the parents."[6] He also quantified this by stating that the intelligence level of parents passed to children was "greater than in the children of ordinary persons."[7] In essence, intelligence was hereditary and not affected by one's environment. This led to the notion that human improvement was not only plausible but also controllable, similar to what Mendel encountered in his experiments. Galton's ideas were comparable to Darwin's theory of evolution through the natural selection process. However, the medium of control had changed from mother nature to humanity. Galton's concepts had emulated the theories of all four scientists which gave it an air of credibility and legitimacy. The correlation between intellect and heredity was used later to create a more hardened theory of eugenics. It is important to understand that when this precursor to eugenic theory was first discussed, no racial overtones existed in its framing.

As Galton's ideas became more blended and cohesive over the next four years, some racial overtones were seen. Nevertheless, his theory did not use race as a qualifying factor. Daniel Kevles supports this argument in his book *In the Name of Eugenics*. He states that "racism figured much less markedly in British eugenics" and that "Francis Galton, the founding father, had been no less a racist than most Victorians, but such consideration entered very little into his eugenic theorizing."[8] Before progressing forward, it is vital to comprehend the theory of eugenics as it existed in the late 1800s and to assess the language used by its author. The following hypothetical

analogy explains the concept of Galton's theory in its most basic form. Imagine that the world's population annually participated in a fill-the-bucket game, and members of the group that won were labeled as the world's most superior athletes. Members of each race are lined up with spoons in front of a water-filled bucket, and their goal is to fill an empty container several yards away only using spoons to scoop the water. The rules state that only those who do not spill a drop can continue to play, while all others were disqualified and had to leave the line. By the end of the competition, all lines would consist of only the most stable members. This, in theory, would allow improvement within individual races. Although the number of participants would vary from line to line, they were acknowledged as the best athletes in their spaces. In addition to this individual improvement, all groups would be ranked in an all-encompassing hierarchical scale of humanity, and one group would win the game and be deemed champion of all. This competition would be ongoing, meaning there existed no permanent title, and new groups would have a chance of victory each year. In other words, the placement of any group in the hierarchy (regardless of race) was not static, and theoretically, individual races could surpass each other through competition.

In Galton's 1869 book, *Hereditary Genius*, eugenics existed as a more complete theory, and this work was the "first systematic empirical inquiry into inheritance, with statistical studies."[9] The publication of Galton's book gave plausibility to his theory in addition to spreading it throughout Britain. Although few initially supported his ideas, some scientists did eventually claim there was merit behind it (even if it still required more analysis). As Galton developed his ideas more thoroughly in his book, he also used it to popularize eugenics and create a platform for his ideas in the social and scientific communities. By discussing the degradation of British society, or the decrease in the upper class and a simultaneous increase in the lower-class populations, Galton was able to persuade more followers to support his ideas. The foundation of the degradation and eugenics arguments was based on the worth determined by the all-encompassing hierarchical

scale of human beings previously mentioned in the analogy above. It is here that interpretations are particularly difficult to decipher, even among academics. On the surface, Galton elaborated on a global racial hierarchy in one chapter of his book by stating that, "black Africans ranked on average two grades below whites in natural ability and Australian Aborigines three. [while] The ablest race in history was the ancient Greeks."[10] Although this statement revealed the first racial overtones seen in his works, by which people of color were viewed as inferior, Galton did not state that their subordinate place in the hierarchy was set.

Upon further analysis in *Hereditary Genius*, Galton argued that the decline of the Athenian Greeks was derived from the civilization being weakened by immigration and the failure of the indigenous population to reproduce the superior breed that previously existed. This was due partially to miscegenation as well as declining birth rates of the Greek population.[11] The only way to guard against societal collapse was to improve the nation's people as a whole. In addition to this, when Galton used the term "race," it was not employed in the same manner as it would be today. This term was loosely used during this period and cannot correlate with the modern definition. As evidence of this, Randall Hansen and Desmond King argues in *Sterilized by the State* that "it was the case that they [eugenicists] all believed in the existence of 'races', but this term was so commonly used at the turn of the century that it became for many a synonym for what is now termed nationality."[12] This indicated that eugenics was not inherently a scientific philosophy solely based on race as it has been labeled. In addition to this, the statement made by Hansen and King explains why classism was a catalyst for eugenic theory in Great Britain during the late 1800s and the United States in the early 1900s. Galton believed his theory could improve the nation in its entirety by focusing on the sources perceived to be the cause of societal degradation: decreased birthrates of the elite and increased breeding of the poor. The use of classism to improve the upper echelons of society eventually would lead to national economic and social improvement from

within and safeguard England from being taken over by outsiders, thus avoiding what had transpired with the Greeks. This mentality was repeated in America in the early 20th century; however, the causes behind social problems continually changed.

Fears of society's collapse caused by the over-birthing of the lower class were fueled by Galton's arguments and subsequently caused popularity for eugenics to grow. Kevles supports this by stating that, "British eugenics was marked by a hostility decidedly more of class than of race."[13] Although eugenics was not rooted in racism, it relied heavily on classism, and this became the primary mechanism that caused its expansion. In addition to this, xenophobia was also linked to early eugenic ideas, as seen with the creator's reference above. The anxiety the upper echelons of society felt towards degradation, and the rise of the unfit classes, were what allowed eugenics to be accepted as a solution to societal problems. As its popularity grew, eugenics became the answer to calm societal unrest. This trend of thinking continued into the early 20th century concerning the evolution of eugenic theory in the United States.

Regardless, the original version of eugenic theory showed that the total improvement of all was possible even though it still viewed non-whites as naturally inferior. While it was never stated that people of color could not surpass whites, it was seen as improbable considering they were much lower on the aforementioned hierarchy. Also, it is important to note that there were far more citizens in poverty throughout Britain than those of different ethnicities, as well as immigrants that had arrived from British colonies abroad. Therefore, increased concern about degradation through class and overpopulation of immigrants, rather than race, existed organically in both the theoretical and societal application of eugenics. In the *Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics*, Diane Paul and James Moore point out that, "Galton did not consider the 'savage' races to be a threat"; however, he was concerned that "degeneration would render the English unfit to cope with…an increasingly complex world."[14] In essence, the lack of eugenic intellectual improvement in British

society could lead to internal collapse, similar to what had happened to the Greeks. If this occurred, the white (English) race could be replaced by a superior foreign group, parallel to the bucket game analogy. To prevent this from happening, Galton advocated against degeneration by appealing to the upper and middle classes, as well as the scientific community and the general population. The reason these pleas were made to those in the upper ranks of society was that they were viewed as the most successful, and therefore most intelligent. The call for increased reproduction of this group, in addition to scientists, academics, and others in the hierarchy, was made to reverse the effects of those on the bottom rung of society who were growing too rapidly.

During the Victorian Era, many in both British and American society believed that the self-help ideology[15] was an unfortunate part of life. If one lived in poverty, it was their duty to rise from it; if they did not, it was their fault. This played a fundamental role in the development of eugenic theory (with regard to social Darwinism) in the United Kingdom and the United States in the following decades. This societal consciousness led to negative opinions of the lower class and immigrants, while it subsequently increased tensions within the social hierarchy. However, as time passed, the concerns of those in the upper levels of society increased. While Galton's theory gained some popularity and started to transform into a legitimate movement, the opinions of scientists, socialites, and other supporters caused factions to be formed before the 20th century. During the late 1880s and early 1890s, a split began to emerge among eugenic supporters. Some advocated for Galton's original theory through the use of "positive" practices and ideals. These included encouraging the upper classes to breed more children through incentives such as money, gifts, tax breaks, or other desirable things. The improvement of a nation through the advancements of those in the upper divisions was both more feasible and in line with the views of British society. It was because of this belief, as well as the inherent beliefs of white superiority in the global racial hierarchy, that eugenics did not use race as a method to draw support during its early years.

However, this did not prevent others from urging the use of their incorrect interpretations of Galton's theory. The creation of "negative" eugenics, a set of policies that promoted sterilization, segregation, and extermination of groups and individuals deemed unfit, occurred because of Galton's supporters.

The rationale behind these individuals' actions was simple to comprehend. They feared positive practices were either too slow or were not feasible to prevent society's impending collapse. The actions that followed were logical, albeit unforgivable, when analyzing the information that had emerged during the early 1900s. Studies began to appear which focused on the health and fitness of British troops during the Boer War (1899-1902). These reports had shown a lack of strength, health, and stamina among the military, and concerns about societal degradation escalated. The arguments presented in *Hereditary Genius* years earlier had stated that "the least capable members of society were reproducing too rapidly," and that Darwin's process of natural selection "was being halted."[16] Given the arrival of these reports, it was understandable why the popularity of eugenics expanded in both the scientific and societal communities. Fears of a collapse seemed imminent without immediate intervention and caused the more radical ideas of followers to spread. Despite this, Francis Galton's theory did not gain the "new religion" status he attempted to obtain. Although his efforts to grow a massive national movement in Britain were not completely successful when compared to those in other nations years later, Galton's ideas attracted the attention of scientists and socialites in his country and the United States. In Great Britain the origins of eugenics were rooted in classism, and the same can be stated regarding America. While this remained true for both nations, classism in America was only an evolutionary step for the ideology.

This did not mean that class was not important in the U.S. On the contrary, presumed class differences gave evidence that supported the neutrality of Galton's theory, and the early views of

elitist Americans. In addition to this, the focus of eugenicists on class rather than race during this first decade revealed that the evolution of race-based scientific philosophy was a process rather than immediate. The rise of eugenics in America was, at first, an implementation of a scientific philosophy aimed at national improvement. However, as membership increased, the prejudices of these individuals slowly embedded themselves in the perception of Galton's theory and warped it into something entirely new. Much like in Great Britain, the fear of outsiders invading and destroying society (partially due to internal weakness) was prevalent and engulfed many eugenicists in the United States. The concerns of internal collapse led eugenicists to focus on those they felt were mentally inferior. At first, this group consisted of the mentally and physically impaired. Unfortunately, as time passed and the opinions of biased eugenicists penetrated the movement, a shift in those targeted occurred. This transpired in conjunction with the first shift in the status quo of the eugenics movement and perceptions of Galton's theory. Although this evolution was responsible for how eugenics is understood today, the history of this shift must be investigated to understand not only how, but why this occurred, and how it paved the way for future changes.

The formal arrival of eugenics in the U.S. came in the late 1880s. In his book, *The Myth of Race*, Robert Sussman discusses the first examples of eugenics in America, which were seen primarily in literature. The interactions between Galton's ideas and American academia began as the popularity of these works grew within the scholarly and scientific communities. One of the most notable academics was Dr. Nathaniel Shaler, a Harvard lecturer. Shaler's opinions blended with aspects of Galton's theory, but they did not completely conform with those of its creator. The melding of both men's opinions was expressed in his teachings and many of his students were influenced greatly by them. Sussman argues that, unfortunately, "Shaler's attitude toward human diversity was directly influenced by…views of Aryan/Nordic superiority" as well as "polygenic

racism."[17] These ideas, in turn, influenced his students extensively beyond the university. Prominent individuals under Shaler's guidance were Theodore Roosevelt, Madison Grant, and most importantly, Charles Davenport. The perspectives on eugenic ideology these men had were obtained partly from their instructor, and because of this, they altered American culture and society in their own ways based on these beliefs. Of his students, Davenport and Grant appeared to have caused the majority of this change and are both directly linked to the evolution of American eugenic theory.

Sussman also discusses the relationship that existed between elites and their impact on society. The first interactions of eugenics in America during the late 1800s can be summarized as benign. No organization truly existed with the sole purpose of spreading eugenic rhetoric across the nation. The only group to form related to the eugenics movement, later on, was the Immigration Restriction League (IRL) in 1894. Although it had connections to Shaler, there were no direct ties to eugenics. In addition to this, only one bill relating to eugenics was introduced throughout the 19th century state legislatures, and it failed to pass in 1897. Nevertheless, as years passed, contact between the theory and society increased slowly, and more activity eventually occurred within the population after 1900. Charles Davenport, the person deemed to be the father of American eugenics, was primarily responsible for this. Davenport became a staunch supporter of Galton's work during the late 19th century, and he thoroughly believed that improvements to the human race were possible. Unfortunately, (likely due to his education at Harvard under Shaler) he aligned more with the negative views and practices that had started to become common in this era. By the turn of the century, the theory had entered North America and became increasingly popular, especially among the upper and middle classes. Within the first decade of its existence in America, prominent individual membership in society grew parallel with the dissemination of eugenic ideology and its proposed benefits. From 1900 to the mid-1910s, Galton's theory of human improvement largely

remained unchanged. However, the influence of prominent American eugenicists ultimately created deviations in the theory. These in turn transformed eugenics from a theory concerned with total human improvement into a biased one by the 1920s. As Edwin Black states, "[eugenicists] relied upon the powerful, the wealthy and the influential to make their war against the weak a conflict fought not in public, but in the administrative and bureaucratic foxholes of America."[18]

Upon his return from Great Britain in 1900, where he met and personally studied under Galton, Davenport began to experiment with eugenic theories of heredity. It was also at this time when Gregor Mendel's work, which studied the identifiable patterns of heredity, had been rediscovered. The rise of Social Darwinism, bio-determinism (the belief that human characteristics were established at birth), and the rediscovery of Mendel's work on genetics, "created a perfect environment for the eugenics movement" to form in America.[19] During this first decade of the 20th century, Davenport switched from studying plants to animals. He investigated the effects of hereditary genes in humans through family histories and genealogical records and pushed to popularize his work in the states. Similar to Galton and his efforts to expand eugenic theory in the United Kingdom, Davenport relied on classism to propel his work. The belief in social improvements through the strengthening of the upper classes existed just as blatantly in America as it had in Britain. As Kevels states in *In The Name of Eugenics*, "eugenicists identified human worth with the qualities they presumed themselves to possess."[20] Since the majority of members in both nations were of the higher class, white, and (in the case of American eugenicists) of the "old stock," it is understandable how the movement became filled with similar members. Davenport fully supported the enrollment of these individuals as he "identified good human stock with the middle class – especially 'intellectuals'… and scientists."[21]

The popularization of eugenic theory continued through these early years with warnings of social degradation, mirroring Galton's efforts. In 1904, after persuading the Carnegie Institute to

fund the study of eugenics and evolution, a laboratory was established in Cold Spring Harbor, New York. The Eugenics Record Office (ERO)[22] became the central hub for research, activities, policies, and general eugenic thought seen during the existence of the movement. The central organizations associated with it, namely the ERO and the American Breeders Association (ABA), established in 1906, had two distinct functions. The ERO focused on the gathering of scientific evidence and the ABA engaged in the creation and spread of eugenic information and propaganda. Because of this two-pronged system, American eugenics spread rapidly to many areas of the country. By 1907, popularity and membership swelled within the movement, and the first piece of eugenic legislation was passed in Indiana. Over the next few years, Davenport and his organizations began to expand their investigations into eugenic theory and the effects of degradation in society regarding germplasm.[23] In 1899, Albert Weissman, a German biologist, claimed that germplasm was heritable. He made the case that negative genes could not be corrected and were permanent. This meant that society as a whole could decay if people with bad germplasm, what is now termed DNA, reproduced more than those with good genes. Davenport adhered to his mentor's philosophy of internal collapse caused by insufficient stock and examined the germplasm of families to establish correlations between social ills and "defective" groups. Because bad germplasm was believed to exist in any group, Davenport did not have to focus solely on a particular race or nationality. Instead, he initially investigated the mental and physical status of individuals and became fixated on the mentally impaired. Although he turned his attention toward immigrants in the years afterward (mainly because of increased nativist beliefs), during the early 1900s, his concentration was on the former. He felt these groups were responsible for the weakening of American stock, and their breeding needed to be addressed first. The targeting of both was understandable given that Galton had attributed the fall of Greek society in *Hereditary Genius* to the reduction of native genes (through reduced procreation) and increased miscegenation

with immigrants. In addition to this, Shaler's views on Nordic superiority likely created the base on which Davenport built his anti-immigrant opinions.

As previously discussed, the theory of eugenics in Great Britain had been based on the scientific evidence of Darwin, Mills, Carlyle, Mendel, and other notable academics. In addition to similar thinkers, Galton, a noted statistician, had based his arguments on the observable hereditary data (phenotype) gathered from parents and their children. Davenport, on the other hand, relied on unobservable hereditary data (genotype), something "that had to be inferred from scrutiny of as many related phenotypes as possible, in and beyond the immediate family."[24] The ERO was responsible for gathering family records and pedigrees in order to study the genotypes of both intelligent and non-intelligent individuals. These were not scientifically based facts, but rather assumptions formulated on immeasurable data. This allowed American eugenics to be more open to the ideas and opinions of those within the movement itself, especially by those who held a diploma of some sort.[25] Data was also being collected specifically to solve social problems. Daniel Kevles explains how this ultimately corrupted Galton's theory: "Davenport deplored the fact that the government had to support tens of thousands of insane, mentally deficient, epileptic, and otherwise handicapped wards."[26] Because of his bias towards these individuals, Davenport naturally sought to find a solution to those whom he felt were perpetuating society's downfall.

The concerns he held regarding internal decay eventually caused him to accept and use negative policies in the American eugenics movement. "To counter the threat from within, negative eugenics called for preventing the reproduction of the genetically defective…by state enforced sterilization," something Davenport felt was necessary.[27] Once this mentality was established, eugenic theory, as Galton had created it, ultimately began to transform. As eugenics expanded throughout the United States, it carried with it these negative ideologies. As the list of supporters grew, it became quite clear that those in the highest positions of the social hierarchy composed its

majority, mirroring British society. Sussman argues that elitist individuals of the era—academics, politicians, celebrities, and other prominent individuals—were largely responsible for the changing beliefs concerning eugenics.[28] The status of these members could, and did, influence all levels of society. An example of this was seen in Gregory Dorr's *Segregation's Science*: "Elite Virginians who favored eugenics created durable ideology that influenced social policy and public opinion."[29] Because of their status, attitudes they had concerning race, class, and politics inevitably trickled down throughout society. Their influence was seen with the evolutionary shifts that took place in the 1920s concerning nationality and the post-World War II era involving race.

The enlargement of the movement coincided with its eventual evolution in several ways. First, the passing of American legislation for sterilization occurred in Indiana in 1907. From this point forward, similar laws were enacted until a total of 32 existed in 1937. The cause behind this growth can be traced back to both the two-pronged system that utilized the ERO and the ABA and the vocal support of prominent individuals. Class betterment was still being used as the primary impetus for growth. The fears of societal collapse due to degradation were still great. Although some members joined because of these concerns, others simply did so under the influence of social Darwinism. The protection of their positions in society was a contributing factor to their enrollment. As more prominent individuals joined, the eugenics movement became more powerful. The groups with elitist and classist biases sought to maintain their status. In support of this claim, Kevles states that "the eugenics movement enabled middle and upper middle-class British and Americans to carve out a locus of power for themselves."[30] As their power grew, so too did their influence in society. This was how eugenic theory grew from a belief in total human improvement to a race-based philosophy. The concerns of societal degradation, combined with the slow corruption of factions associated with the movement, created a perfect environment for the first shift in those targeted. The influence of classism on eugenic theory and the perception of the

philosophy by social Darwinists revealed how this evolution continued. The concerns of societal decay caused by the intellectually "inferior" are in actuality pieces of supporting evidence that show Galton's theory was not solely based on racial rhetoric.

In the United States, no apparent early racial biases toward the targeted parties were discovered throughout this investigation. During this early era of eugenics, from approximately 1900-1913, supporters primarily focused on segregation of the mentally ill from mainstream society to preserve the germplasm and reverse decay. Those institutionalized who suffered from mental illness and disabilities were the subjects of investigation by Davenport and his followers. While many of these individuals were not placed there by the eugenics movement, their lives were affected by its members in an effort to reduce their visibility and perceived negative effects on society. According to eugenicists, those who were "unfit," regardless of race, needed to cease procreation to stop this inevitable internal collapse. This type of mentality (as well as the focus on segregation based on mental faculties rather than race) was revealed in Edward Larson's book, *Sex, Race, and Science*. "Southern eugenicists were…worried more about the deterioration of the white race than about any threat from the African race."[31] This not only provided supporting evidence that eugenics was far less racist in origin than has been perceived but also showed the value of classism in both movement and theory. The early American interpretation of Galton's theory was more aligned with improvement from within, through the nipping of mentally "unfit" buds; to strengthen the nation from superior external groups. While Larson focuses on southern eugenics, this behavior was not limited to Dixie. The fact remains that an area well-known and associated with high racial tension was more fixated on the disintegration of white stock[32] than on being "taken over" by African Americans. The mentality here gives evidence that, for eugenic theory in America, class was more important than race during this early portion of the 20th century.

This was a logical way of thinking; after all, the use of Jim Crowism and the inherent belief of white superiority allowed many eugenicists to not view people of color in the U.S. as genuine threats capable of overturning society.[33] However, the mentally ill and disabled posed more problems to the system during this era simply because of the economic aid being provided by progressive reformers. The support they were given directly contradicted the tenants of social Darwinism, which assumed that had they not been given financial assistance, many of these individuals would have perished. In the mind of many eugenicists, continued aid to this group would facilitate internal collapse and perpetuate weakness throughout the nation, thus opening it to invasion. To prevent collapse, the mentally ill became the primary targets of the eugenics movement. Yet, at this time there was still a lack of overt racial biases to be seen in the movement, eugenic legislation being passed, and in the rhetoric disseminated by the American Breeders Association (ABA).

Although eugenics had primarily been used by whites in both Britain and America, there was also a significant rise in its use by the African American community at that time. This not only shows the eugenic theory in its infancy was not inherently racist, but that it was also classist. "At the beginning of the twentieth century, the black population was indifferent to eugenics," because "African Americans had been using reproductive control for decades prior to this time," and had interacted with similar philosophies.[34] Had eugenics entered the U.S. using pure racial/race-based rhetoric, the adoption of its principles by people of color would not have occurred. Galton's original theory, which had emphasized class improvements, crossed these racial lines and caused involvement in the Black community to grow. Eugenics became a tool to improve the lives of arguably one of America's most oppressed groups. Although the use of eugenics among the Black population was limited when compared to the white community, those who accepted these theories illustrated the evidence that classism brought Galton's ideas to more than just whites. For example,

in 1903, prominent civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois published his essay on The Talented Tenth, intellectuals who were at the top ten percent of the Black race. His views on eugenic improvement appeared consistently within its pages, and he stated that "the negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men."[35]

Du Bois understood that Galton's theory could be used as a method for race improvement among people of color, as well as a source for recognition of these advancements by whites. Logically this made perfect sense; the perspectives many white Americans had about their black counterparts stemmed from ignorance and myths established by Jim Crow. If African Americans were to use eugenics as a method to improve and "equalize" the race with whites, it, in theory, could lead to improved race relations. He and other leading figures, like Marcus Garvey, attempted to push advancement through positive eugenics within the black community as a way to preserve and enhance the intelligent members of the race. Throughout the early 1900s, Du Bois spoke of creating a better, more intelligent race as a way to combat racism, and gradually he gained followers. As Paul Lombardo points out, "black folk recognized promise and power in the new science."[36] Though classism allowed eugenics to spread throughout the community, African Americans never truly had a direct role in the actions and decisions of white eugenicists who were responsible for the creation of policy. Participation in Galton's theory here occurred in a bubble with little input or lack of concern by whites. The inherent belief of white superiority and disbelief that people of color were capable of hereditary improvement strong enough to change the societal status quo, explained why race-based practices against African Americans did not occur often during these early decades. In addition to this, Jim Crowism also reflected the causality behind why cooperation between white and black eugenicists was almost non-existent at this time. This was not because the former was concerned with the latter's rise to equality, but rather because white eugenicists viewed improvement to African Americans as futile or impossible. Regardless, the

absence of direct involvement from various ethnic groups, lower social classes, and those of different races overtime allowed for a disconnect to be made between white eugenicists and others. This helped in perpetuating the race-based eugenic environment seen in later decades.

At the same time that Davenport was expanding the eugenics movement across the nation and using his influence to persuade whites to accept his views, the same was being done by influential black leaders. Instead of using eugenics as a method to alienate and oppress others however, Black eugenicists were using this philosophy to improve themselves and to fight for equality. Lombardo explains that the "African American intelligentsia…used the ideological flexibility inherent in eugenic theory to advance their own political and social programs," and that "Black eugenicists could and did 'fight fire with fire' by inverting and adapting racist whites' eugenic ideas and turning them toward antiracist, equalitarian ends."[37] An example of this was seen with the use of Better Babies Contests. These competitions, which began around 1908 in Louisiana, evaluated the eugenic worth of infants based on features that were recorded and assessed based on criteria set by the Eugenics Board. Initially, these contests were used to encourage participation in eugenics by members of the white population. However, they were also used to promote positive practices by everyday African Americans, in addition to raising funds for anti-lynching campaigns. Had eugenics been rooted only in racism, these activities would have never occurred.

Although eugenic activities were taking place in the Black community, the major members who controlled the direction of the Eugenics Movement were still the upper class, white, prominent elites. The individuals who were persuaded by Davenport to join the movement were also influenced by social Darwinism, biodeterminism, the self-help ideology, and the propaganda disseminated by the ABA. As Michael Kohlman explains,

> "New fields like genetics, evolutionary biology and sociology…gave direction and legitimized the social agenda of the eugenics movement. The socially conservative WASP defenders of the status quo could not be easily dismissed as cranks if they were guided by the mantle of empirical scientific authority."[38]

As the movement grew, the opinions of these members began to influence broader perceptions of the theory itself. The fears of societal degradation and degeneracy that had plagued socialites in Great Britain decades prior had also occurred in the states. Unlike their colleagues across the Atlantic, American eugenicists proposed that negative policies, such as sterilization, were the more appropriate and long-term solutions to these problems in society. From 1907 to 1921, approximately twenty states created and passed sterilization laws due to the efforts of eugenicists. Their efforts stemmed from the fears of societal degradation and collapse previously discussed, yet race had not yet become a deciding factor at this point. Instead, mental illness and disability were the primary factors that dictated the segregation of citizens. Evidence of this can be observed when investigating the legislation passed during this fourteen-year span.

According to a presentation on eugenic sterilizations by Professor L. Kaelber at the 2012 Social Science Historical Association, state eugenic legislation, beginning with Indiana in 1907 continuing through Montana in 1921, had extremely similar compositions. The laws included the sterilization of patients at institutions; those who were mentally ill, disabled, or retarded; those with promiscuous tendencies; criminals who were serving sentences for sexual crimes; and other identifying features. However, there appeared to be no mention of race, ethnicity, or similar characteristics.[39] In the data and outline presented by Kaelber, varying mental problems appeared to be the primary focus of early sterilization and segregationist eugenic laws. This evidence, combined with the use of Galton's theory in the black community, gives credibility to the theory that American eugenics was not racist in its infancy. While still deplorable, the motivation of American eugenicists at this point was to separate and sterilize people who were mentally

challenged, regardless of race or nationality. The reason for this was because these individuals were believed to be the ones who posed an immediate internal threat to society along with the lower class. The notion that inferior heredity and genes had caused the massive wave of "imbeciles" and "feebleminded" to burden society was one that many socialites agreed upon, regardless of its hypocrisy (given that many had relatives afflicted with mental or physical disabilities). While this mentality was common, it revealed a major fracture in Davenport's perception of eugenics, as well as evidence to support the argument that Galton's ideas had been corrupted after entering the U.S.

Around 1908, Henry Goddard, the superintendent of the Vineland Training School for Feebleminded Boys and Girls, returned from France with a method he believed identified those of lesser intelligence. The Binet-Simon Test (BST) was implemented at Goddard's institution as a method to see where these adolescents ranked. Davenport spoke with him a year after his return to the states and "made the heritability of feeblemindedness a subject of increasing importance at the Eugenics Record Office."[40] He also provided agents in an effort "to help Goddard carry out a systematic study of the mental characteristics of the Vineland students and their relatives in the local population."[41] From 1909 onward, the ERO used female workers to collect eugenic data using "identical questionnaires [which] were taken to the homes of eminent families of 'superior blood' and into the hovels of notorious families of 'inferior blood.'"[42] Additionally, "they also roamed the community collecting [circumstantial evidence] of close living neighbors."[43] In 1911, Goddard made changes to the test to further deduce the intelligence of his subjects. Unfortunately, these caused an increase in those termed feebleminded. As these numbers grew, much more emphasis was placed on controlling the birthrate of the mentally impaired by eugenicists, especially those in institutions across the United States. These individuals often failed the BST and were seen as the source of societal problems within the nation. They were likened to parasites – something Davenport firmly agreed with. As this occurred, eugenicists began to work towards correcting this

source of societal degradation by pushing for more sterilization laws. The evaluations by Davenport and the Eugenics Record Office of the citizens who were labeled as feebleminded, idiots, morons, mentally defective, or any one of the cavalcade of terms used, proliferated in society. The opinions of both the upper and middle classes soon became negative, fearful, and trickled down throughout the movement and spread outward.

As this transpired, the American eugenics movement began to target those deemed "unfit," primarily the institutionalized mentally ill and challenged. Those with disabilities were always under the watchful eye of eugenicists, but new targets arose over time. While Davenport's perception of eugenics did not concentrate solely on race as a factor, it was not because he was not racist. On the contrary, "Davenport's views on black Americans conformed for the most part to the standard racism of the day."[44] However, his opinions on the mentally ill and immigrants were a source of much greater contention. Throughout the late 1900s, the eugenics movement had grown rather rapidly and had expanded to more of the prominent individuals in society. These newer members of the movement were almost entirely racist and had joined after hearing the rhetoric of like-minded men. Because of their pre-existing beliefs and the interpretations of Galton's theory by leaders such as Davenport, who had been influenced by Professor Shaler, and Henry Goddard, who had similar beliefs as his mentor, the shift in the American perception was never a question of if, but when.

The involvement of society as a whole, and how it changed eugenic theory through the eugenics movement, can be described best as pack mentality. The individuals at the peak of the social hierarchy, meaning the socialites, men of science, and others in similar spheres, influenced the opinions and actions of those in the valley. While this appears juvenile, scholars have given evidence of this as a legitimate cause behind the growth of American eugenics.[45] This also explained how the evolution of eugenic thinking occurred as rapidly as it did. Because of this

mentality, few were audibly outspoken about eugenics being a negative and dangerous philosophy in America. In addition to this, the fears of social degeneration were still on the rise and all levels of society were attempting to improve themselves so as to not become a part of an undesirable group. To better understand this pack mentality, the psychological aspects of society and the role prominent members played in the movement must be analyzed further.

The notoriety of these members combined with the status they held in society, and their influence in organizations such as the American Breeders Association allowed their ideas to flow into almost every corner of the nation. The enrollment of the eugenics movement became saturated with more socialites than scientists during the late 1900s and early 1910s. This altered the delicate balance of the group and caused concern for the academics associated with it. These newer supporters were composed of more racist and/or xenophobic individuals and less of those who sought to maintain society through the use of Galton's original theory. As these new members joined, their views on various social issues spread, which led to further corruption of eugenic theory. The ABA's efforts had been successful during this time, and more of the lower-middle class had begun to listen to the proposed benefits of eugenics. In his work, *The Legacy of Malthus*, Allen Chase discussed both the gradual and general acceptance of eugenics by common people, as well as the role American eugenicists played in this corruption. Chase claimed that "some of [the eugenics movement's] earliest American adherents were overt racists and elitists," a list that included notable people such as Charles Davenport, Roswell Johnson, and Henry F. Osborn.[46] While he also stated that many non-racists joined the movement, they were not named directly in the text. This demonstrated that some of the most influential people that later supported eugenics were the most recognized and influential in society. There were those who did not share the opinions of their peers and spoke against the changes in the movement, and disagreements grew as it became apparent that the scientific evidence behind eugenics was flawed.

These individuals were the cause behind the growth of race-based eugenics in America. The assertion that these people's views became socially acceptable (as did the movement, thus the evolution/fusion of the two as most understand it today) is supported by Robert Wilson. According to Wilson, "our sense of belonging, often deeply, to certain groups – our family, our nation, our people, our species – are all signs and products of our specific social nature."[47] In essence, humans follow patterns in society; the beliefs and philosophies influential individuals adhere to are what most of the remaining population converts to. It is therefore logical that because of this biological drive, as well as the influencers of the era, most Americans accepted eugenics as it was presented to them, with varying degrees of disagreement. And that acceptance had consequences. Only two years after the first eugenic sterilization bill was approved in Indiana, three more states adopted similar laws. By 1909, eugenic legislation regarding the segregation and sterilization of institutionalized people existed not only in Indiana, but also in California, Washington, and Connecticut. Within six years, another seven states passed similar laws. The movement was gaining acceptance in society and in government. From 1910 to 1915, eugenics became much more pronounced in American society and life. As it prospered, newer members began to introduce their own opinions into Davenport's perception of the theory.

As the eugenics movement began to shift in its perceptions, scientists, anthropologists, and geneticists who disagreed with their peers stated that the implementation of eugenics in society was not only irresponsible but also dangerous. For example, in "Eugenics" Franz Boas, stated that "although these [eugenic] methods sound attractive, there are serious limitations to their applicability," and that only certain factors were hereditary while the rest were environmental.[48] He acknowledged the fact that many in this circle were building eugenic rhetoric on scientific uncertainties. In addition to this, eugenicists blatantly ignored the roots of various traits associated with the individual's undesirable actions in society. For example, Boas stated that the debate of

nature versus nurture had still not been settled; however, this did not stop (what can be termed) social eugenicists from lumping various traits as genetic or heritable, rather than as environmental. Also, Boas argued that these people also failed to acknowledge environmental factors that likely played a huge role in the actions of those being examined. The data behind eugenic study during this first decade was seriously flawed and biased. Because of this fallacy, a massive misinterpretation of eugenics expanded throughout this decade. Data that was collected in the years following were being incorrectly evaluated and the arguments made by eugenicists in later decades were based on this corrupted foundation. The later shifts in eugenic theory can primarily be followed back to this point.

In addition to this warning, Boas also discussed how the case for degradation of population had no scientific basis because of its lack of evidence. He also argued against eugenics being used as a social improvement tool because it was simply infeasible. Boas stated instead that without substantiated evidence, the claim that national degeneration was occurring at that time was, to say the least, inappropriate.[49] Although he did not agree with how eugenics had been used socially, he stated that he understood why the movement had gained such a following in both the social and scientific communities. However, he also remarked clearly that there were two very distinct groups of eugenicists: those who sought to understand the scientific, genetic, and biological improvements to humanity, and those who sought to improve the overall health of society through hygiene, suppression of undesirables, and support of those with desired traits. He concluded his article by stating that he felt the social side of eugenics would become more problematic, popular, and idealistic as it grew, citing that "social stimuli" would have much more effect on eugenic popularity in society than the bland reports of the scientific stimulus.[50] Indeed, he was correct, and as eugenic theory spread across the nation, it became much more concerned with the suppression of others rather than the improvement of all.

The theory of eugenics, as well as the eugenics movement, has been explained as a racist pseudo-scientific philosophy that lived and died during the early 20th century. This, to say the least, is a simplified misunderstanding. Eugenics, when it was created, was certainly classist and was used by prominent figures in order to preserve and enhance society through improvements of the fittest people in that society. However, the argument that Francis Galton created his theory as a method to create a white world, or to create a super-human species, is something that has been built through the incorporation of misunderstood history. While it is inappropriate to say that eugenics was not created for the improvement of humanity with an emphasis on whites, the perception that it was used for only the advancement of whites is also unsuitable. The fact of the matter is this: eugenics was created by Galton to push the human race as a whole to an ideal plane of peak physical and mental perfection. The basis for his theory was made on the scientific discoveries of the era, combined with the statistical data made by his research. The opinions of its creator, and how he viewed the collapse of powerful empires, were negative towards those he felt posed a threat to society. Although this mentality was not enlightened, Galton never expressly vilified or called for the extermination of any group. He was a product of the time and did view the world as a racial hierarchy that placed whites on top and darker-skinned people lower. Yet he still called for the improvement of these groups, in addition to leaving them unmolested after they had been given the tools to advance themselves.[51]

The evolution of eugenics into what the world understands it as today is nothing but a shadow of the original theory. From its creation in 1865 to the early 1920s, Galton used classism to fuel the growth of eugenics as well as perpetuate his theory that improvements to humanity were possible through the uplift of those in society's top ranks. Restricting the procreation of mentally challenged individuals and the lower class was a negative policy formed by Galton's followers. The use of these and other practices like segregation and sterilization (as well as positive practices)

were not linked to race for two reasons. First, race in British society was not a major source of tension, unlike in the United States. Second, the inherent belief that whites were superior to all other groups in the global hierarchy created a platform many eugenicists saw as unattainable to non-whites. Therefore, the elimination of these people was not necessary, as it was believed they would eventually go extinct. On the contrary, the focus on detrimental traits such as alcoholism, promiscuity, and other behaviors associated with mental illness were what eugenicists fixated on.[52] The American eugenics movement was both similar and different in the execution of Galton's theory. While it used classism to grow, it also allowed its elite members to warp the base philosophy. The girth of the movement, its swelled ranks of prominent individuals, and the extent of its reach allowed it to become a powerful institution. Because of these factors, the use of eugenic policies as a method to fix problems in society resulted in the sterilization of tens of thousands. The societal, economic, and political conflicts in the U.S. were much more diverse than in the U.K., and because of this, new targets of eugenics emerged as the decades passed.

Although the United States cannot be held entirely responsible for this change, the major negative turns this scientific philosophy took during the early-to-mid-20th century can be attributed to it. Eugenics in its infancy was not bound solely in racist rhetoric, and while it did have overtones, it did not speak exactly to race as we understand it presently. Instead, it spoke to nationality and xenophobia, an opinion on which both Great Britain and America had similar views. The environment of American society concerning eugenics leaned towards racial and nationalistic biases, which led to an emphasis on hereditary purity. As the late 1910s and 1920s unfolded, the transformation of eugenics from a scientific theory created to improve humanity to one that encapsulated ethnic purity, expulsion, and restriction of immigrants (based on the ideology of the movement's members) occurred. By the early 1920s, eugenic theory in the states had become corrupted and was used to target those deemed unfit from reproducing. New concerns of

degradation in society came from the immigration of tens of thousands in the early years of the 20th century. While class uplift was still a concern for some at this time, the rising fears of others regarding this "invasion" trumped the bourgeois sentiments of the dying Victorian Era. Because of this, the next evolutionary step in American eugenics changed from a focus on classism to nativism.

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[1] Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003), 99; Michael Kohlman, "The Anthropology of Eugenics in America: Ethnographic, Race-Hygiene and Human Geography Solutions to the Great Crissi of Progressive America," *Alberta Science Education Journal* 42 (July 2012): 32, 34; Garland Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies: The American Eugenics Movement, 1900-1940," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 5 (1983): 108, 113, 118.
[2]Wendy Kline, "Eugenics in the United States," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Allison Bashford and Philippa Levine (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 511.
[3] Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*: *Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 20.
[4] Robert A. Wilson *The Eugenic Mind Project* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018), 48.
[5] Diane Paul and James Moore, "The Darwinian Context: Evolution and Inheritance," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Allison Bashford and Philippa Levine (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 29.
[6] Francis Galton, "Hereditary Character and Talent", *Macmillan's Magazine* 12 (1865): 158.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 76.
[9] Paul and Moore, "The Darwinian Context," 29.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences* (London: Macmillan, 1869), 331.
[12] Randall Hanson and Desmond King, *Sterilized by the State: Eugenics, Race, and the Population Scare in Twentieth-Century North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 64.
[13] Kevles*, In the Name of Eugenics*, 76.
[14] Paul and Moore, "The Darwinian Context," 31.
[15] The philosophy that one could advance in society and improve their standard of living through hard work and virtue. This did not consider the realities of economic, racial, sexual, and other constraints in society.
[16] Paul and Moore, "The Darwinian Context," 30.
[17] Robert W. Sussman, *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 45.
[18] Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak,* 87.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 76.
[21] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 47.
[22] This office was originally established in 1904 and went through two name changes until 1910 when it officially became the Eugenics Record Office.
[23] Germplasm refers to the genetic makeup of a cell (typically a plant one). In essence, the term was used similarly to how contemporaries use DNA.
[24] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 45.
[25] Kohlman, "The Anthropology of Eugenics in America," 34.
[26] Kevles*, In the Name of Eugenics*, 51.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Sussman, *The Myth of Race*, 47-48, 51-52.
[29] Gregory M. Dorr, *Segregation's Science Eugenics and Society in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 9.
[30] Kevles*, In the Name of Eugenics*, 76.
[31] Edward Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 2.

[32] This can be inferred as the collapse of the class structures through class mixing, introduction of foreign hereditary, or breeding with those termed mentally deficient, thus creating an inferior stock of whites in Southern Society.
[33] Hanson and King, *Sterilized by the State*, 17; and Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 2;
[34] Dillon Bell, "Sterilization and the Black Community: The Neo-Eugenics Movement, 1945-1981," *Omnino: Undergraduate Research Journal* 9 (Fall 2018): 29.
[35] W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative Negroes of To-day* (New York: Arno Press, 1903), 33.
[36] Paul A. Lombardo, *A Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 70.
[37] Lombardo, *A Century of Eugenics in America*, 87.
[38] Michael Kohlman, "The Anthropology of Eugenics in America," 35.
[39] Kaelber, Lutz. "Eugenics: Compulsory Sterilization in 50 American States," 2011, http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/.
[40] Kevles*, In the Name of Eugenics*, 78.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Allen Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1977), 120.
[44] Kevles*, In the Name of Eugenics*, 46.
[45] Dorr, *Segregation's Science*, 9; Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies," 108; Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus* 114-115; Wilson, *The Eugenic Mind Project*, 7, 48.
[46] Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus*, 115.
[47] Wilson, *The Eugenic Mind Project*, 7.
[48] Franz Boas, "Eugenics," *Scientific Monthly* 3 (November 1916): 471.
[49] Boas, "Eugenics," 474.
[50] Boas, "Eugenics," 477.
[51] Francis Galton, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims," *The American Journal of Sociology* 10 (July 1904), 2.
[52] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 47-49; and Diane Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present* (New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1995), 42.

Chapter II

1908-1924: SHIFTING FROM MENTALISM TO NATIVISM

The previous chapter examined the origins of eugenics, the scientific theories behind its creation, and its arrival to the United States. The first period of eugenics in America (1902-1913) was rooted in classism rather than racism. Eugenicists' main goal at this point was to improve society through the use of positive eugenic practices, similar to their counterparts in Great Britain. However, it became clear that these tactics were infeasible and the extensive breeding of the lower class and mentally "unfit" needed to be addressed. Those believed to be burdens to society (paupers, prostitutes, criminals, and the mentally impaired) were targeted by eugenicists. From 1908 to 1913, the movement's focal point changed from this group to southern and eastern immigrants.

During the second period of the American eugenics movement (1913-1924), members targeted these groups and sought to change immigration policy; this transition was multi-faceted. The first factor was linked to Galton's arguments of societal collapse in his book *Hereditary Genius*. He argued that the arrival of genetically inferior stock had diluted the weakened Athenian gene pool and led to their downfall. The second factor was a result of pre-existing nativist ideas many eugenicists held mixing with the movement's ideology and priorities.[1] Connections between morality, mental capability, and social scientific philosophies led many members to argue for the genetic inferiority of immigrants during the 1910s and 1920s. The third factor stemmed from the data collected by the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) and the intelligence tests translated (and improved) by Henry Goddard, as well as the publication of nativist eugenic rhetoric in 1909 and 1916. The second period of eugenics in America shifted from classism to xenophobia by 1924 with the passing of the Johnson-Reed Act.

Since this nation has existed, xenophobia and nativism have been a part of our character as a country. Discussions of immigration policies have consistently been linked to the perceived worth

associated with incoming groups of immigrants regardless of the era in American history. Nowhere is this more evident than in the late 1910s and early 1920s with respect to the eugenics movement. During the late 19th century, social scientific philosophies such as social Darwinism, bio-determinism, natural selection, and others were linked to Francis Galton's theory. These concepts led to the belief that social problems (pauperism, prostitution, and criminality) were connected to the mentally impaired and developmentally delayed.[2] As discussed previously, the popularity of eugenics grew from the late 1800s to the 1910s through the use of classism, a prime motivator behind the ascension of new members. These individuals were White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs), many of whom had nativist views, believed in these philosophies, and thought that traits linked to societal problems were hereditary.[3] As these ideas became more widespread, fears of societal degradation became more common among the upper echelons of society. The eugenics community shared similar opinions about those they felt were inferior and the cause of societal problems. In the nineteenth century, "a veritable army of educated, middle and upper middle-class Americans had launched a crusade to remake society – to eliminate corruption, stamp out disease and vice, assimilate the immigrant, and uplift the poor."[4] Throughout this period, eugenics focused on stabilizing and correcting the alleged degradation in society by mandating the sterilization and breeding restrictions of the feebleminded. Due to the connections between mental health and issues in society, many eugenicists (who had studied Galton's work, *Hereditary Genius*) feared that similar to Athens, too many of America's genetic failures were outbreeding the successful; thus, leading to an inevitable collapse. However, as sterilization laws were passed, the internal threat became less concerning, allowing eugenicists to focus on the external "menace."

The roots of xenophobia in the eugenics movement can be traced back to Dr. Nathaniel Shaler and his students in the late 1800s. Shaler argued as early as 1888/1889 that the genetic superiority of the Nordics (descendants of northern and eastern Europe) was factual. His argument was the central point of a lecture series Shaler gave during that time, and he turned these ideas into a book in 1891.[5] While he did not have direct connections to the eugenics movement in America, due to his death in 1906, his students did. In 1894, Shaler and many of his pupils formed the Immigration Restriction League (IRL), an

organization that later worked alongside the eugenics movement.[6] Many eugenicists held membership in both groups, one of the most notable being Madison Grant. During the pre-movement years, nativist attitudes existed in addition to beliefs in social scientific philosophies such as social Darwinism. As Michael Kohlman explains "in America, the seminal ideas of Galton and other peers combined with preexisting nativist or Nordic biases and prior strains of scientific racism."[7] Although the first evidence of this was seen in the late 19th century, the perpetuation of nativism in the eugenics movement occurred in both the first and second eras.

Another factor that pushed for the growth of nativism and xenophobia in the U.S. was the Industrial Revolution and the changes to society that it wrought. Urbanization skyrocketed. The promise of work led to massive quantities of people from Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as poor rural people, to migrate into American cities. Next, a lack of birth control led to a huge population boom. Rampant alcoholism, caused by the environmental stresses of industrial life, increased violence and crime over the course of fifty years (1870-1920).[8] For many eugenicists, who were concerned with class purity and the overall improvement of society, this appeared to be a reenactment of Athens.

In the documentary, The Eugenics Crusade, historian Jonathon Spiro explains the societal tensions that had occurred because of the Industrial Revolution. During the late 1800s to the turn of the century, "we have rampant urbanization…industrialization…immigration. The old order is passing, and wherever you look, society appears to be deteriorating."[9] The tensions that existed during this transition influenced the upper and middle classes in the following years. As poverty, crime, and sanitation became serious issues in the urban areas of America, resistance to change grew stronger. Daniel Kevles also alludes to this. "People were apprehensive about rapid change, about the kinds of people you saw on the streets; slums, crime, alcoholism, [and] prostitution. Native white protestants felt they were losing control of American society."[10] This feeling of helplessness inspired the actions of many in the upper echelons of society. For those who chose to focus on correcting the societal problems most common at that time (pauperism, prostitution, and criminality), "eugenics had a little bit of something for everyone" and was a good fit.[11] From 1902, Davenport diligently worked to gain the support of those who believed change was

needed and possible. Those who joined him did so for varying reasons. For both academics and lay people who had read Galton's works, American society appeared to be in danger of an inevitable downfall. For those who adhered to the social scientific philosophies, it was believed that charities were slowing natural selection and interfering with social Darwinism.[12] Davenport persuaded many that eugenics was the answer to society's woes and that through better breeding not only could the nation be cleansed, but it could also be improved for future generations.

The organizations that attempted social improvement during the first decade of the 20th century were indirectly connected to the eugenics movement. As previously stated, eugenics was offered as a solution to problems on which other movements had based their ideologies. Prohibition, clean living, and other well-intentioned activities meshed with the American Eugenics Movement at this time. Because of this symbiosis, eugenics grew and many who were members in one organization were associated with others. These members were often of similar class, education, and race. While it is inappropriate to say a hive mindset existed between members of multiple groups, many of these individuals were in the same cliques and had similar opinions. These prominent individuals, who largely adhered to the social scientific philosophies, believed that the lower class was inherently inferior (social Darwinism), their genes were the reason for their lack of success (biodeterminism), and that they were mentally impaired. Galton's original argument, that the native Athenian stock was weakened because of the low birthrates of "superior" individuals, rang loudly in eugenicists' ears at this time. This mindset led in 1906 and 1907 to the enactment of sterilization laws. The primary focus of eugenic policies at this time was on the mentally impaired, but this slowly changed after 1908. Goddard's translation of the Binet-Simon Intelligence Test (BSIT) created a seeming bridge between legitimate mental deficiencies and the morality of those in the lower class. Historian Wendy Kline states that "Goddard construct[ed] that term, "moron," and mental deficiency and immorality basically become interchangeable."[13] When this happened, there was an increase in those deemed "feebleminded," due to the fact that morality was a much harder criterion to prove or disprove.

Goddard created a new ranking system to catalog levels of feeblemindedness. According to Diane

Paul, it was modeled on a pre-existing scale which was "based on judgments of what constituted normal social behavior."[14] She also says that "the new language of mental defect was overlaid on an older concept of the moral imbecile."[15] In essence, mental fitness and morality were interconnected in 1908. If one were to be found lacking in either area, it was possible for them to be labeled as feebleminded regardless of their intelligence. Once the line between morality and mentality had been crossed, the nature of the American eugenics movement began to change. Before 1908, those believed to cause social problems were aligned with the mentally deficient; the line between actual mental or psychological problems and loose morals had already been blurred before Goddard. While some always viewed a person's environment as an aspect of their status, more individuals began to adhere to the hereditary argument. Individuals who did not conform to moral or social norms were perceived to be genetically inferior to common citizens, their traits passed on to their offspring. The translation of the BSIT and the ranking system that accompanied it appeared to give such ideas credence.

On the heels of the eugenics movement implementing morality as a factor of mental impairment, a resurgence of nativism began. The publication of J.F. Bobbitt's *Practical Eugenics* in 1909 re-established the arguments Galton had used in *Hereditary Genius* to a newer generation. In the book, Bobbitt claimed that "many influences are at work to protect the weaker and poorer social stocks and to enable them to have larger families than in past ages," and that charities "corrupt the streams of heredity which all admit are at present sufficiently turbid."[16] This statement that economic aid had led to the continuation of a weaker strand of citizens was aligned with the opinions of many eugenicists, including Galton. The internal degradation of society in Athens was argued to have occurred because of the overbreeding of inferior specimens and vice versa. The collapse of Athenian society was solidified by the influx of immigrants according to him. According to Michael Kohlman pointed this out in his article:

> "J.F. Bobbitt dramatically warned that two sinister processes were at work in America. The first was the "drying up of the highest, purest tributaries to the stream of heredity," referring to the decrease birth rates of the native Anglo-Saxon stock…the second was the "rising flood in the muddy undesirable streams," referring to the large influx and troubling higher birth rates of the

more recent wave of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants."[17]

Although nativism had existed before the eugenics movement, the rebranding of Galton's ideas came at a time when societal tensions were high and anti-immigrant sentiments strong. In addition to this, the prominent members of the movement who had pre-existing nativist ideals (such as Davenport, Grant, Laughlin, and others) were gaining popularity among the upper classes. While the movement was still in its adolescence in this period, changes began to occur that eventually led to the xenophobic policies and legislation seen in the 1920s.

A collection of genealogies in the U.S. was first undertaken by Goddard in New Jersey around 1906, then continued on a larger scale four years later by the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) in New York. In his book, *The Legacy of Malthus*, Allen Chase states that "[the ERO field workers] roamed the community collecting thousands of old wives' tales, neighborhood myths, and…malicious gossip about the sanity, the health, the morals, the intelligence…of close living neighbors [in a community]."[18] This data was not only inaccurate but also circumstantial, but it was used to create criteria for identifying and assessing the mental fitness of individuals in and out of institutions. Goddard showed his belief that the mentally impaired were the root of societal issues in his address to the New Jersey State Conference of Charities and Corrections in 1910. "Feeble-mindedness is at the root of probably two-thirds of the problems that you as a charity organization have before you."[19] This revealed that assumed ties between social status and mental impairment existed during this time, but as eugenic thinking changed, so too did the groups upon which this opinion was based. Diane Paul explains that "scientific theories are socially plastic; they can be and frequently are turned to contradictory purposes. Thus we should not expect absolute correlations between scientific theories and social views."[20] In essence, the opinions of society were strong enough that eugenic thinking changed as new threats became identified. Growing anti-immigrant opinions combined with the nativist views of eugenicists during the early 20th century. Momentum built from 1909 to 1913, and by 1921 enough power and public opinion existed to shift the focal point of the movement from the mentally impaired to southern and eastern European immigrants.

In conjunction with the rising xenophobic views, research by psychologists and scientists began

to support American eugenic ideals more broadly by analyzing the defectiveness of a person based on the BSIT. Data collected by Davenport and Goddard began to resonate with the upper echelons of society. As historian Nathaniel Comfort states, "Eugenic ideas were floating around as early as 1880, but Davenport gave [it] teeth. He was institutionalizing eugenics; he was marshalling people around a research program."[21] As eugenics began to receive more scientific support through the efforts of the ERO, the American Breeders Association (ABA), and outside academics, the movement's power and influence grew. Beginning in 1911, Goddard implemented intelligence testing throughout the New York public school system. The purpose of this exercise was to identify and evaluate the amount of undiagnosed/misdiagnosed students, as well as make recommendations for improvement. During this time, he experienced serious opposition and criticism which ultimately led to the school board officially rejecting intelligence testing.[22] However, this did not lead to decreased faith in intelligence tests. As Leila Zenderland explains,

> "To the contrary, the very fact that intelligence testing had been tried in this city further advanced its legitimacy. In addition, Goddard's report exacerbated public fears that the feebleminded were far more prevalent than previously believed – a fact that in itself suggested the need for more testing."[23]

Three years after he began his survey in the New York public school system, intelligence tests were being used in hundreds of public institutions, all without the consent of local school boards. As results of these tests were disseminated, it appeared that the amount of the feebleminded was rising exponentially. The support for these tests aided in the targeting of immigrants and the mentally impaired in the following years. Attempts to prevent societal collapse through the restriction of immigration was as deeply rooted in fear as it was the science of the era. The information and data collected by the ERO and other organizations in conjunction with the results of intelligence tests offered skewed results which portrayed incoming immigrants as external threats to the nation's gene pool.

Nativists argued "newer arrivals from…Italy, Russia, and the Balkans tended to be less Protestant, less educated, more impoverished, and more "culturally alien" than…the immigrants who

preceded them."[24] Leila Zenderland explains that these perceived notions caused debates among citizens concerning the mentality of these groups, nativist literature intensified the debates. Edward Ross's 1914 study, *The Old World and the New*, "argued that Italians were inherently prone to crime, Slavs innately servile, and Jews…crafty businessmen with a passion for Gentile girls."[25] These stereotypes existed in society years before this, but as more literature was published these labels became more common. As this occurred, Goddard began to implement intelligence testing on immigrants at Ellis Island. The results of these tests not only painted an inaccurate image of the mental fitness of newer immigrants but were later used in the justification of the quota system introduced in 1921. At the same time as these publications and Goddard's arrival to Ellis Island, Charles Davenport "established a subcommittee on immigration within the American Breeders Association, which included [P.F.] Hall and [Warren] Ward."[26] Thus by 1913 enough momentum in society had been built to shift the focus of the eugenics movement. Although Goddard's implementation of the BSIT on immigrants led to their oppression, Zenderland argues that he was not a nativist eugenicist (primarily because his work never stated that social ills were connected to foreigners). However, Davenport, Grant, Laughlin, and many others were.

When Goddard arrived at Ellis Island it was at the behest of immigration officials who requested help in identifying the mentally impaired. Zenderland explains that these officers had been given nearly impossible tasks of examining and determining the unfit from a daily influx of five thousand immigrants. The sheer volume did not allow for proper testing, and Goddard requested records from local institutions to determine the percentage of immigrants listed as feebleminded. "According to the sixteen institutions responding, less than 5 percent of their populations were…foreign-born."[27] To ensure that these numbers were correct, Goddard and his assistants (field workers mentioned earlier) began applying minor intelligence tests in 1912. The results contradicted previous predictions, and the amount of feebleminded immigrants from southern Europe was alleged at nine percent; almost three times as much as those from northern Europe.[28] As the years passed, the number of supposed feebleminded immigrants began to increase. This "evidence" fueled the concerns of those in the eugenics movement specifically and the public in general. The argument of internal collapse caused by the overproduction of unfit citizens was

reexamined only a couple of years before these tests were conducted. As a result,

> "both the increasing national alarm over feeblemindedness and the growing body of data acquired from mental testers [played] a role in influencing American immigration policy. Deportations due to this mental condition had begun to increase dramatically, from 186 in 1908 to 555 in 1913 to 1077 in 1914."[29]

In addition to these results, two events occurred in 1915 and 1916 which further perpetuated a shift in the American eugenics movement. The first was the Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) and the second was the publication of Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*.

The PPIE was not necessarily eugenic in its foundation. It was a small world's fair focused on societal progress. However, due to eugenics being regarded as a progressive science, the first year of its existence was tied to the ideology. John Kellogg, cereal founder and eugenicist, was responsible for an exhibit displayed at the expo. The Race Betterment Foundation, established by Kellogg in 1906, erected the booth and displayed data collected from eugenic organizations such as the ERO. The exhibit showed correlations between those labeled feebleminded and existing social problems, as well as propositions that improvement to humanity was possible through eugenics. More than ten thousand attendees visited the display, which "offered a brief for enacting eugenic-based legislation that would support sterilization of "defectives" and limit immigration to Northern Europeans."[30] This exhibit was the first large-scale eugenic display in the United States and the prototype used to build other displays seen in the following years. Nativist and xenophobic attitudes that had been slowly growing were quickened as similar exhibits became more popular. When these parades of eugenic fitness spread, they carried the data attached to the original versions. Since the display at the PPIE had promoted immigration limitations and sterilization, it is only logical that exhibits that copied this one did as well. Michael Kohlmann states "eugenic displays sponsored by various American eugenics and social-hygiene associations were staples at many public events."[31] Therefore, eugenicists, and by extension the eugenics movement, were promoting immigration restriction (supported with "scientific" evidence) by 1915. Kohlmann also states these exhibits were presented "in strategic conjunction with eugenics-related legislative hearings, votes, or public

referendums," which inferred that not only were they biased, but also politically charged.[32]

> "Parts of [the PPIE] exhibit were later used by eugenics experts such as Harry H. Laughlin, who testified to "educate" American congressmen on Capitol Hill before the passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Restriction Act of 1924."[33]

The second event that helped shift the focus of the eugenics movement to immigrants was the publication of *The Passing of the Great Race* by Madison Grant in 1916. This was one of the most popular pieces of nativist literature among eugenicists, even attracting the attention of Adolf Hitler while in prison. Grant, who was a lawyer and conservationist, reiterated the arguments of Galton and Bobbitt alike while adding new ones. Grant claimed, similar to Galton's theory, that immigration had caused the collapse of Greek and Roman society.[34] Kohlmann simplifies Grant's argument by stating "It was the race mixing and gradual absorption by…later immigrants or lower classes – the Alpines and Mediterraneans – that explains their eventual decline and fall."[35] Thus Grant emphasized immigration restriction to keep America as a "civilization preserve for the Nordic race" in which he "advocated for immigration only from Anglo-Saxon or Nordic regions of Europe."[36] Grant's book argued that not only should immigration restriction be enacted to keep the purity of the United States safe, but he also warned that miscegenation between those of Nordic bloodlines and non-Nordics would lead to race degeneration. This argument not only was similar to Galton's stated cause of Athens's collapse, but it also spoke to the upper- and middle-class Americans who were already concerned with society's downfall. Grant's use of the term Nordic for native-born Americans gave WASPs a definition they identified with. He portrayed the group as in danger of destruction and in need of protection from genetic mixing. As historian Johnathon Spiro states, "According to Grant, the Nordics are the most recently evolved of all the races…their genetic traits are still fragile…so if [one] mates with a more primitive race, a Mediterranean, a Jew, certainly a negro, or an Asiatic, the more primitive genes…will actually overwhelm the superior [ones]."[37] Nativist eugenicists in the movement agreed with Grant's arguments either from personal beliefs, data collected by eugenic organizations, or social scientific philosophies of the era. Regardless, when Grant stated that "the mixture of two races in the long run, gives us a race reverting to the more [primitive], generalized, and lower

type," it further reinforced the fears that society was in danger from forces it needed to control.[38]

Unfortunately, many believed this, and support for the movement rose while becoming increasingly biased. Expansion of xenophobic rhetoric was not only caused by increased literature and eugenic displays but also through the increased number of lay members. During the 1910s and early 1920s, scientific support began to wane, and scientists quietly began exiting the movement. New evidence had revealed that germplasm and hereditary traits were much harder to determine and harness; in essence, what had been argued by eugenicists as controllable was not. Garland Allen states that "while geneticists were withdrawing from the eugenics movement, amateurs were flocking to it."[39] As the movement gathered non-scientific supporters, its momentum grew as well as its biases. While it is inappropriate to argue these newer members were wholly uneducated about eugenics, it must be noted that these individuals were mostly laypeople, not scientists. They had joined years after the movement was first established. At this time, nativist literature had become more common, and the author of eugenic theory was deceased (therefore his input on matters was impossible to obtain). As these individuals began to join, they were influenced by stimuli such as eugenic displays, literature, or the budding educational courses in colleges. Also, the beliefs of older eugenicists, like Davenport, were likely impressed upon the newer members. These factors culminated together during the 1910s and were the driving force behind the movement's shift in focus from the mentally impaired to immigrants. The involvement of these prominent figures during the second period of the movement occurred because of their biased views, social environment, and beliefs in social scientific philosophies. For men such as Davenport and Grant, their education under Nathaniel Shaler gave them a foundation in nativist eugenics. Both individuals had studied under him, and Grant had become an early supporter of the Immigrant Restriction League, headed by Hall and Ward, the same men who were on the ABA's immigration subcommittee.

Davenport had a disdain for immigrants. His 1911 book, *Heredity In Relation To Eugenics,* warned that "the population of the United States will, on account of the great influx of blood from south-eastern Europe… [be] more given to crimes."[40] Davenport also stated that those in mental institutions "are relatively more foreign-born than native" and that if immigration restriction or limitation

was not enacted, "the ratio of insanity in the population will rapidly increase."[41] This is an example of beliefs outweighing fact; Goddard disproved that the majority of mental patients were immigrants in 1913. Davenport's arguments had little scientific support and were influenced by his xenophobic views. The proposal he made to safeguard America's "superior gene pool from genetic enslavement" included passing restrictive immigration laws, and "subjecting every foreign race polluter in America to compulsory sterilization."[42] Given the attitudes of founding eugenicists, the data collected from Goddard and displayed through exhibits, not to mention the xenophobic rhetoric circulating the country, it is understandable that new members of the movement would be entering a biased environment. In addition to these factors, the involvement of the United States in World War I also pushed for increased focus on the mentality of the nation, immigration, and the threat of collapse.

In May of 1917, Robert Yerkes, Henry Goddard, Lewis Terman, Carl Bingham, and several other psychologists formed a committee to create tests for the army. These exams were similar to the BSIT, but, they were designed not only to measure intelligence but to evaluate the appropriate positions for soldiers. "In less than two weeks, these psychologists had transformed Binet's oral tests for individual children into…tests for groups of adults."[43] Within two months they had succeeded in their endeavors. The tests were created and used on the literate and illiterate recruits in army installations through the end of the war. "By January 31st, 1919, psychologists had given the Alpha [literate version] and Beta [illiterate version] tests to 1,726,966 men," and the results shocked the testers.[44] The number of low scores made it appear as if societal intelligence was in rapid freefall. However, Daniel Kevles and Diane Paul point out that these tests were "by no means measures of intelligence…how well you did on them depended upon your degree of education…and also how aligned you were with middle class culture."[45] Indeed, "draftees were required to identify authors, athletes, ...characters in books and advertisements [and various other elements] clearly dependent on education or experience."[46] These questions were unanswerable by many recruits and those who took the beta tests faced similar issues (such as completing a puzzle of a steamship, something recruits from the Great Plains had great difficulty with). Despite these obvious errors, "the test results were cited as evidence that a stream of 'defective germ plasm' was flooding into

America from Eastern Europe."[47] For the duration of the war, these results were kept secret in the interests of national security. However, in 1919 they were declassified and a swarm of requests to analyze the data and publish its findings was received. Although the years between 1917 and 1919 were relatively quiet concerning the eugenics movement, the results of the army intelligence tests fueled the actions of eugenicists until almost the end of the next decade.

Another eugenicist is Harry Laughlin, was crucial in the final stages of the eugenics movement's shift in focus from the mentally impaired to immigrants. During the first decade of the 20th century, he joined the movement and was appointed as the superintendent of the ERO. From 1910 to 1921, he remained in this position and became its director from 1921 until 1940. Laughlin's role as superintendent consisted of gathering, organizing, and disseminating hereditary data. In addition to this, he studied "the forces controlling, and hereditary consequences of, marriage matings" and also investigated "inheritance of specific human traits," among other tasks.[48] Laughlin was also involved with the legalization of sterilization and had experience with legislative processes. He excelled at "understanding how to both propose and pass laws that were deemed "constitutional" at both the state and federal courts" and knew "what steps [were] needed to be taken to subvert the "checks and balances" designed into the American system of government."[49] A.E. Samaan states that Laughlin, and by extension the eugenics movement, had convinced the government that the number of unfit individuals in society required eugenic intervention to prevent collapse. The gathering of this genealogical information by the ERO and the results of the BSITs given to civilians and soldiers, in addition to other sources, culminated together resulting in the figures seen by the public. Samaan argues that the movement effectively controlled the evidence behind these figures, allowing members to own "the conclusion[s] to be drawn."[50] In other words, the data collected by the movement itself fueled the argument members used against those they believed to be linked to social collapse. During the first period of the eugenics movement, this group consisted primarily of the mentally impaired, while in the second southern and eastern European immigrants were the targets.

From 1914 to the mid-1920s, Laughlin was involved in action which resulted in the growth of the

movement's political strength, as well as its reach. Alexandra Stern explains that Laughlin was not only involved with improving and expanding domestic sterilization laws, but he was also focused on immigration restriction during this period, helping the eugenics movement slowly began to shift its primary focus from mentalism to nativism. Although the first xenophobic policy was not seen until the Immigration Act of 1917, the anti-immigrant attitudes behind it had been building years prior. The expansion of literature and "evidence" from the PPIE, not to mention the results of Goddard's early tests on immigrants, led individuals like Laughlin to argue that the U.S. Government needed to safeguard society by restricting the influx of these unfit groups. By 1919, Laughlin had been involved in actions that influenced the nativist policies enacted over the next five years. As stated above, the first legislative victory for the eugenics movement during this second period came with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, which identified and isolated those who suffered from problems linked to social ills and mental impairments, one example for each being feeblemindedness and pauperism. Although the act did not restrict immigrants outright, it proved that the arguments of Grant and other eugenicists had begun to sway political discourse in their favor. After World War I, nativism and xenophobia grew through of several factors. First, there was an increase in anti-immigrant literature, which made arguments based on the results of the Army intelligence tests (1917-1919). Second, the information disseminated by the movement claimed a decrease in societal intelligence, and an increase in economic burdens (feebleminded) to the nation, resulting from the influx of immigrants. The last factor came from the solidifying of Laughlin's reputation as a eugenics expert, and his testimony to both houses of Congress from 1920 to 1924.

As seen earlier in the chapter, nativist and xenophobic literature linked to the eugenics movement began in 1909 with J. F. Bobbitt's *Practical Eugenics*. However, by 1916, nativist ideas had grown because of the race betterments exhibit at the PPIE, and Grant's book.[51] Books released after the war used the army intelligence tests to build degradation arguments. Zenderland states, "Especially emphasized in many popular publications where the low scores earned by recent immigrants."[52] In 1920, Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color Against White Supremacy* was published. According to Garland

Allen,

> "popular books began to appear with increasing frequency. Although these books usually claimed a "scientific" and scholarly foundation, they often demonstrated a highly biased and racial tone. Perhaps the most popular…were Madison Grants *The Passing of The Great Race*…and Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color Against White Supremacy*…both lamented the increasing number of foreign immigrants into the United States, and the decline of the Nordic "civilization" in the West."[53]

Throughout the 1920s several pieces of literature were published highlighting the low scores of immigrants. These included William Dougall's *Is America Safe for Democracy?* in 1921, Charles Gould's *America: A Family Affair*, Stoddard's second book, *The Revolt Against Civilization* in 1922, and Carl Brigham's *A Study in American Intelligence* in 1923. Many of these works referenced the results of the Army intelligence tests and the latter used Grant's book when arguing the validity behind societal degradation and "race suicide."

According to Zenderland, McDougall's book "promoted eugenics and disparaged immigrants", and Gould's piece was an "anti-immigrant diatribe," which used "army data to [help] prove his case" of immigrant inferiority and hereditarian arguments of biodeterminism.[54] Indeed, the work stated that "man must first breed before he can educate intelligence," and based on the results of these tests, Gould argued that recent immigrants were not the proper vessels for intellectual improvement.[55] Similar arguments were seen in Stoddard's first book, but, it utilized the fear of societal collapse caused by miscegenation and argued that "the immigrant tide must at all cost be stopped and America given a chance to stabilize her ethnic being."[56] By 1923, this type of literature had become commonplace. In Brigham's *A Study in American Intelligence*, he blatantly claimed that "the results which we obtained by interpreting the army data by means of the race hypothesis support Mr. Madison Grant's thesis of the superiority of the Nordic type."[57]

The final factor behind the movement's shift from mentalism to xenophobia requires the examination of eugenicist's actions in Congress from 1920 to 1924. According to Samaan,

> "In 1919 Laughlin compiled and impressively thorough directory of all the state institutions that housed "defective, dependent, and delinquent classes," and the Department of Commerce published the resulting report through the Washington Printing Office…the report's impressive scope…cement[ed] Laughlin's reputation as the most knowledgeable expert on [eugenics]…" In addition to this, "Laughlin's 1919 "Statistical Directory" …provided the eugenicists ownership of the facts to be debated when the manufactured crisis of "racial degeneration" came before the various legislatures."[58]

After the report was reviewed by the House Committee on Immigration (around the same time Stoddard's first book was published in 1920), Laughlin was appointed as the expert eugenics agent by chairman Albert Johnson. During this time, the committee was "working on the emergency restriction act," and Laughlin provided quantitative data such as "graphs, pedigree charts, and the results of hundreds of IQ tests as evidence of 'the immigrant menace' to…Congress"[59] This information was taken into consideration by the committee, along with the arguments from labor unions, and other groups angered by the recommencement of immigration after the war. During the presentation, "the message was clear; Laughlin and company viewed [immigrants] literally as a potential disease upon the social body," and had "scientific" evidence to support their claims.[60] After Laughlin's testimony and appointment in 1920, Johnson asked him to study and report on the mentality of recent immigrants. The data he collected was later used in the hearings connected with the Johnson-Reed Act. The factors mentioned previously also resulted in the enactment of the Emergency Quota Act in 1921. It was the second victory for nativist eugenicists, and its limiting of European immigration to ten percent of the 1890 census was celebrated. However, like its 1917 predecessor, this legislation was the steppingstone for the movement's final shift from mentalism to xenophobia—the passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Restriction Act.

Eugenicists had become linked with the political process largely because of Laughlin, but, as the years passed, legislators became more involved with the eugenics movement of their own accords. This fraternization had begun because of Grant in the late 1910s when he "began with a charm offensive directed at Congressman Albert Johnson," whom he plied "with whiskey and cigars and gradually

persuad[ed] him of the urgent need for eugenics."[61] The intermingling between politicians and eugenicists grew slightly but not to exorbitant levels. However, some significant individuals were members of both, namely Johnson and John Box. The relationship the former had with Madison Grant did influence the course of the committee, but as Paul points out, Johnson "was already a Nordic supremacist when he appointed Laughlin adviser to his committee."[62] This was an important correlation considering the rise of nativist literature and the eugenics movement likely made the latter more appetizing to politicians. In any case, Zenderland states that "eugenicists recognized Grant's influence in Congress regarding immigration policy and used it well," including Charles Davenport sending eugenic research to Johnson through Grant.[63] Although "infiltrate" may be an inappropriate choice when discussing the actions of eugenicists and the U.S. Congress, it seems fitting, especially when considering Diane Paul's claim that the views of Nordic superiority and societal degradation were so "commonplace [in 1921] that a holder of high office could assert it without shocking his audience."[64] Regardless, the relationship that existed between the two aided in the passage of xenophobic policies. The quantitative data displayed at the Second International Congress of Eugenics in 1921, for example, was seen in the Senate the following year. In November of 1922, Laughlin presented the results of a report Johnson had commissioned in 1920 to the committee.

In addition to Laughlin's own information, "the extravagant charts and illustrations of this Second International Congress…paper[ed] the walls of the U.S. Congress" and this presentation "would pass the restrictive immigration law [of 1924]."[65] Daniel Kevles argues that the information Laughlin presented had been twisted, and in actuality there had been higher amounts of unfit native-born than immigrants. But because of Laughlin's nativism, he believed the latter's "bad recessive genes" would eventually emerge.[66] Judging by the xenophobic attitudes held by men like Johnson, it is plausible to say that had the truth been known, it likely would not have made a difference. After all, both Laughlin and Johnson were nativists and the latter had close ties with the movement, as well as with prominent xenophobes such as Grant. In addition to this, both were members of the 1923 Committee on Selective Immigration, a subcommittee of the American Eugenics Society chaired by Grant himself. The report this group conducted at the end of the year "added up to an endorsement of the permanent immigration restriction

bill," something Grant had advised Johnson to push for.[67] By 1924, the Johnson-Reed Immigration Restriction Act was passed due to the "scientific" evidence presented on behalf of Harry Laughlin, and by extension the eugenics movement, as well as the societal concerns of Americans who feared the nation's collapse.

During the second era of the American eugenics movement (1913-1924), focus shifted towards immigration because of several factors. The first is linked to Galton's arguments of Athenian societal collapse, namely the influx of immigrants. He argued that the arrival of genetically inferior groups diluted the already weakened native stock, which, in turn, led to its demise. Those in the movement familiar with this argument assumed that since American society had become weakened by the unfit, the next step was likely the dilution of stock via increased immigration. The second factor came from the pre-existing nativist sentiments of many eugenicists including Charles Davenport, Harry Laughlin, Henry Goddard, Madison Grant, and many others. These individuals gathered data during the first era allegedly linking the problems in society with the mentally and physically impaired. It was the information collected here and, in the years following, that allowed for "scientific" arguments to be made against the immigration of southern and eastern European individuals and which persuaded officials to their cause. The third factor stems from the creation of intelligence testing (in addition to a ranking system connected with exams), the implementation of these tests, the growth of unscientific genetic record-keeping, and the publication of nativist eugenic literature from 1906 to the 1920s. Between 1908 to 1913, the eugenics movement slowly shifted attention to a new group while simultaneously addressing the fears of internal societal degradation. The increased diagnoses of "feebleminded" individuals, due to the application of the BSIT in mental institutions, prisons, and schools, alleged that immigrants or first-generation Americans were among the highest concentration of morons. This along with the release of J.F. Bobbitt's article, "Practical Eugenics," in 1909, led to assumptions that Galton's theory was correct fueled by these factors. Eugenicists believed that the external threat was real and in 1913 Goddard began to use similar tests on arriving immigrants at Ellis island to determine their mental fitness. From this point until 1924, the eugenics movement began to gradually shift its primary focus from those believed to be domestic

threats to society, mainly the mentally impaired. During these eleven years, more laws were enacted that safeguarded the nation from this group, but no similar laws existed to repel those perceived to be a greater threat to the genetic future of the U.S.: southern and eastern European immigrants.[68] Legislative actions and the publication of nativist literature by eugenicists that occurred during this time expanded pre-existing sentiments and led to xenophobia being the next evolutionary step in the movement. The zenith of this period was seen with the passage of the Johnson-Reed Act, but, as the 1920s continued factors were introduced that shook the foundation of the eugenics movement and changed the beliefs of members, as well as ordinary Americans.

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Chapter III

THE FALL OF FORMAL EUGENICS, RISE OF INFORMAL EUGENICS, AND THE SHIFT TO ANTI-BLACK RACISM.

The first two chapters discussed the theory of eugenics, its application, and the establishment and growth of the movement. During the first era, Galton's theory and Davenport's interpretations were not built on racism. The use of Galton's theory was applied by members of the black community and promoted by various leaders. Had eugenics been entirely race-based, this would not have occurred. However, as the movement became more populated with nativists and racists, it became polarized and shifted towards xenophobia. During the second era, eugenicists began to target southern and eastern European immigrants under the allegation that they were intellectually inferior and contributed to social problems. By the 1920s, xenophobic laws and restrictions were enacted under false scientific data in order to solve these issues. Throughout the next two decades, geneticists, social scientists, and others challenged the validity of the American eugenics movement was challenged by geneticists, social scientists, and others. These encounters shook the alleged scientific foundation boasted by leading members and caused gradual decay and eventually led to a formal collapse. By the mid-1930s, eugenic thinking was deeply entrenched in many layers of society and culture. Although the science it was based on was exposed as completely fallible by this point, eugenic philosophy and ideology continued in multiple areas of society, sustained by a transition in the movement's fundamentals from science to personal concepts of ethics. Since its arrival to the United States, eugenics had been tied to economics, morality, and to a lesser extent, sex. These bonds grew during the first two decades of the 20th century, and by the 1930s connections between eugenics, poverty, sexuality, and immorality were strong. These ties would become the justification behind the sterilization of African Americans. By the 1940s, the formal movement fizzled out, but many organizations related to it were rebranded and its rhetoric

continued.[1]

The period between the late 1930s and 1950s was a time of incubation and metamorphosis for these groups and led to an informal rebirth, primarily in the South. The third era of American eugenics, which can be labeled as Neo-Eugenics, began during this period and elements are still seen in some form to this day. After World War II eugenic practices, such as sterilizations, shifted to focus more on race. This occurred as an indirect result of the ties between eugenic philosophy, socio-economic status, societal perceptions of morality, and negative beliefs about the black community. Informal eugenics gained significant traction in the South due to the philosophy's late arrival, the region's conservative environment, and its desire to maintain its established social and cultural structures. The continuation of eugenics in Dixie occurred because of several factors. First, state and federal laws passed before 1937 gave legal standing for sterilizations (institutional and non). Second, beliefs about immorality grew as existing myths of Black female promiscuity, illegitimacy, and welfare abuse became heightened in the post-war era. Third, rising racial tensions, combined with the opinions of healthcare professionals led to biases that disproportionately affected Black women. During the third era of American eugenics, arguments about economics, social problems, maternal fitness, sexual deviancy, and welfare shifted the informal movement to become overtly racist towards African Americans and various other minority groups. Before the war, eugenics had largely coexisted within, and parallel to, the Black community. Leaders had even used its ideology in an effort to improve the intellectual and physical prowess of the race, as well as its morale. Unfortunately, after the 1940s, eugenics was used to forcibly sterilize tens of thousands of African Americans for decades. While the movement did not solely target black Americans during its early existence, the concerns about social ills, economic burdens, and immorality (that were cast on immigrants and the mentally challenged decades prior) were used as the rationale to oppress people of color on welfare rolls.

As briefly mentioned in the first chapter, the early decades of the eugenics movement in America consisted of conflicting opinions. Eugenicists gathered data to prove that intellectual inferiority was more hereditable among lower-class individuals rather than those in the upper class. Geneticists had given

support to the idea that traits were transmitted from parent to offspring, leading many to become supporters of the movement. However, after the transitionary period from 1908 to 1913, evidence began to appear that heredity was much more complex than originally proposed.[2] The documentary, "*The Eugenics Crusade*" points out that Charles Davenport's perception of eugenics rested on Mendelian Laws of genetics.[3] As scientists examined various animal species, it became clear that "there were no experiments that really could support Davenport's theory," and that hereditary traits could not be predicted with any real accuracy.[4] This largely disproved the foundation on which Davenport based the movement. As a result of this discovery, support from the scientific community began to slowly decrease. A rift began to form between eugenicists and geneticists during this period and grew larger in the following years. There was no sufficient evidence to support the movement's major arguments of inherited pauperism, criminality, and other social ills which were central to pending eugenic legislation. The first scientist to abandon the movement was zoologist Thomas Morgan in 1915. In a letter to Davenport, Morgan resigned from a committee within the American Genetics Association.

> "I have been entirely out of sympathy with [the Eugenics Committee's] method of procedure…the reckless statements and the unreliability of a good deal that is said in the Journal [of Heredity] …If they want to do this sort of thing, well and good…but I think it is just as well for some of us [scientists] to set a better standard, and not appear as participants in the show."[5]

Morgan, like many other geneticists who followed, walked away quietly from the movement. The reasons for this silent withdrawal were based on beliefs that science should not intervene in politics, an academic *laissez-faire* attitude towards inaccurate theories, and "personal and psychological factors."[6]

Although the slow exodus of scientists was quiet at first, the next two decades increased open conflict between geneticists, sociologists, psychologists, and eugenicists. As stated previously, the roots of this began years before Morgan's abdication and were based on the discovery of evidence that debunked eugenic arguments. The most notable confrontation during this time was between Franz Boas and Madison Grant. As Robert Sussman states, "the rivalry between Boas and Grant epitomizes the major differences in racial theory during the early 1900s." It also revealed that the argument of inheritance

versus environment was still raging.[7] The former argued environmental factors were what created differences between races/nationalities in the 1911 book *The Mind of Primitive Man*. However, Grant claimed in *The Passing of the Great Race* that genetic traits were responsible, and an inherent inferiority of non-Nordics was diluting American stock. Boas countered Grant with multiple journal articles and theories, but, the latter's book was sought after by many who preferred a simple solution to a complex problem; a trend that continued for decades. Boas continued his work and gathered "supporters who were well-trained scholars and who had compiled a massive amount of data that could be used to join the assault against eugenics."[8] As Jonathon Spiro explains in *Defending the Master Race*, Grantians were the older generation of amateur anthropologists obsessed with categorizing races; while the Boasians were professionally trained, younger, and felt race was a social, not biological, construct.[9] Sussman maintains a similar argument and explains that Boasians became a main scientific group that exposed eugenic fallacies. However, even as discoveries showed that the movement's base was unstable, it was still supported by many in the scientific community.

It was not until the passage of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924 that more geneticists began to publicly voice their dissent.[10] Because of the increased investigations, analyses, and interactions of geneticists, the eugenics movement decayed at an increased rate. A notable example of Boasian victory came from Otto Klineberg in 1928. He thoroughly examined the intelligence test data Carl Brigham (et. al.) had used to argue that Southern and Eastern European immigrants were considerably more feebleminded than others. Klineberg measured this data against results from tests conducted in Europe on 1000 rural and urban children. He concluded in 1935 that "no support to the theory of a definite race hierarchy" existed.[11] Similar revelations had taken place in the late 1920s, and by the end of the decade, Boasians had published several journal articles and pieces of literature. These helped expand the belief that culture (environment by current definition) was a viable factor behind intelligence and social status.[12] As the 1930s began, support for the eugenics movement waned as geneticists brought foundation-breaking evidence to the public eye. In addition to this, the ties between Nazism and the movement started to unnerve many members and caused academics to distance themselves. As Kenneth Ludmerer

points out, “to geneticists, the American movement, with leaders such as Popenoe, Stoddard, and Grant, seemed to [contain] too much of a Nazi brand of racism.”[13] This caused many to publicly remove their support of the movement. On top of the exodus of scientists, the Great Depression aided in the downfall of formal eugenic thinking by showing that poverty, pauperism, and criminality were connected to environmental factors rather than genetics. Ironically, it also created new outlets which allowed for informal eugenics to continue for decades.

Throughout the 1930s, several events occurred which fundamentally altered most aspects of eugenic philosophy. As the economy worsened, poverty, crime, and prostitution increased, significantly affecting multiple areas in society. “The person who’s now on the bread line might have been a lawyer who graduated from Harvard,” Adam Cohen states, and “this was a clear indication that poverty was not biological.”[14] The argument that poor individuals were immoral, or mentally deficient, lost considerable clout as more citizens were forced to do what was necessary to survive. Despite this, the movement continued throughout this decade and did not reach its end until the 1940s. This occurred because of two factors; first, eugenic philosophy and ideology had become deeply ingrained into American culture and social consciousness. While the scientific foundation had all but crumbled under geneticists’ revelations, the connections eugenics had made in these areas were what upheld the movement during its final decade. Additionally, these ties allowed an informal continuation after World War II. The social and cultural connections were formed during the movement’s infancy, mainly because of the American Eugenics Society (AES), the American Breeders Association (ABA), and the Eugenics Record Office (ERO). The educational system had significant interactions with eugenic philosophy and propaganda during the early 20th century. Furthermore, the involvement of such organizations in county fairs and similar rural venues helped propagate the movement’s beliefs across the nation to both the white and black communities. From the primary to the post-secondary level, and from the educated to the uninitiated, eugenic ideology saturated society and culture.

In “Evangelizing Eugenics,” Michael Kohlman discusses the growth of eugenic education in the early 20th century, and how deeply rooted it became in our consciousness by the 1930s. He states that

eugenicists used the AES to create committees in order to educate (propagandize) the public.[15] The two committees responsible for teaching the general public and students in the school system were the Popular Education Committee and the Formal Education Committee. The latter was for the "incorporation of eugenics as an integral part of various appropriate courses…[from] elementary grades through high school, as well as…in colleges and universities," as described by W.S. Evans in 1931.[16] These committees perpetuated the ideology onto both the public and future generations to gain support. Regarding the general population, "eugenics exhibitions at state fairs, national events, and museums were staples throughout the interwar period" and introduced the middle class to "the social perils that eugenics promised to ameliorate."[17] Examples of these were the Better Baby and Fitter Family contests mentioned previously, as well as the Panama Pacific International Expo of 1915. Participation in these events and exhibits initiated many in both the lower and middle classes to accept, or learn more about, eugenics. In addition to this, presentations, pamphlets, magazine articles, and even church sermons disseminated information to the public.[18] As for the formal school system, eugenics at the primary and secondary levels was more pronounced in certain areas than others, and results were mixed. However, at the post-secondary level, eugenics grew rapidly. "The number of American colleges and universities offering separate eugenics courses grew from 44 in 1914 to 376 in 1928."[19] The AES created hardy roots that aided in the ideology's survival well into the end of the century. The connections between eugenics and higher education likely influenced many social workers, medical professionals, and others in similar positions throughout the decades.

The second factor behind the continuation of eugenics was the transition from a scientific to a moral foundation. This was completed by the end of the Ann Hewitt court case in 1936 (see below). As the foundation of the movement came under fire from the scientific community, eugenicists began to focus more on the morality of individuals to stabilize their arguments. This allowed a non-scientific basis to form and continue for decades, while still being entrenched in the nation's moral ethos. Although legitimate scientists had largely departed by this point (as seen by a serious lack of attendance in the Third International Eugenics Congress of 1932)[20] the movement reached its zenith. Beginning in 1931, the final

four states to enact sterilization laws did so, ending with Georgia in 1937. State hospitals began to experience economic burdens because of the Depression, and operations increased to an all-time high. Daniel Kevles explains that this occurred because sterilizations were used as a method to reduce cost; sterilization before a patient's discharge became a common practice.[21] Furthermore, sterilization during this period was popularized by eugenicists as "a doctrine of reproductive morality that countered selfish individualism with social responsibility," which "promoted the idea of increased state intervention in…private matters for the protection and stabilization of social institutions."[22] As the transition to morality continued, the movement began to focus more on sterilization, motherhood, and the home environment. Eugenicists began to argue that these operations were not only cost-effective solutions but that they also produced "better children and renewed the American family" which gave them "a greater degree of cultural authority than ever before."[23] Wendy Kline explains that "by emphasizing environment rather than heredity, the eugenics movement survived attacks…and flourished in a society in search of immediate and effective solutions to severe economic and social problems."[24] As the links between environment, motherhood, and reproductive control grew, more emphasis was being placed on the moral "fitness" of women. No place was this better seen than with the Ann Hewitt case.

In 1934, Ann Cooper Hewitt had an emergency appendectomy, and during the operation, she was sterilized without her knowledge or consent. She was completely unaware of the procedure at first, but after learning the truth, she filed charges against her mother and the surgeons who had operated on her. While it became famous across the nation, the Hewitt case was a symbol that the eugenics movement in America had transitioned from a scientific platform to a moral one. After the 1930s, eugenic policies like sterilization became much more flexible, far-reaching, and were based on personal perceptions rather than *any* scientific evidence (what little there was to begin with). The Hewitt case was much different than *Buck v. Bell*, which had taken place almost a decade earlier. The latter involved Carrie Buck, a poor Virginian who had been raped, given birth out of wedlock, and was then sent to the state colony for the feebleminded. The court's decision to sterilize her set a precedent that institutional sterilization of inmates was constitutional; a factor that rapidly increased the number of operations during the Depression.[25]

However, Ann Hewitt was almost completely the opposite of Buck. She was wealthy, educated, from a prominent family, and most importantly, she had never been in an institution. Despite this, Hewitt had still been unknowingly sterilized on her mother's orders by a private physician under the guise of mental deficiency. Additionally, she had been given an intelligence test hours before surgery that labeled her as feebleminded, yet she was fluent in several languages and was well versed in literary classics. Eugenicists and the defense were concerned with hereditarian arguments, as the fallacy of intelligence testing would dismiss their claims of feeblemindedness (and rightfully so considering many who had authored these tests, like Goddard, had renounced their findings entirely by this time).

Two main arguments became central to the case after this point: the first was female sexuality and the second was maternal fitness. Kline states that the case "introduced sterilization as a family-centered solution to the problem of female sexuality" and that "[Ann & Marion Hewitt] were on trial for the same crime: the incapacity to mother."[26] During the trial, eugenicist Paul Popenoe was asked in a letter from defense attorney I.M. Golden if Hewitt's operation was appropriate considering her alleged defects (which were caused by hypersexuality). He responded, "we should all answer negatively…whether a young woman such as you describe would be a desirable mother," and that the validity of her defects was not the issue.[27] Several days into the trial, Judge Sylvain Lazarus dismissed the case on grounds that sterilizations had been legal in California since 1909, and that the physicians were not at fault. The ruling solidified the transformation of eugenics from science to morality. By the late 1930s, ethical arguments became central to eugenic rhetoric.[28] After its transition, new criteria for sterilizations both in and out of institutions were established. The Buck decision allowed for operations to be performed on those in mental institutions nationwide. Likewise, the Hewitt case set an unofficial precedent that inadvertently allowed non-institutional sterilizations; even without the consent of the patient, regardless of if they were feebleminded or not. Although no decision was rendered, many states and their institutions used the arguments of societal interest, female sexuality, and maternal fitness when determining if a person was to be operated on. The latter two factors were consistently seen in later decades as reasons why thousands of non-institutionalized women were forcibly sterilized. As Rebecca Kluchin states,

> "As ideas about reproductive fitness changed, so, too, did images of the "unfit." Women continued to receive the majority of attention because of their ability to bear children, but the ethnicity and race of those targeted changed as Cold War society struggled to accept civil rights, Mexican immigration, an expanding welfare system, and a rise in illegitimacy."[29]

This event solidified the evolving arguments of eugenicists.

In addition to parental fitness and sexuality becoming the new determining factors, the development of New Deal policies also played a large role in the economic arguments of sterilization. The establishment of government assistance programs was a major reason why eugenics continued after the war, and why African Americans became targets of sterilization. However, it is important to note that social welfare programs were a Schrodinger's cat, of sorts. New Deal programs were open to all citizens and allowed for those who needed assistance to be aided by the U.S. Government. While African American families were allowed to obtain these benefits, it was harder for many of them to receive them. This was true regarding financial support like welfare, as well as employment programs designed to keep families afloat. According to the Roosevelt Institute, relatively small percentages of the New Deal Programs hired black workers. "By 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was employing approximately 350,000 African Americans…about 15% of its total workforce" and the Civilian Conservation Corps rose from "3% at its outset in 1933 to over 11% by the close of 1938."[30] During the Depression, many discriminatory practices withheld benefits and jobs from people of color, and shockingly this actually saved many from being mutilated. *Sterilized by the State*, explains that "indeed, and rather paradoxically, racism was until the 1960s something of a shield for African Americans from eugenicists practices," because "eugenicists viewed their society's African American citizens as so removed from the mainstream of white society as not to warrant [their] consideration." [31] Because of these discriminatory practices, New Deal programs benefited only small percentages of the black community during the 1930s and 1940s; only afterward was there a rise in welfare enrolment. Despite this, rumors of welfare abuse by people of color swirled within white society and were a primary factor behind coerced sterilizations post-WWII. The Jim Crow era made whites careless to the needs of the Black population and having a

segregated society meant African Americans were not permitted to share the full benefits of social welfare and by proxy eugenics. While this saved many people of color initially, after the 1940s (when assistance rolls began to increase with black participants) eugenic practices on this group rose dramatically.

Before the collapse and rebirth of eugenics can be discussed further, the philosophy's existence in the Black community before the 1940s must be readdressed. As stated in chapter one, during the first three decades of the 20th century eugenics had relative popularity among African Americans. Many in the black community had some form of connection to fertility control, reproductive choice, knowledge of birth control methods, and other aspects later associated with the eugenics movement. Loretta Ross, a co-founder for the Foundation of African American Women, explained that "African-Americans used birth control and abortion to resist slavery," and "the midwifery culture amongst African-American slaves maintained…knowledge about contraceptives and abortifacients."[32] As Ross demonstrated, the use of fertility control was fairly common in the community, but not always the first or favored choice by Black women. The beginning of the eugenics movement did not concern or merit fear from Black Americans because it was a part of African American culture, and at that time did not target them specifically. The relationship between eugenics and the Black community was fairly complex, to say the least. In most cases African Americans did not formally join the movement because of particular concerns, but those who did participate did so partly to promote the race to white Americans. W. E. B DuBois was one of the first Black male leaders who believed in a woman's right to choose.[33] While others rallied behind him, some opposed his views due to "fears of depopulation" by those "who were concerned about the long-term survival of the race"[34] The anxiety that many had came from viable sources. To begin with, poverty was still largely affecting the community, this resulted in higher mortality rates due to lack of medical care and overwork. Racism, which had been consistent throughout the nation, was now amplified during the Jim Crow Era. Finally, lynching had become extremely popular in the U.S., especially in the South. While these fears were completely valid, it is imperative to show that the eugenic targeting of African Americans in perpetuity had not yet begun.

As mentioned earlier, the collapse of the formal eugenics movement occurred in the 1940s. This was due to the ties which existed between it and Nazism, as well as the revelations of scientific evidence. Additionally, the conscription of doctors and shocking discovery of the Holocaust led to decreased sterilizations. Between 1941 and 1945, approximately 16,000 to 60,000 of the nation's physicians (an estimated 129,000 in 1940) were drafted into the armed forces.[35] With fewer physicians, medical priority shifted; sterilizations were seen as much less important at that time than they were two decades earlier. Although operations continued, their rates dramatically decreased. While this is significant in understanding the reduction of operations during the war, the reporting of the Holocaust was more momentous and caused feelings about eugenics to change. Siddhartha Mukherjee and Daniel Kevles explain that,

> "By the mid-1940s, the full horror of what happens in Nazi Germany becomes apparent – the movement from sterilization to extermination…based on this kind of idea of betterment of the human race…create[d] a vast embarrassment for the American Eugenics Movement." Additionally, "people were repelled and began to turn away from eugenics, and "eugenics" became a dirty word."[36]

Following the gruesome discovery of the Holocaust, eugenic science became even more scrutinized and demonized. The movement slowed to the point of collapse during this period, but the beliefs of Davenport and others continued even after most organizations ceased operation. Unfortunately, "the horrors of the Nazi era weren't enough to overcome an even stronger force: the urge to believe that quick, easy solutions can solve our social ills."[37] Around 1942, the same year the Wannsee Conference decided the fate of six million Jews, eugenicists began to rename organizations associated with the dying movement. According to Stern, "after World War II…a core group of eugenicists merged their interests in salvaging and retooling eugenics."[38] The most notable example of these efforts was Birthright Inc. (originally the New Jersey Sterilization League). This entity became the new hidden face of eugenic activism and spawned many other satellite organizations which provided information to universities all across the nation during the 1940s and 1950s. "Birthright pushed…thousands of copies of pro-eugenics literature, much of it

modeled after what had been done in California before the war."[39]

The continuation of informal eugenics after World War II was not a nationwide phenomenon like its predecessor. It was much more scattered and isolated to various regions and specific states. Certain states like California had strong ties to the movement and continued to perpetuate rhetoric for years after the war, largely focusing on Mexicans and various other groups for its duration. Outside of the South, the informal eugenics movement began to gain following through the actions of organizations such as Birthright Inc., and the mission and policies were altered to rally more members. Those involved began to look for support from wealthy donors; one of the first and largest contributors was Dr. Clarence Gamble of The Proctor & Gamble Company. With a small donation of ten thousand dollars, members began to circulate information about the "new" association in the late 1940s. The eugenicists (who at this point were largely non-scientific, racist converts, many of whom had begun flooding into the formal movement two decades prior) were successful in recruiting prominent universities such as Vassar, NYU, and Stanford, to send requests for information. During this time, many Americans rejoined the ideology, and because of this, a form of the movement was saved. It is because of these men, and those who supported them, that the United States underwent a genocide in the Black community during the 1960s and 1970s.

In the South, eugenic philosophy had a slower and more mediocre introduction during the first part of the century. This likely occurred because new ideas on science and industry had always traveled slower to this region. "There was almost always lag time between the making of a scholarly discovery and its dissemination to the public… this lag was, if anything, longer than usual in the case of eugenics."[40] Considering this, it was understandable that any scientific evidence or beliefs that traveled to the South were already outdated when they arrived. This contributed to the presence, and diffusion of, more biased arguments in the following decades. However, as years passed, these ideas became more popular, and sterilizations rose as a result. From the 1940s onward, the factors mentioned above such as welfare abuse, parental fitness, and sexuality all played into the moral arguments of eugenicists/sterilization advocates. For the southern region of the United States, these arguments were widely accepted because of the late arrival of this obsolete ideology to the area, along with the natural conservative environment, stringent

views on morality, and traditional beliefs of sexuality in society. These factors allowed the eugenics tree to root as its branches died elsewhere. During the post-war era, opinions began to change concerning assistance programs, and beliefs of abuse by larger black families also grew. Welfare, after all, had been a double-edged sword in Dixie, primarily because it offered blanket aid to both poor whites and blacks. To many elite southerners, this challenged Jim Crow society and was regarded as dangerous. This occurred during an era of higher racial tension and rising activism by African Americans in civil rights. All of these elements culminated in the increased sterilizations of colored people after the war. However, before neo-eugenics in the South can be explained, the formal movement's existence in the region before the 1940s must be discussed.

The southern United States has always been an anomaly with regard to the rest of the nation, and the eugenics movement was a prime example of this. Industry, science, and education had largely been slower to develop in the South than in most other areas. Additionally, society in almost all aspects was different, especially regarding race and class. Before the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in 1896, segregation had been a societal concept without legislative support. However, after the Reconstruction Acts were passed, white society needed to "protect" itself. As C. Vann Woodward reveals in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, the formation of a segregated South was awkward, to say the least.[41] It is important to note that during one of the most racially charged periods of American history (in the most hostile area for African Americans) eugenics was almost non-existent. As the 20th century began, most southerners were fairly ignorant of the movement. Elites may have known about this philosophy, but there was little use for it to anyone outside this group. This was because the gentry had well-established class and racial lines that were mostly uncrossable. If anything, early southern eugenics was used to improve familial lines and genetic stock, as Galton intended. Edward Larson explains in *Sex, Race, and Science* that, "southern eugenicists were…worried more about the deterioration of the white race than about any threat from the African race."[42] The early twentieth century brought forth the perfect medium for racial control and subjugation to the most racially restrictive region in the U.S.; yet southerners did not consider using eugenic policies on African Americans as their northern contemporaries had on immigrants. This was

because whites had separated themselves from Blacks in society by the turn of the.[43]

During the 1910s, southerners were more concerned with the "excess reproduction by white 'degenerates,'" rather than with black reproduction.[44] Even after eugenicists began to warp Galton's ideas to support xenophobic arguments in the late 1910s and early 1920s, the movement did not gain a significant following in Dixie. Before the 1950s, sterilizations of African Americans averaged less than operations performed on whites in multiple states (South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and others).[45] Using North Carolina as an example, one can see that before the late 1940s, eugenics, or rather eugenic sterilization, was relegated to the white population. It is important to note that these statistics are focused only on women, but that does not dispel the fact that the majority of the operations were performed on whites.

Figure 1: North Carolina Sterilizations on Women by Race and Time Period, 1929-1968.
Credit: Serene Sebring, "Reproductive Citizenship: Women of Color and Coercive Sterilization in North Carolina, 1950-1980." Page 38, Table 4.

	White	Black	Indian	Time Period Total
1929-1949	1631 (80%)	396 (20%)	0	2,027
1950-1964	1683 (50%)	1669 (49%)	35 (1%)	3,387
1964-1968	213 (33%)	414 (65%)	10 (2%)	637
Group Total	**3,527**	**2,479**	**47**	**6,053**

After the Depression began, Davenport's eugenic ideas slowly began to take hold in the South. This likely occurred because of several factors, including the establishment of economic programs, rising involvement of African Americans in civil rights, and the shift from a scientific to moral basis within the movement. As Larson states, "Only later, after the Civil Rights Movement began dismantling the machinery by which southern Whites controlled local blacks, did regional eugenic practices turn against African Americans."[46] Considering the long civil rights movement began and grew during this time, it is understandable that rising racial tensions played a role in the existence of neo-eugenics.[47] Race-based sterilization and control of Black bodies was on the horizon, and it went gingerly hand-in-hand with Jim Crow.

Throughout the 1930s, African American activism became more common, and because of this, white resistance grew both nationally and in the South. The Great Depression, which had established the social welfare programs of the New Deal, caused both races to receive aid from the government. The rise of Black activism and the reality of poverty angered many whites, and nowhere was this anger felt more strongly than in the South. The region's suffering, which had been longer and deeper, combined with the availability of social welfare offered to Black southerners threatened Jim Crow society. Tension and anger then increased between the groups after the United States entered World War II. The inadvertent creation of a black middle class and the rise of patriotism in the community increased activism during this period. As the pressure between whites and Blacks grew, so too did desires for control. African Americans wanted to be autonomous in all aspects of society, economics, and politics. While many whites wanted to maintain their control through segregation. It was at this time that Black southerners became vocal in their desires and the early civil rights movement began. As these events transpired, southern eugenics began to grow for multiple reasons. The rumors of welfare abuse by African Americans became grew after the 1940s, even though assistance recipients were (and continue to be) primarily poor whites. This became more pronounced in the South due to the social environment and traditional white racism. Although New Deal programs were available to people of color, racism and discrimination had largely kept participation low. In addition to these beliefs, myths of immorality, and black female promiscuity (a leftover from the antebellum period) caused tens of thousands to be sterilized.

During the first three decades of the eugenics movement, over half of the nation had compulsory sterilization laws on the books. Of these states, six were in the south. The total number of sterilizations performed annually in all of these states is unclear due to insufficient records, or limited access to existing ones. Still, total operations (by way of petitions against sterilization) before 1943 can be seen in the table below. The races of all victims are not known, but an estimate can be made for North Carolina from 1933 to 1943 due to the research of Angela Davis, Alexandra Stern, and Johanna Schoen. By the late 1930s, most southern states had adopted eugenic reforms and placed laws to curb the breeding of those labeled as feeble-minded. These catch-all terms were initially designed to place those "unfit" in society, individuals

with low intelligence test scores, and those with forms of mental/learning disabilities into institutions. "From the 1930s to the 1960s, lay people were casually working with assumptions that, for many scientists, were long disproven."[48] It is important to understand that during the existence of formal eugenics in the South, mental hospitals and asylums were underfunded, overcrowded, and heavily segregated.[49] This indicated that before the 1940s, while Black patients may have been sterilized in the region, it was certainly at a much lower rate than whites. The terms used in eugenic laws remained in use throughout the evolution of the movement, and were the excuses utilized in operating on African Americans with "mental deficiencies."

State	Number of Sterilizations prior to 1943
Alabama	224
Georgia	190
Mississippi	542
North Carolina	1346
Virginia	4472
West Virginia	47

Figure 2: See Full Excel Sheet

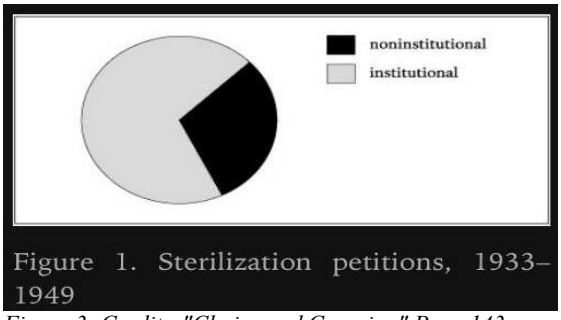

Figure 1. Sterilization petitions, 1933–1949

Figure 3: Credit - "Choice and Coercion" Page 143

As the shift from a scientific basis concerned with biological quality and personal health shifted to a moral one (aimed at limiting the reproduction and influx of various "undesirables"), fertility activists took to the frontlines. "Birth control advocates believed it was important to 'prevent the American people from being replaced by alien or Negro stock."[50] The repression of the former was seen from the late 1910s to mid-1920s (which lasted until immigration reforms in the 1960s), and after this group had been thoroughly tamed, the latter was next. According to an exposé on eugenic practices in North Carolina by the Winston-Salem Journal, "the [eugenics] program had been racially balanced in the early years." [51] While balanced was used loosely, the fact remained that before the 1940s policies in the South did not outright target African Americans. However, as the beliefs of welfare abuse rose, racial tensions increased, and old perceptions of immorality in the Black community grew during the 1930s to the 1950s, so too did the targeting of minorities. The myth of the Jezebel, or the belief that African American women

were promiscuous or hyperactive sexually, combined with beliefs of abuse and morality. This became the cause for targeting non-institutionalized minorities during the 1960s and 1970s. This was "precisely the period when minority women were being targeted" Kevin Begos argues.[52] This myth allowed not only for black women to be institutionalized more often after the 1930s, but also allowed for the increase of sexual violence and assault against them, thus raising illegitimacy rates; a factor also used during the neo-eugenics period for sterilization. If women were seen as promiscuous, they could be sterilized. "The [eugenics] board almost routinely violated…the law by passing judgement on many other things, from promiscuity to homosexuality."[53]

As stated in the first chapter, eugenics during the early 20th century had primarily been used to sterilize those in institutions such as prisons, mental asylums, and mental health hospitals. Those institutionalized at this time did not have the choice of refusing sterilization as a treatment. If a doctor signed the paperwork provided by the state's eugenics board, the patient's operation was a certainty. The methods of invoking sterilization were built in such a way as to curb any attempt to halt them. Those who appealed to the eugenics board were turned down most of the time; regardless of who was present in the patient's defense or the validity of the reason behind the operation. This was seen multiple times with the sterilization petitions by patients in hospitals and asylums after the war. "Hearing cases [against sterilization] …have been only a formality"[54] the Winston-Salem Journal wrote in its 2002 exposé. The shift from institutional to non-institutional operations occurred during the late 1930s around the same time as the racial shift began. Because of this, many African Americans who were operated on in the 1950s and 1960s were never in mental health institutions and were often coerced in the privacy of their own homes. In many cases, those who had never actually been admitted to the sterilization program were picked. For example, an un-institutionalized woman by the name of Sally was taken to a hospital in North Carolina for exhaustion in 1945. While there, it was determined that she needed sterilization due to a slight intellectual disability. Even after her parents intervened by saying that their daughter was not promiscuous and a respectable woman, Sally was still sterilized.[55] These situations were common during the neo-eugenics period. According to Johanna Schoen, "Patients in state institutions were told that they

had to agree to sterilization as a condition of release, and in many cases people on welfare were threatened with loss of benefits"[56]

During the 1950s and 1960s, race and welfare status were used to target the Black community. In the south, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia comprised to twenty-six percent of all the national sterilizations performed from 1943-1963.[57] Because of limited access to (and the existence of) operation records, historians can only estimate the total number of victims and what percentage were Black. However, if North Carolina were used as a model state to measure sterilizations, it becomes clear that African Americans were intended targets of eugenic policies after WWII. We can infer that from the 1940s to the 1960s, roughly fifty to sixty percent of southern sterilizations were performed primarily on Black women.[58] This occurred because the lower class, which had historically been comprised of minority groups, especially African Americans, was labeled as a burden on financial assistance programs (an argument perpetuated since the beginning of the movement itself). Additionally, as more participants enrolled in welfare programs, regardless of race or existing demographic rates, it became clear that taxpayers were going to be responsible. This "rediscovery of poverty"[59] in the conservative South, combined with the myths of Black women, Black female sexuality, and fears of welfare abuse, created an environment that not only allowed eugenic rhetoric to continue but also pushed anti-Black attitudes.

As time passed, the shift from a scientific to morality basis caused those outside of institutions to be targeted more vigorously. Figure 3, from Johanna Schoen's *Choice and Coercion,* gives support to this argument. The chart shows the number of sterilization petitions filed from 1933 to 1949. It became clear that operations performed before the 1950s were in institutions such as hospitals, mental asylums, and so on. For the first half of the century, sterilizations of whites were extremely high. This seems understandable considering that most facilities housed primarily white patients, and Black-only institutions were not created until the late 1930s.[60] After the aforementioned shift, eugenics gradually began to change from xenophobia to anti-black racism. Because non-institutional sterilizations were growing rapidly after the 1940s (see figure 4), this allowed for more African Americans to be targeted despite the low number of integrated or all-black institutions. Shoen states that in North Carolina,

"patients… who were African American rose from 23 percent in the 1930's and 1940's to 59 percent between 1958 and 1960 and finally to 64 percent between 1964 and 1966."[61] While it is hard to pinpoint exactly what inspired this growth, Black female resistance to sexual violence, Black male resistance to physical violence, participation in civil rights, as well as the factors previously mentioned, appear to be the most plausible. After all, a pattern existed in the early years of the eugenics movement regarding changes to the status quo. Care for the mentally ill challenged societal perceptions on the government's role and its economic responsibility to citizens. Additionally, the massive influx of eastern and southern European immigrants threatened the demographics supported by nativists. In both cases, these groups were targeted by eugenicists based partially on these societal conflicts. The same can be said regarding African Americans during the Civil Rights Era. Although these issues were not the only elements behind this targeting, they were significant.

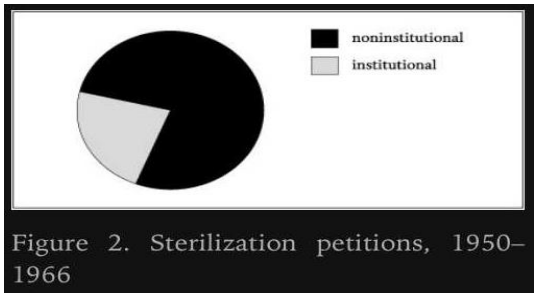

Figure 2. Sterilization petitions, 1950–1966

Figure 4: Credit - "Choice and Coercion" Page 143

State	Sterilizations: 1950-1963
Alabama	244
Georgia	2,481
Mississippi	87
North Carolina	3,896
Virginia	1,581
West Virginia	50

Figure 5: See Full Excel Sheet,

During the post-war years, the rise of sterilization in the United States became more frequent and evident. The only exception to this rise within the South was in West Virginia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Since the repeal of the sterilization law in Alabama, no operations were undertaken during this time. The reason for this rise was a mixture of concern that welfare abuse by the black community was becoming rampant, and the increasing racial tension brought on by the start of the civil rights movement.

> "By the 1950's, social policy had refashioned the theoretical foundations of eugenic sterilization to meet its purposes. Fears about the rising cost of the ADC [welfare] program led to a significant shift in the racial composition of those targeted for eugenic sterilization."[62]

As these elements mixed, the number of operations performed on poor black women increased. The

resistance of black women during the 1940s came in the form of court cases and charges filed against white southern rapists. Women such as Recy Taylor, Joan Little, and Fannie Lou Hamer began to fight back against white supremacy and white male control over their bodies. "Between 1940 and 1975, sexual violence and interracial rape became one crucial battleground upon which African Americans sought to destroy white supremacy"[63] This broad-based Black uprising in the South likely encouraged eugenics boards to control the black population in some way. Then there was black military service, increased job availability, better pay, and Executive Order 8802. Black soldiers returning home from the war brought with them the idea of "Double V" or "Double Victory."[64] This was an era of great tension, and as the attempts to break free from Jim Crow became more common.

These forms of resistance combined with the rise of people on the welfare rolls culminated in increased sterilizations of African Americans, mainly women. "Nationwide, the percentage of welfare recipients who were African American rose from 31 percent in 1950 to 48 percent in 1961."[65] With this rise of black participation in government assistance programs, whites across the South began to exaggerate pre-existing myths about welfare abuse in the black community. In response to this, the local eugenics boards sent social workers out to evaluate those accused of abuse in an effort to reduce the strain on assistance programs, such as Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). Those who were often targeted were primarily women of color in larger families. As Stern points out.

> "the forced sterilization of women in the United States was interwoven with the enlargement of the welfare state…" and because of this association with race and welfare abuse, thousands of people suffered horrible mutilations.[66]

While not all social workers specifically went after Black women, many in the South did. They used as an excuse social ideals of proper sexual activity, attempting to ensure that mothers were not breeding multiple children in order to obtain more money through the ADC. Victims of racially biased eugenic sterilizations were harassed under the guise of protection. Social workers who visited minority women during the 1950s and 1960s usually came around the time that a member of the household was pregnant

or had just given birth. Laws had been passed stating that those who had an excess number of children, or those who had illegitimate children, needed to be sterilized for the good of society.[67] The unnecessary birthing of Black babies, they argued, meant that more benefits of welfare programs would go to African American families and mothers. Mississippi advocates claimed, "We have a welfare problem that is hurting our state…we do not approve, and we are not going to continue to pay for it."[68] This sentiment was felt throughout the South, and with it came the fighting back of white southerners.

Of the thousands of sterilization patients in the South, this text uses three to exemplify neo-eugenics in this region after the 1940s. The first victim focused on is Fannie Lou Hamer, a survivor of mutilation and a civil rights activist. Hamer was admitted to the Sunflower City Hospital in Mississippi to have a procedure performed on a uterine tumor in 1961. While being operated on, it was decided by the surgeon to sterilize the forty-four-year-old without her knowledge or consent. This procedure was often performed on Black patients, and even became known as the "Mississippi Appendectomy." Hamer was one of many women in the state to receive this operation, and she voiced her concern that this treatment was occurring outside her home. During a 1965 speech in Washington D.C., Hamer shocked many by claiming that "about six out of every ten Negro women that go to the hospital are [unknowingly] sterilized with the tubes tied."[69] Hamer was only one of the thousands of Black women who were sterilized in the 1960s. After learning she had been forcefully sterilized, Hamer began to work with the Student Non-violent Coordination Committee (SNCC) in order to educate the U.S. citizens on what was happening in Dixie (this was only one of many activities she performed during the civil rights era). SNCC produced a pamphlet in 1964 called *Genocide in Mississippi*. It focused on exposing the treatment of minority women in the South and included everything from a list of participating counties to the representatives who had voted for various sterilization legislation.[70] Hamer's and SNCC's activism helped inform those in the region, and in Mississippi specifically, about the dangers Black women faced. Unfortunately, this was not enough to stop sterilizations, but the operations in the state began to decline in the following years.

The second victim, Nial Cox Ramirez, was sterilized in 1965 after giving birth to an illegitimate

child at 18. After learning of her pregnancy, the Eugenics Board of North Carolina gave her two choices; either give birth to the child and be sterilized after, "or have welfare payments for her mother and six brothers and sisters cut off."[71] She made the heart-wrenching decision to be sterilized was made after the gravity of the situation set in. Ramirez and hundreds more like her became the targets of the racial eugenic rhetoric that had come to dominate the neo-eugenics era. A prime example of the rationale behind decisions to target African Americans can be seen in the arguments of people such as Sue Casebolt; a former executive secretary of the North Carolina eugenics board. She and others after World War II were implementing the racially biased scientific ideas which had been accepted in the South. This created an agenda to target minority neighborhoods by insisting that "poor blacks had more mental problems than other groups," a belief that had existed since the Army intelligence tests were released almost fifty years prior. [72] This clear attack on young African Americans is corroborated by Alexandra Stern.

> "An uninterrupted line can be drawn from the sterilization laws passed…in the 1910s that targeted 'morons' and the 'feebleminded' to the…surgeries performed by federal agencies on poor female welfare recipients during the 1960s.[73]

The state eugenics boards were coercing the southern Black population into mutilation through legal means, and there was little opposition to these laws outside of the Black community. As more of these victims began to speak out, there were attempts to correct the wrongs which had been made. However, progress on this front has been exceedingly slow and the full recognition of what has occurred in the United States has not yet been completed.

The final victim discussed in this chapter is Elaine Riddick Jessie, who was maimed by the state in 1968. She and Ramirez both had similar stories of sterilization; however, Jessie's was much more unique. Jessie had been younger than both Hamer and Ramirez at the time of her operation. At age 13, she had been sexually accosted by a man in his late 20's and the incident resulted in the child becoming pregnant. Due to her race and young age, the eugenics board denied all appeals made by her and her family. The Winston-Salem Journal points out that the myth of the Jezebel played a role in their decision. "Officials also justified their actions by terming Jessie promiscuous."[74] The treatment she endured was a

key reminder of the bias held by the white eugenics board members, and how they viewed black citizens. Evidence of this was seen when she was given an IQ test prior to her operation. The board had established intelligence test standards years prior concerning sterilizations, and if a patient were to take an IQ test and score above a 70, they were exempted from sterilization. Jessie's test, which was taken as part of one of her appeals, came back with a 75. Despite this, she was still operated on in 1968.[75] Another thing that sets her and Ramirez's case apart was the fact that Jessie's grandmother, Maggie Woodard, had unknowingly signed the sterilization paperwork, and was coerced into doing so. "The white social worker…pressed Woodard to consent to have Jessie sterilized."[76] This was the most blatant evidence that white social workers, who worked through the eugenics board, were deeply involved in sterilizing African Americans enrolled in welfare programs. The desire of these people was so strong that they violated the law multiple times to obtain what they deemed was necessary. Jessie was a perfect example of how racially biased eugenic rhetoric functioned in the South during the neo-eugenics era. She was a minor at the time of her operation, and she could not sign her petition, so "Woodard, who [was] illiterate, signed her "X" on a consent form."[77] This was in no way a legal form of consent from either party, regardless, it was upheld.

These three women, and thousands of others, continued through a life of pain and misery that no one can possibly imagine. The reasons behind their mutilations stemmed from racial ideology which had slowly infiltrated the eugenics movement decades prior, beliefs in long-existing myths about people of color, violations of social norms regarding sex, rising social tensions, and many more. There was never solid scientific evidence behind the formal movement, and after its collapse it continued on old beliefs, outdated philosophies, and fears of "the other." In 1973, as racial tensions began to calm slightly, the sterilization of two African American sisters brought attention to eugenic policies. In Alabama, Minnie and Mary Relf were operated on without their knowledge nor their (or their parent's) consent. Shortly after, eugenic policies were under serious scrutiny when a lawsuit was filed. The *Relf v. Weinberger* (1974) case not only ended federally funded involuntary sterilizations but also "the practice of threatening women on welfare with the loss of their benefits."[78] The culmination of voices finally opened "the Pandora's box of sterilization abuse…[but] it was practically too late to influence the politics of the

abortion rights movement," and the legislation created by eugenics.[79] The story of these violations in the Black community has been explored in various depths since the 1980s, and new discoveries have been made through the efforts of scholars within the last decade, giving more attention to victims of the eugenics movement.

As stated earlier in this chapter, an exact number of sterilizations per southern state (as well as the race and gender of those victims) is extremely hard to determine. However, Sebring, Schoen, and others have allowed an approximation to be made based on the available data. According to Angela Davis, in North Carolina "7,686 sterilizations had been carried out since 1933 [to 1981] …about 5,000 of the sterilized persons had been Black."[80] At an average of 134 annual operations performed during this timeframe, approximately 95 were performed on African Americans.[81] Using these numbers, a total average of black sterilization in the state was possibly as high as 65%. According to Sebring's data, African American operations averaged 20% of total sterilizations from 1929 to 1949. After WWII, these numbers steadily increased to 65% by 1968. Total operations on whites from 1929 to 1968 averaged 58.7% and on Blacks 41.2%. While whites were still the primary victims overall, their numbers during the 1950s to 1968 dropped 17% and their total average fell to 47.7%. For African Americans, the total jumped from 41.2% to 52.3% during the same period. Although data here cannot speak for the entirety of the South, it is logical to assume that operations on black North Carolinians ranged from 52% to 65% after the 1940s. If this state's actions were similar to the others in Dixie (which is plausible given that pre-war sterilization percentages in other southern states were almost the same) a grand total of operations performed on this group in the region before 1964 was between 6,019 and 11,571.[82] Even if North Carolina were treated as an outlier, the fact remains that even at fifty percent the number of African Americans sterilized in the South hovered potentially at 10,000. While the numbers are still presently being researched, the horrible reality remains.

Informal eugenics made the movement's final shift to anti-Black racism by the latter half of the 20th century. Although race was not the sole criteria behind its formal existence, racist rhetoric infested the movement during the late 1910s and early 1920s. The shift from a scientific to moral basis in the

1930s allowed for morality and economic myths of African Americans to be used as excuses in order to put this group under the knife. Only after the war, with the rebuilding of this ideology (neo-eugenics) did black Americans become major targets of race-based eugenic sterilization. This was caused by the rising "percentage of welfare recipients who were African American [which] rose from 31 percent in 1950 to 48 percent in 1961," "emphasis on illegitimacy in the black community," and the "racist stereotypes about the hypersexual black woman."[83] After the 1940s, neo-eugenicists supported racism through policies used to harm people of color. Continuation of rhetoric in the South did not occur at a large rate until civil rights activism began in the 1930s and flourished in the following three decades. As this occurred, the mentality of southern eugenicists changed to focus on the newest group challenging traditional beliefs and Jim Crowism. The social issues connected to these people, such as enrollment on welfare rolls, illegitimacy, hypersexuality, morality, and others were used as fuel to push coerced sterilizations on the Black community.

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[1] A large portion of this chapter was used in an earlier draft of my article "Sterilization and the Black Community: The Neo-Eugenics Movement, 1945-1981" with permission from the *Omnino Journal* of Valdosta State University.
[2] Kenneth Ludmerer, "American Geneticists and the Eugenics Movement: 1905-1935," *Journal of the History of Biology* 2 (1969), 347.
[3] Hereditary traits were based on a single gene with repetitious patterns, like pea plants, and could be predicted.
[4] PBS, The Eugenics Crusade, Public Broadcasting Service, October 16, 2018. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/eugenics-crusade/v
[5] Letter from Thomas H. Morgan to Charles Davenport, 1915. Quoted in Garland Allen, "Genetics, Eugenics, and Class Struggle," *Genetics* 79 (June 1975): 39.
[6] Allen, "Genetics, Eugenics, and Class Struggle," 36-37.
[7] Robert W. Sussman, *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 166.
[8] Sussman, *The Myth of Race,* 169.
[9] Jonathon Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (University Press of New England, 2009), 302; and Sussman, *The Myth of Race*, 169.
[10] Ludmerer, "American Geneticists and the Eugenics Movement", 355.
[11] Otto Klineberg, *Race Differences* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1935), 194.
[12] Sussman, *The Myth of Race*, 187.
[13] Ludmerer, "American Geneticists and the Eugenics Movement," 358
[14] PBS, The Eugenics Crusade.
[15] Michael Kohlman, "Evangelizing Eugenics: A Brief Historiography of Popular and Formal American Eugenics Education, 1908-1948," *Alberta Science Education Journal* 58 (Winter 2013): 661.
[16] W.S. Evans, "Organized Eugenics," *American Eugenics Society* (January 1931): x.
[17] Kohlman, "Evangelizing Eugenics," 663.
[18] Ibid., 666.
[19] Hamilton Cravens, *The Triumph of Evolution: American Scientists and the Heredity-Environment Controversy, 1900- 1941*, (University of Philadelphia Press, 1978), 53. Cited in "Evangelizing Eugenics", 671
[20] PBS, The Eugenics Crusade.

[21] Ibid.
[22] Wendy Kline, "A New Deal for the Child" in *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s*, ed. Susan Currell & Cristina Cogdell (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 18, 19.
[23] Kline, "A New Deal for the Child," 19.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 24.
[26] Ibid., 25, 27.
[27] Letter from Popenoe to Golden, May 26, 1936, in File 11.9. 89, Gosney Papers. Quoted in Kline, "A New Deal for the Child", *Popular Eugenics*, 34.
[28] Kline, "A New Deal for the Child," 18-20, 23.
[29] Rebecca M. Kluchin, *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 75.
[30] Roosevelt Institute, "African Americans and the New Deal: A Look Back at History," February 2010, https://rooseveltinstitute.org/african-americans-and-new-deal-look-back-history/, accessed February 20th, 2018.
[31] Randall Hanson and Desmond King, *Sterilized by the State: Eugenics, Race, and the Population Scare in Twentieth- Century North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10.
[32] Loretta Ross, "African-American Women and Abortion: A Neglected History," *Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Undeserved* 3 (1992): 276.
[33] W.E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater*: *Voices from the Veil* (Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1920), Chapter 9
[34] Ross, "African-American Women and Abortion," 278.
[35] U.S. Army Medical Department: Office of Medical History, Chapter IV: Procurement, 1941-1945: Medical, Dental, and Veterinary Corps, https://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwii/personnel/chapter4.htm, accessed April 26, 2018.; and William Weinfeld, "Income of Physicians, 1929-1949," (Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis, July 1951), 3.
[36] PBS, The Eugenics Crusade.
[37] Kevin Begos, "The American Eugenics Movement after World War II (Part 1 of 3)," *Indy Week*, May 18, 2011.
[38] Alexandra Stern, *"Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in America"* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2016), 4.
[39] Begos, "The American Eugenics Movement after World War II (Part 1 of 3),"
[40] Hanson and King, *Sterilized by the State*, 165.
[41] C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3-10.
[42] Edward Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 2.
[43] PBS, The Eugenics Crusade.
[44] Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 2.
[45] Gregory M. Dorr, *Segregation's Science Eugenics and Society in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 186; Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 155; and Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*: *Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 187.
[46] Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 2.
[47] Ibid., 40.
[48] Hanson and King, *Sterilized by the State*, 165.
[49] Ibid., 10-11.
[50] Betsey Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics ff Population Control and Contraceptive Choice*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1987), 97. Quoted in context with Ross, "African-American Women and Abortion," 279.
[51] "Against Their Will," *Winston-Salem Journal*, December 09, 2002, http://www.journalnow.com/specialreports/againsttheirwill/, accessed February 25, 2018.
[52] Begos, "The American Eugenics Movement after World War II (Part 1 of 3)."
[53] "Against Their Will."
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Excel spreadsheet provided by Alexandra Stern via email from Johanna Schoen.
[58] Values derived are from sources in annotated bibliography and averaged; the lowest percentage was 43 and the highest was 65.

[59] The "rediscovery of poverty" was the realization that the lower class needed financial support in order to survive. It was assumed by white citizens that the majority of those in need were non-white who abused the system to avoid work. This belief persists today despite evidence that poor whites compose the majority of financial assistance rolls.
[60] Hanson and King, *Sterilized by the State*, 10-11.
[61] Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion, Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 156.
[62] Schoen. *Choice and Coercion*, 156.
[63] Daniel McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street,* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), xx.
[64] This term references the idea of victory abroad during WWII by defeating Hitler and the Axis Powers, and victory at home by defeating the "Hitlers" of the United States, or white supremacists/racists.
[65] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 156.
[66] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 7.
[67] Begos, "The American Eugenics Movement after World War II (Part 3 of 3)."
[68] Ibid.
[69] Fannie Lou Hamer, *The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is* (University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 41.
[70] Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee, *"Genocide in Mississippi"*, (SNCC Atlanta Office, 1964)
[71] Winston-Salem Journal, "Against Their Will," Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 7.
[74] "Against Their Will."
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] The Southern Poverty Law Center, *Relf V. Weinberger*, https://www.splcenter.org/seeking-justice/case-docket/relf-v-weinberger, accessed April 24, 2021.
[79] Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 215-216.
[80] Ibid., 217.
[81] This number derived from averaging the total sterilizations of North Carolina from 1933-1963 (7,686) and the total number of African Americans sterilized in the state (Approximately 5,000) minus the average of sterilizations recorded prior to 1943.
[82] 6,019 black patients was derived from using Sebring's 20% from 1929-1949, and 49% from 1950-1964 with the sterilization data in southern states provided by Stern and Schoen. Likewise the 11,571 black patients was derived using the same method except using Davis' estimate of 65%. In both Sebring and Davis' estimates the maximum percentage of black sterilization victims was 65% by the late 1960s.
[83] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion,* 138.

CONCLUSION:

ASSESSING HOW EUGENICS EVOLVED AND IMPACTED THE UNITED STATES.

The term "eugenics" typically invokes a highly negative response from most who hear it. Often, many envision the Holocaust, Nazism, or other examples of population control in totalitarian regimes. Rarely do people imagine Carrie Buck, Ann Hewitt, Fannie Lou Hammer, or the nameless masses that underwent sterilization in the United States. As stated in the introduction, students in this nation are seldom taught this horrifying reality before they reach the college level. That factor combined with a severe lack of original documentation are likely reasons why the American eugenics movement has faded from our consciousness. Regardless, this philosophy has become ingrained in society and transformed how we examine the economics, intelligence, morality, worth, and other aspects connected to the human condition.

When Galton's theory was first created, social class was a more fundamental factor than race for two reasons. First, class division was much older and more prominent in British society than race.[1] Second, Galton and similar men of science held a belief of inherent superiority and felt that the immediate threat to humanity (and the nation) was the procreation of the mentally ill and deficient. The mindset was that if the lower class, who had larger amounts of these people, kept breeding at an increased rate while the upper classes decreased in birthrate, eventually the country would be intellectually and physically weakened. This could open Great Britain to external forces and allow it to be taken over in some fashion. These fears became prevalent, and eugenics slowly grew in the United Kingdom for years, all the while focusing on increasing the birthrate of the "fitter" upper classes. Galton's ideas were racist in the sense that he regarded non-whites as beneath whites, but he

never sought to eliminate or depopulate these groups. On the contrary, Galton felt that non-whites were so intellectually stunted that eventually, they would become extinct; therefore, no reason existed to destroy or improve them.[2] The original concept of eugenics was almost unrecognizable when compared to the philosophies and policies seen in the United States decades after its initial arrival. Within fifty years Galton's beliefs that human improvement through increased breeding of intellectuals was warped to benefit only upper-class WASPs.

During the early years of the 20th century when eugenics arrived in the U.S., it remained almost entirely classist. From its introduction and through its infancy, American eugenic thinking relied more on social Darwinism and used classism to rid the nation of those allegedly behind social problems. The individuals in the lowest socio-economic areas who engaged in prostitution, those given charity through wealthy donors or by the state, or criminals were the primary targets of early eugenic policies. Race, before the late 1910s, was not a serious contributing factor. Intelligence was, and the Black community advocated the use of eugenics for decades. Additionally, legislation passed before 1937 focused on the sterilization of the intellectually inferior, a general term that applied to multiple groups and various sexes. Donald Pickens' work, which was the first contribution to eugenic historiography, stated that "eugenicists defended the status quo by sterilization, immigrant restriction, and birth control."[3] Indeed they did, and as new groups challenged the status quo, they became targets of American eugenic policies. Because they were seen as the link to social and economic problems, the mentally ill were portrayed as threats to the nation and subsequently pursued. However, as new challenges to society emerged and conflicting scientific evidence against eugenics grew, the foundation and targets altered to remain relevant.

The next group many upper-class whites viewed as a threat to American society were immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. This was primarily because these groups had flooded into the nation since the late 1800s and were reproducing rapidly. Composed mostly of the lower

class, they posed legitimate economic and political dangers to those in power. Additionally, most members of the eugenics movement by the late 1910s had joined because of growing nativist and xenophobic rhetoric "supported" by intelligence testing.[4] Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, tensions and fears grew that put European immigrants at the center of problems in society; similar to how the mentally deficient had been cast earlier in the movement. The conclusion of World War I, isolationism, nationalism, and several other factors contributed to upper-class whites' concerns that the nation needed to improve, or risk takeover by "the other." Nativist literature began to circulate in the 1910s and increased the xenophobic attitudes of eugenicists and laypersons. This combined with intelligence test results, which had been published and used to argue immigrant inferiority, to grow the movement's political extension. Ultimately by 1924, eugenic thinking had persuaded Congress to enact immigration restrictions that remained in use for over thirty years. Because these members had been led to believe that the majority of the criminals, prostitutes, political and economic threats, and sources behind modern social problems were non-native-born Americans, the door to America was almost entirely closed.

As American eugenics shifted from classism to nativism and xenophobia, the scientific reality of eugenics was under serious scrutiny. Scientists and geneticists who had been members of the movement slowly withdrew upon learning that contradictory evidence revealed the flawed foundation of Davenport's (and by extension, Galton's) arguments.[5] Although initially a silent retreat, soon these individuals began to speak out. This occurred because laws and restrictions were being passed in response to eugenic science, which they argued had no solid foundation.[6] By the 1930s, the movement was in danger of collapse after counter-information became widespread. Unfortunately, members were able to alter their arguments from relying solely on scientific evidence to emphasizing ethics and morality. After this point, the ideology slowly changed into a form that allowed it to continue despite

the end of the movement in the 1940s. It was also during this time that race began to play a more central role in the arguments of eugenicists.

As stated above, while Galton believed in a natural hierarchy that placed Anglo-Saxons on top and all others in various descending order, racism was never a major pillar in his ideas. However, as eugenics transformed in the U.S., it was adapted to fit our social system. This meant that racism was inevitably to be a factor in how it functioned. During the infancy and adolescence of the movement, eugenics (while still based on classism) was used by African Americans as well as whites. After the policies of the New Deal began to threaten the status quo of Jim Crow by offering financial support regardless of race (in theory), eugenics found a new target. However, unlike with xenophobic actions taken against immigrants years prior, the movement was not able to enact legislation that specifically targeted Black citizens. Despite this, the groundwork for future oppression was laid as economic arguments and myths against African Americans grew. The political uprising of the civil rights movement in the 1930s through the 1960s further challenged the status quo of white society and fueled actions taken against people of color. The change from science to morality in the 1930s, combined with economic arguments and murmurs of welfare abuse, led to increased eugenic activities against this group. Additionally, economic concerns combined with pre-existing myths that African Americans were immoral, leading to the sterilizations of thousands of black citizens, primarily in conservative regions like the South, for decades.

The evolution of eugenics is a complicated and multi-faceted history. The common misconception that this British-born, American-raised, ideology was used only to target minorities is prevalent in our consciousness, despite its inaccuracy. While eugenic policies did eventually target various racial groups including Native Americans, African Americans, and others, the fact remains that original targets were generally the mentally ill of multiple races; specifically, those believed to be responsible for social problems. As time passed and groups who jeopardized (or were thought to

threaten) American society became the new targets of formal or informal eugenic policies. Classist eugenic ideology targeted individuals through mentalism, nativist eugenics focused on immigrants through xenophobic policies, and finally racist eugenics concentrated on sterilizing various minorities through economic and moral arguments. The entirety of the movement itself cannot be labeled as solely racist when the first decades of its existence had different races utilizing its ideas for their benefit. Additionally, until the 1950s and 1960s eugenic policies largely targeted lower-class whites. Although Southern and Eastern European immigrants were affected from the 1920s onward, most of these individuals were or are deemed white. Even though eugenics was not founded primarily by racism, the period in which it was implemented made a lasting impact on how it has been examined, received, and generally accepted as correct in the modern world.

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[1] Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*: *Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 76.
[2] Francis Galton, "Hereditary Character and Talent," *Macmillan's Magazine* 12 (1865): 325.
[3] Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 18, 50.
[4] Robert W. Sussman, *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 53-54; and Diane Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to Present* (New Jersey: Humanities International Press Inc., 1995), 58-59, 108-109.
[5] Garland Allen, "Genetics, Eugenics, and Class Struggle," *Genetics* 79 (June 1975), 36-39; and Sussman, *The Myth of Race*, 167-170.
[6] Sussman, *The Myth of Race*, 168-169.

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APPENDIX A:

Table 1: Nationwide Sterilizations Performed By State From 1900 to 1964. Credit – Johanna Schoen and Alexandra Stern.

	Alabama	Arizona	California	Connecticut	Delaware	Georgia	Idaho	Indiana
Totals prior to 1943	224	20	16553	457	641	190	14	1231
1943			459	31	17	97		55
1944			387	2	27	73		74
1945			436	1	20	90		122
1946			480		29	68		192
1947			401	6	15	24		89
1948			326	8	34	94		77
1949		1	381	10	19	167		49
1950			275	2	13	226		71
1951			150	3	7	200		60
1952			39	5	33	279	5	37
1953			23	5	4	246	8	55
1954			27	2		207	4	85
1955		1	25	3		261	2	94
1956		8	23	7	12	268		34
1957			13	2	8	268		29
1958			13	2	1	142		17
1959			12	1	0	112		7
1960			18	2	9	148	1	14
1961			24		9	60	2	9
1962			26	5	22	57		11
1963			17	3	25	7	2	12
TOTALS UP TO 1964	224	30	20108	557	945	3284	38	2424

Iowa	Kansas	Maine	Michigan	Minnesota	Mississippi	Montana	Nebraska	New Hampshire
493	2706	217	2388	2111	542	208	530	468
58	88	1	78	46	4	5	79	24
46	57		107	34	8		23	19
52	32	2	86	13	9	2	16	20
45	71	9	75	2	19	15	13	9
70	29	3	117	1	11	6	7	6

127	18	3	131	4	3	5	20	11
165		3	88	8		8	16	14
113	24	6	72	12			19	17
178		4	65	15		3	19	23
70		5	81	16		2	37	18
85		8	103	13			27	21
72		17	71	10		2	23	8
47		26	61	9			15	4
69		1	27	19	6		8	8
48		5	47	12	13		5	8
21		4	39	8	22		4	
14		4	27	6	15		10	1
28		2	18	5	13		6	
51	7	3	46	5	3		10	
28		2	26	1	8		5	
30		1	33		7		10	
1910	3032	326	3786	2350	683	256	902	679

New York	North Carolina	North Dakota	Oklahoma	Oregon	South Carolina	South Dakota	Utah
42	1346	628	553	1597	57	643	310
	152	43		57	17	3	69
	107	13		24	3	7	16
	117	21		21		10	22
	105	29		49		24	56
	139	17		30		46	58
	186	33		43	4	12	16
	249	23		32	7	3	14
	295	23		60	12	5	34
	375	42		42	10	4	30
	326	22	2	72	3	4	46
	270	37		59	7	8	16
	300			25	8	6	13
	289	16	1	28	30	2	9
	216	14		38	43	2	15
	305	14		23	34	4	12
	318	9		14	11	3	5
	260	22		40	6	1	7
	234	12		19	7	1	16
	248	16		24	3		
	220	15		21	6		
	240			23	9	1	
42	6297	1049	556	2341	277	789	764

Vermont	Virginia	Washington	West Virginia	Wisconsin	GRAND TOTAL
225	4472	685	47	1372	40970
3	203		1	48	1638
4	105			47	1183
8	178			58	1336
10	152			24	1476
	122			35	1232
1	134			46	1336
	215			28	1500
1	204			42	1526
	207			22	1459
	153			12	1267
	169			16	1180
	171		14	14	1079
	111		33		1067
	87		3	1	909
1	128			7	986
	114				747
	69				614
	61			8	622
	39			2	561
	29			6	488
	39			8	467
253	7162	685	98	1796	63643