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What's in a Name? The Politics of Commemoration from the un-naming of the Alexander Graham Bell dorm at RIT to the Samuel Schmucker controversy at WCU

Brent Ruswick

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RELEASE THE STRANGLE-HOLD OF
HEREDITARY DISEASE AND UNFITNESS

**WHAT'S IN A NAME? THE POLITICS OF
COMMEMORATION FROM THE UN-NAMING OF
THE ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL DORM AT RIT,
TO THE SAMUEL SCHMUCKER CONTROVERSY AT
WCU**

Dr. Brent Ruswick

Professor, Department of History

Overview

The Short History of
Eugenics (15 min)

Schmucker,
Contextualized (25 min)

A Recent, Relevant
Example: RIT (7 min)

RELEASE THE STRANGLE-HOLD OF HEREDITARY DISEASE AND UNFITNESS

Literally: "The science of being well-born"

"Its first object is to check the birth-rate of the Unfit, instead of allowing them to come into being, though doomed in large numbers to perish prematurely. ["Negative Eugenics"] The second object is the improvement of the race by furthering the productivity of the Fit by early marriages and healthful rearing of their children." ["Positive Eugenics"] -Galton, *Memories of My Life*, 1908, as quoted in [Levine and Bashford](#), p 5.

Overview: Eugenics

Related Goals: Promoting Natal, Maternal Health to improve birth outcomes. ("Euthenics")

Features: 1890s-1940s Eugenics

Negative Eugenics: To Segregate and Sequester?

- [Marriage restriction laws](#) in > 40 states
- Tens of Thousands more [“unfit” involuntarily institutionalized](#) for decades-to-life, committed to labor for institution’s upkeep.

Or To Sterilize???

- [At least 60,000 involuntary sterilizations](#) of the “unfit” in U.S.
- [Sterilization laws in 32 states](#)
 - Involuntary Sterilizations upheld in [Buck v Bell](#) 1927
 - Model legislation would have sterilized millions in US, became [basis of Nazi “race hygiene” laws](#) that sterilized approx. 400,000

bei zu schwacher Fortpflanzung der höherwertigen

Targets:

- **1st phase 1890s-1940s: “feeble-minded,” poor, criminals, both white and black women**
- **Feeble-minded = “easily manipulated into a catch-all term for any type of behavior considered inappropriate or threatening”**
- **Always Rooted in Ableism, Often Rooted in white supremacy: “Race Suicide”**
 - **The immediate ancestor to modern-day white supremacists’ “replacement theory”**

am Anfang

nach 30 Jahren

nach 60 Jahren

nach 90 Jahren

nach 120 Jahren

Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford from the *Oxford Handbook for the History of Eugenics*:

“these were projects of racial nationalism and indeed racial purity—eugenics was never not about race—but the objects of intervention, the subjects understood to be “polluting” were often not racial outsiders, but marginalized insiders whose very existence threatened national and class ideals.” ...

“much, if not most, eugenic intervention was directed at “degenerates” who already “belonged,” racially or ethnically: “internal threats” or “the enemy within,” whose continued presence diluted the race.” – [Levine and Bashford 6, 7](#)

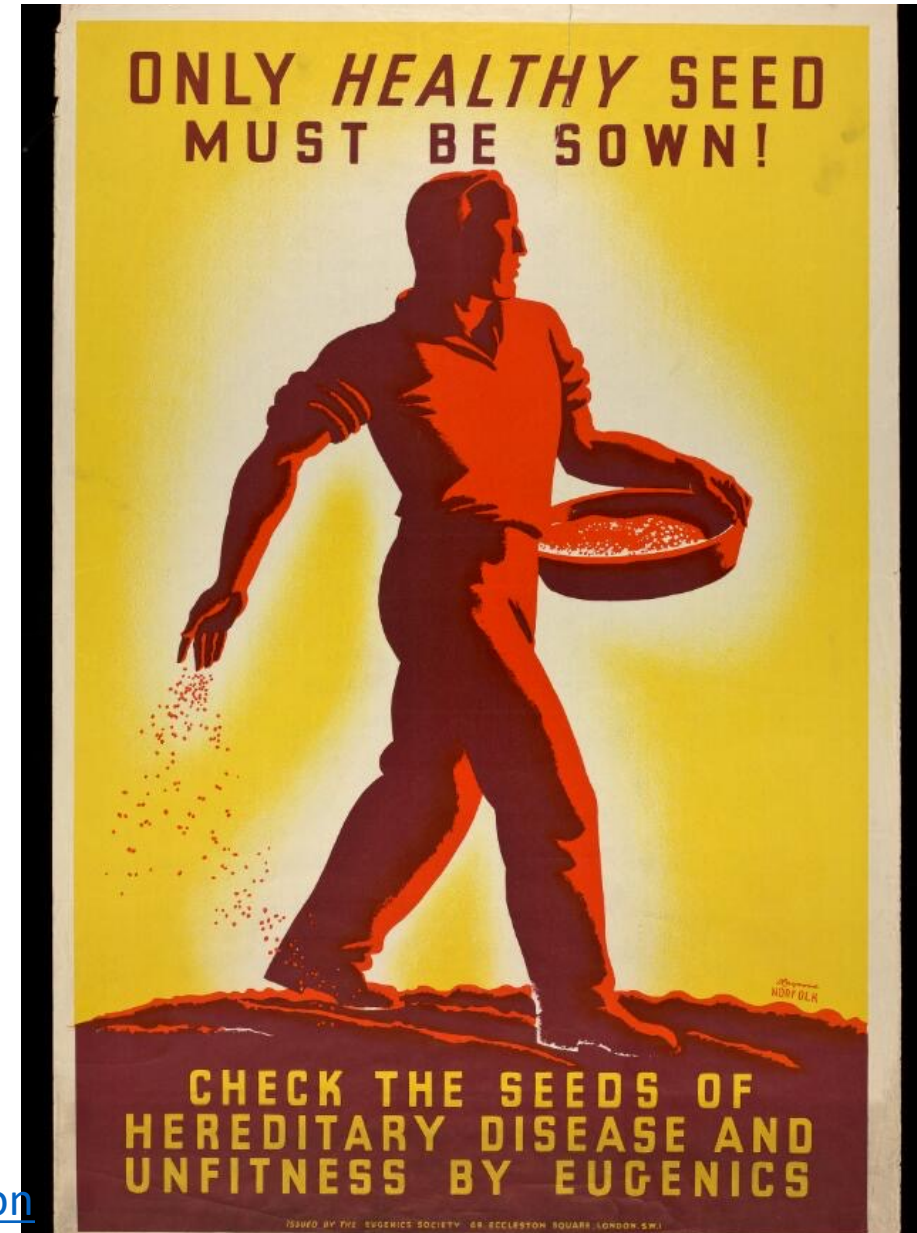
The Question of Black Eugenacists

- Still had all the classism and ableism. Doesn't make eugenics OK.

“Although African American engagement in eugenics complicates the ways in which we understand its legacy, we also cannot forget that eugenics legislation disproportionately targeted African Americans in violent ways. ...African Americans sought to mobilize eugenics for racial improvement, but were ultimately disproportionately targeted by eugenics legislation.”

[Nuriddin, “The Black Politics of Eugenics”](#)

[Photo: Wellcome Collection](#)





EUGENIC AND CONSERVATION: FELLOW-TRAVELERS

- MADISON GRANT (*Passing of the Great Race*, 1916: Nordic/Alpine/Mediterranean)
- THEODORE ROOSEVELT
- GIFFORD PINCHOT

Garland Allen, [“Culling the Herd”: Eugenics and the Conservation Movement in the United States, 1900-1940.”](#) *Journal of the History of Biology* 46, no. 1 (2013): 35-6

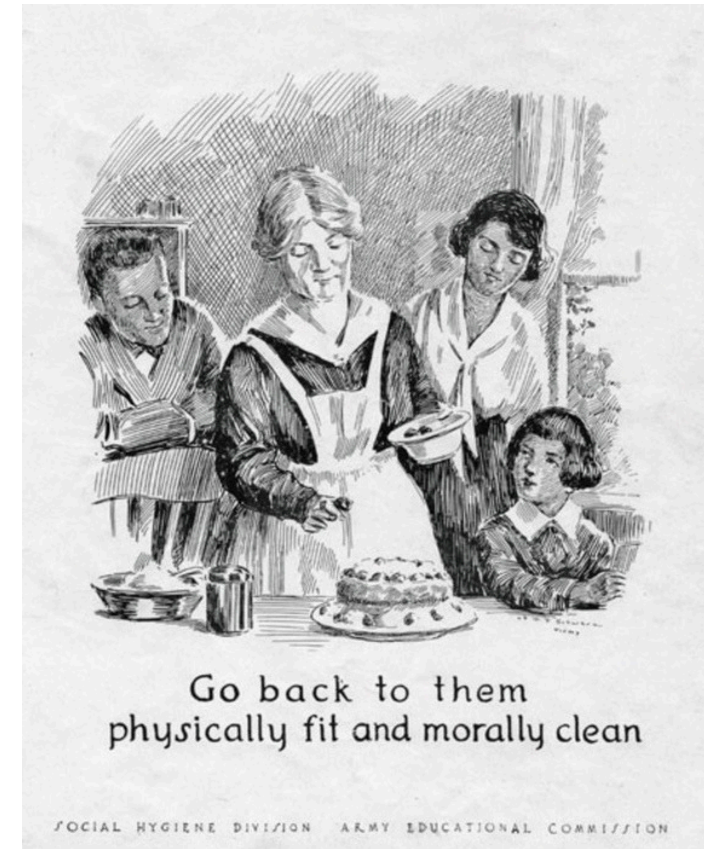
– New York Historical Society, [“Redwoods and Hitler: The Link Between Nature Conservation and the Eugenics Movement”](#)

EUGENICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH: FELLOW-TRAVELERS

“prevention and efficiency joined progress, a general faith in the ability of human ingenuity to design and manage a better world, where social problems would eventually be conquered.” ... “Population-based solutions” – Lombardo, *Oxford Handbook of Public Health Ethics*, 643-4



Credit: [Library of Congress](#)



Credit: [Venereal Disease Visual History Archive](#)

DOES THAT MEAN EUGENICS WAS GOOD? HAD REDEEMING QUALITIES?

“The primary eugenic goals—to eliminate disease, crime, and poverty by managing heredity and infusing law with science—comprised a hopeful program that included a future of healthy babies and the promise of prosperity. This hopeful side of eugenics generated much of its attraction. ...

Retrospective ethical analyses of eugenics have focused on how eugenic policies used the stigma of disease, medically coercive practices, racial and ethnic bigotry, and policies of exclusion and discrimination as the means to meet eugenic goals. We associate eugenics with fear, hatred, and racism because the campaign to remake the United States as a eugenic nation relied on those strategies to pass eugenic legislation, and focused that legislation in patently discriminatory ways. Eugenic laws violated expectations of autonomy, equal treatment, and justice by targeting the most vulnerable—the poor, the disabled, and sexual and racial minorities—as the objects of eugenic reform.” [Lombardo, 648-9](#)

On the “Just A Man of His Times” Analysis...

- While Eugenics was Popular, it was also Controversial and Fiercely Resisted
 - Religious, especially [Catholic Opposition](#)
 - [Scientific Opposition](#) ([Hardy-Weinberg](#), 1908; [T.H. Morgan](#), Franz Boas, [Alfred Myerson](#))
 - Political Opposition
 - [PA Gov. Pennypacker vetoes eugenics legislation](#) (1905)
 - [Opposition of those targeted](#)

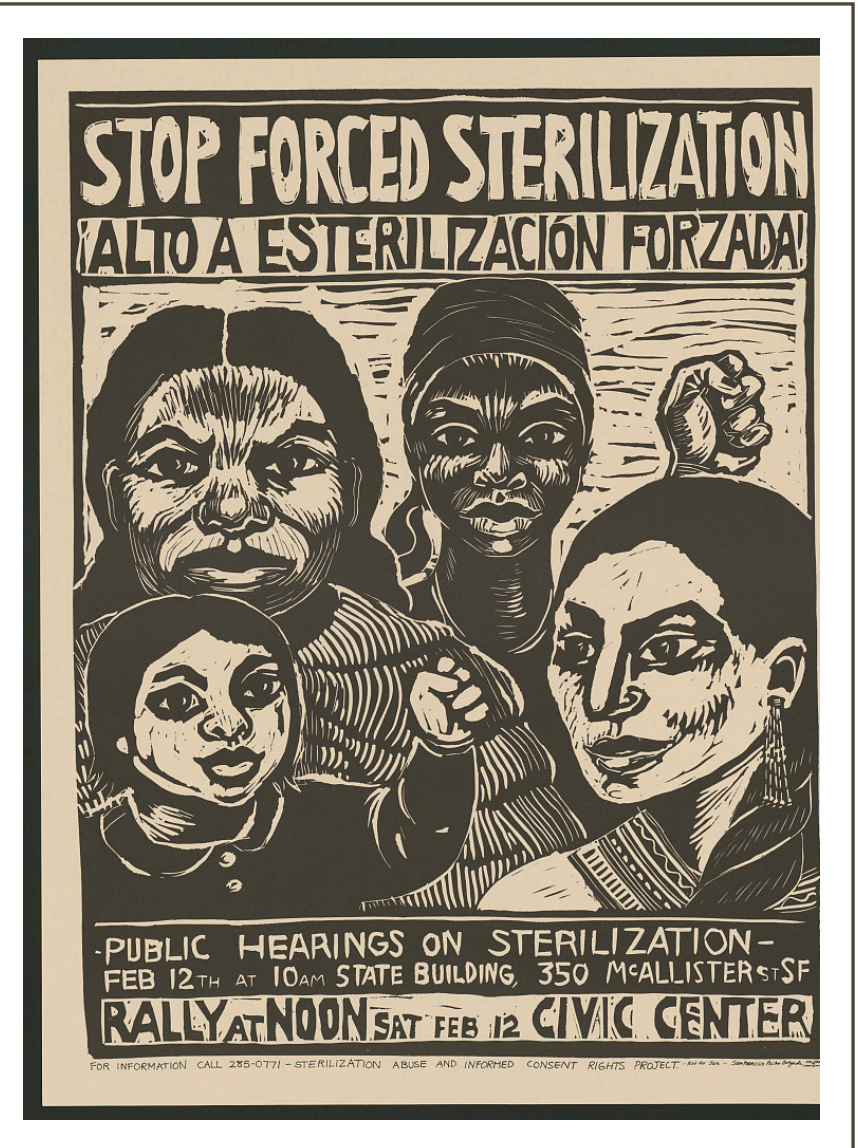
Then and Now

Old Narrative: Eugenics ended due to revulsion of link to Nazis, better genetics.

New Narrative: Eugenics changed forms:

1940s-1990s, increasingly targeted Latina, Black, and Indigenous women, more by use of coercion, deception, language barriers than by force of law.

1980s-Present, targeted all people in poverty, all people with disability, through social welfare and public health policies whose outcomes restrict reproductive choices in discriminatory ways. U.S. approach to covid as a “new eugenics?”



[Photo: Library of Congress](#)

The West Chester Eugenicians: Henry Goddard and Samuel Schmucker

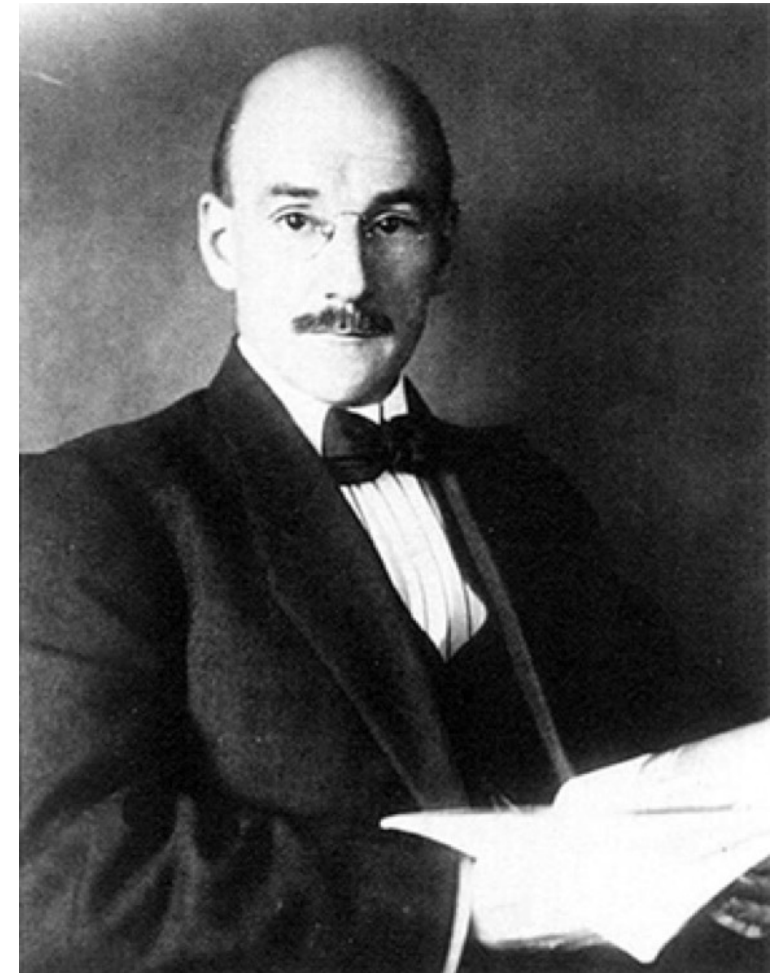
Henry Goddard – Professor of Education Psychology 1900-1906

(Greatest Football Coach in WCU History? 1-0 record)

1906-1918: [Director of Research, Vineland Training School for Feeble-minded Girls and Boys, Vineland NJ](#)

Title	IQ	Mental Age
Moron	51-70	8 to 12
Imbecile	26-50	3 to 7
Idiot	0-25	2 or less

Creator of IQ gradations, Author of most famous eugenic manifesto, [The Kallikak Family](#), proponent of institutionalization for eugenic control of the “Feeble-minded.”



WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

In Revolutionary War times there was a soldier named
"MARTIN KALLIKAK"

While in service he dallied with
a feeble-minded tavern girl

—after the war he married
a worthy young Quakeress

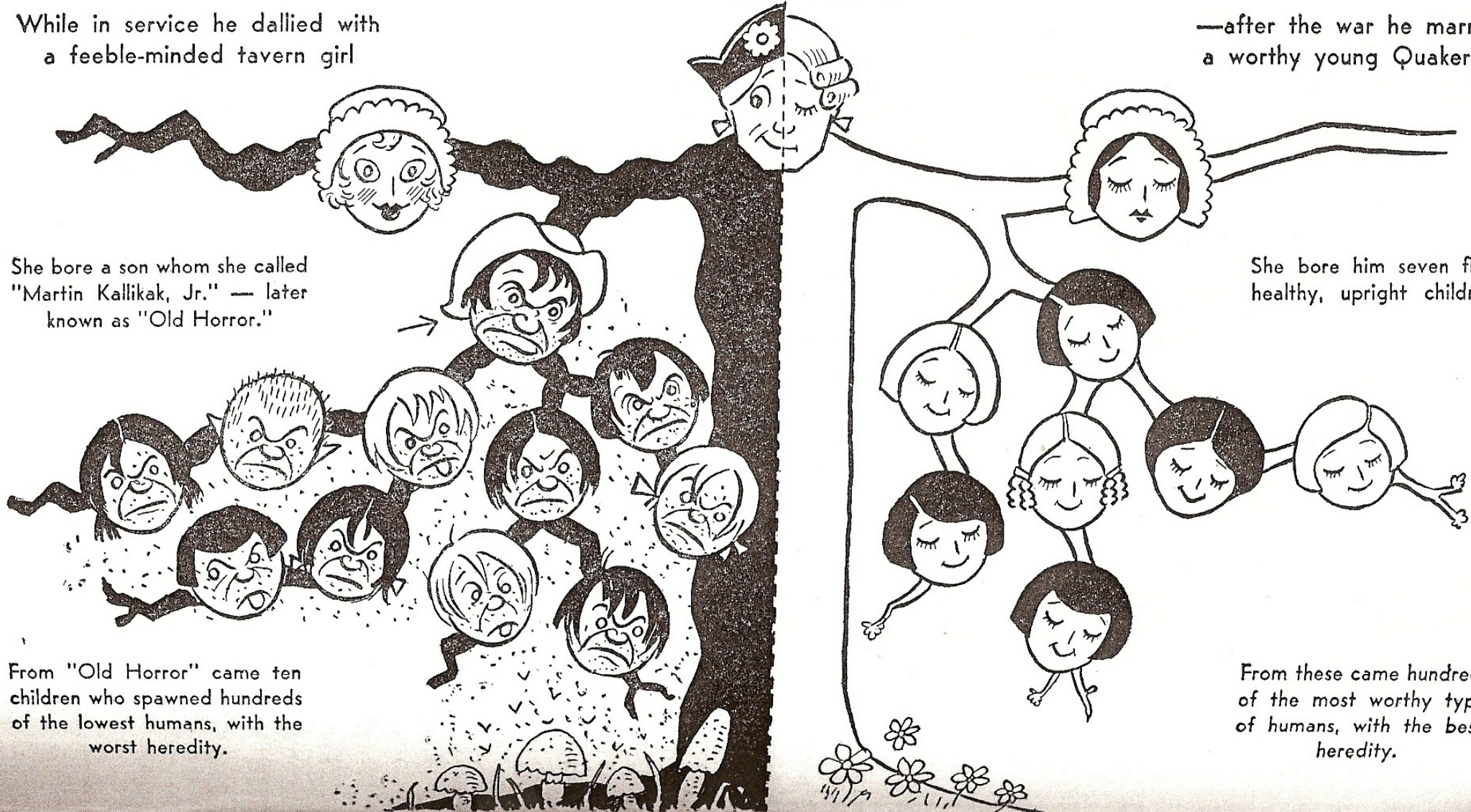
She bore a son whom she called
"Martin Kallikak, Jr." — later
known as "Old Horror."

She bore him seven fine,
healthy, upright children.

From "Old Horror" came ten
children who spawned hundreds
of the lowest humans, with the
worst heredity.

From these came hundreds
of the most worthy type
of humans, with the best
heredity.

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Connections to Samuel Schmucker...

- (Credit to Student Fall 2021 HIS 400)
- Schmucker defends Goddard in a university controversy*
- Approving references to *Kallikak Family in Schmucker, The Meaning of Evolution* (see following...)

*“A Record of the Minutes of the Faculty of the West Chester State Normal School from Sept 2, 1895 to June 10, 1908” (Minutes Book, West Chester University Libraries Special Collections), 208-211.

Schmucker's Achievements

- Popular Biology, Science-Education professor. 1895-1923
- Popular speaker on Chautauqua lecture circuit
- Popular synthesizer of Protestantism and Evolution, antagonist to creationists, Fundamentalists
- “Believed fundamentally that science teaching was the educational equivalent of a moral crusade” – Davis, 225.

PROF. S. C. SCHMUCKER,
WEST CHESTER, PA.



Schmucker, on Intellectual Disability: *The Meaning of Evolution*, 1913

“There is one taint from which society has the right and the duty of freeing itself, so far as in its power lies. This is the trait of feeble-mindedness. Of all the calamities that can befall a human being, feeble-mindedness is, perhaps, the worst. From most misfortunes it is possible to recover; with most of the rest one may exist without detriment to the race. To be feeble-minded simply means to hark back to the level of our animal ancestors, without regaining their power to guide life.

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THE MEANING OF EVOLUTION

the still worse handicap of an illegitimate parentage, with all its bitter train of scorn and shame. Accordingly, it must be possible before the law for those who are not thoroughly vigorous to marry. But, year by year, we may come nearer accomplishing a finer mating by the aims and purposes we foster in the growing generation. Marriages will never be worth while when they are not freely entered into by the contracting parties. Choice must be free and unrestricted if it is to last for life; but this does not mean that it must be unguarded. It would be bitter folly for parents to leave to their children, without attempt to influence or restrain, the making of their marriages. The mating of our children must be inspired, not directed.

There is one taint from which society has the right and the duty of freeing itself, so far as in its power lies. This is the taint of feeble-mindedness. Of all the calamities that can befall a human being, feeble-mindedness is, perhaps, the worst. From most misfortunes it is possible to recover; with most of the rest one may exist without detriment to the race. To be feeble-minded simply means to hark back to the level of our animal ancestors, without regaining their power to guide life. The animal is provided with a bundle of instincts which tell him what to do in all the ordinary emergencies of life. The hu-

THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF MAN 265

man species, in its development, has lost a large portion of its instincts, and has gained, instead, the power of intelligent choice and the ability to learn by imitation. When these drop away, man without his instincts or his intelligence is more helpless than the brute. Students of sociology are making clear to us that a large portion of the criminality of the world, much of the looseness of life, and a large part of the alcoholic excesses are due to this taint of feeble-mindedness. Recent investigations have made it clear that one feeble-minded family in a community may, in the course of years, poison the life of an entire state. The Jukes family in New York, the Kallikak family in New Jersey, have shown the awful possibilities of descent from a single feeble-minded ancestor. Prisons, almshouses, and houses of shame owe their population in no small degree to this bitter curse. It will not be long before society will learn to protect itself against such poisoning of the human stock. Nothing is more clear to the investigator of this subject than that the one overwhelming cause for feeble-mindedness is feeble-mindedness in the parentage.

There is one type of mental weakling, known as the Mongolian idiot, which may arise right out of the heart of an apparently sound family. But the number of these is comparatively small. The num-

(cover-page identifies him as “Professor of Biological Sciences in the West Chester State Normal School. West Chester, PA.)

(Credit, Student, HIS 400)

Schmucker on I.D., continued

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Schmucker on ID., Continued

Every attempt to examine large numbers of school children shows a sickening proportion of those who are distinctly feeble. ... Such people rarely live long lives without leaving behind them feeble-minded children, no small proportion of whom are likely to be illegitimate. Against this fouling of the stream at its source, society must protect itself.

ber of feeble-minded, who are feeble-minded because of their heredity, is dishearteningly and astonishingly large. Every attempt to examine large numbers of school children shows a sickening proportion of those who are distinctly feeble. Every little community seems to have its boy or girl who is what is known as silly. Such people rarely live long lives without leaving behind them feeble-minded children, no small proportion of whom are likely to be illegitimate. Against this fouling of the stream at its source, society must protect itself. Legislators revolt at the somewhat inhuman but certainly safe method of surgically preventing the possibility of the feeble-minded becoming parents. It would be more creditable and just as effective if society would take upon itself the tremendously expensive task of caring for all its feeble-minded in institutions during their entire life. The cost would be large for a generation, but would rapidly diminish and eventually become small. It certainly would be the humane way. These people in good institutions are by no means unhappy. Within the limit of their capacities they can do many things. Wise management usually will secure from them labor enough of wholesome and simple kind nearly to pay for their own support. Nothing could be better for them than to till the soil, care for the cattle, tend the chickens, and, in

this way, provide very largely the materials on which they are fed. How this problem shall work out, time only can decide. With it once worked out, there is no doubt that the level of humanity will be distinctly raised. No other one feature in the program of eugenics seems more absolutely hopeful than this.

In several of the states of the Union it has recently become the practice to remove the possibilities of parenthood from certain classes of criminals. The purpose of this is clear and benevolent. Society has a right to prevent the oncoming of new generations of foreordained criminals. Underlying the practice is the theory that the children of criminals are born criminals. It is far from likely that this is the case. Criminality may be due to a wide range of causes. If the criminal is one of those actual born degenerates whose whole mental and physical make-up is so defective that nothing but criminality can be expected of him, then we have a case in which it is clear that society may, and should, remove the possibility of having more generations of the same kind. Probably only a moderate proportion of the criminals in our jails and penitentiaries belong to this class. Doubtless a distinct majority are criminals more through environment than through heredity. Born of average ability, or more, these people

Schmucker on I.D., Continued

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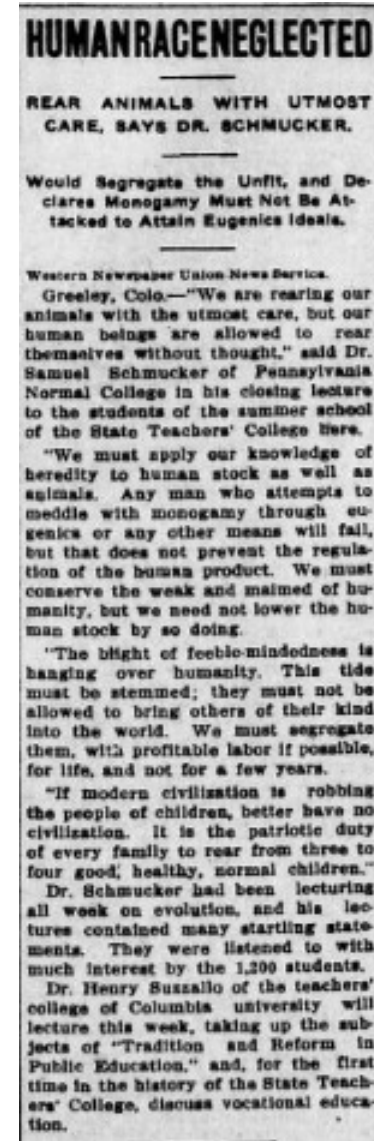
The Keota News, July 3, 1914

(Credit: Student, HIS 214 project)

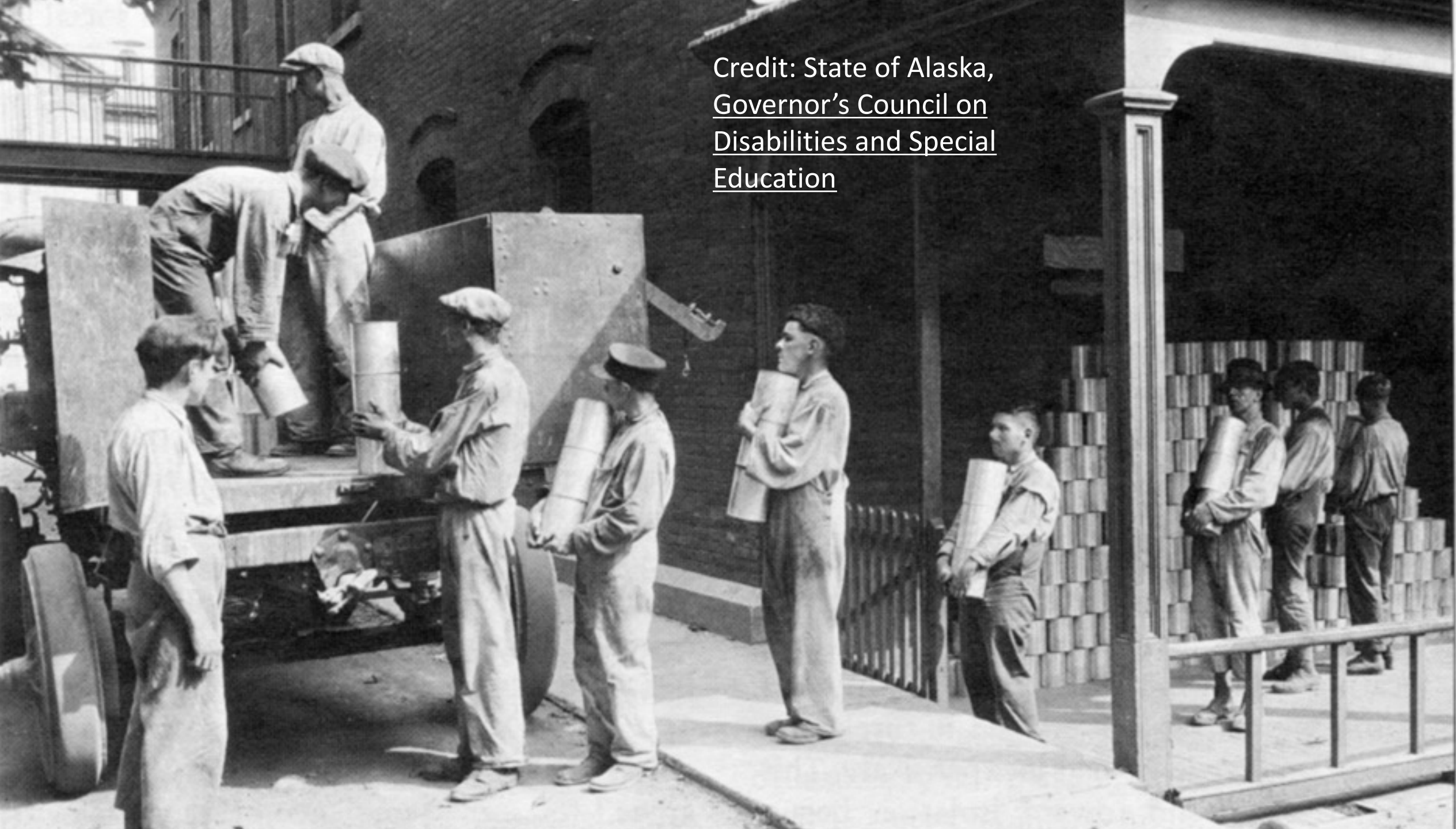
“We are rearing our animals with the utmost care, but our human beings are allowed to rear themselves without thought,” said Dr. Samuel Schmucker of Pennsylvania Normal College in his closing lecture to the students of the summer school of the State Teachers’ College here.

“We must apply our knowledge of heredity to human stock as well as animals. Any man who attempts to meddle with monogamy will fail, but that does not prevent the regulation of the human product. We must conserve the weak and maimed of humanity, but we need not lower the human stock by doing so.”

“The blight of feeble-mindedness is hanging over humanity. This tide must be stemmed: they must not be allowed to bring others of their kind into the world. We must segregate them, with profitable labor if possible, for life, and not for a few years.”



Credit: State of Alaska,
Governor's Council on
Disabilities and Special
Education





capacity, that is a larger range of capacity, than the normal child of the same age. A normal child of ten does a great many tasks for which he has been trained. No one expects a normal child as a rule to set himself to work, to keep himself working, or to use good judgment in meeting the emergencies that arise in connection with his work. This is precisely the case with the defective of this grade. All this means that we must provide him with an environment in which there are few emergencies, in which the activities call for intelligence of his level and may be carried on by habit. This may include much of the routine of farming, of housework, and many kinds of simple industrial occupations. These pursuits, however, require more or less of planning and there are inevitably more or less emergencies, which means that there must always be a person of higher intelligence who can be called upon at a moment's notice, who will make the plans from day to day. This at once suggests a farm colony and segregation so much discussed at the present time.

In this connection the following industrial classification is of interest.

This classification was made in the following manner: Every employee at the Vineland Training School was asked two questions about every child in the Institution, viz.: *What does he do? What can he do?* The answers were grouped and all those of the same mental age were put together. From the many answers in each mental age group an expression was sought that would describe the activities of the group. The children of the same mental age were often doing different

INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

MENTAL AGE	INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY	GRADE	
Under 1 year	(a) Helpless. (b) Can walk. (c) With voluntary regard	Low	Idiot
1 yr.	Feeds self. Eats everything	Middle	
2 yrs.	Eats discriminatingly (food from non-food)	High	
3 "	No work. Plays a little	Low	Imbecile
4 "	Tries to help		
5 "	Only simplest tasks	Middle	
6 "	Tasks of short duration. Washes dishes	High	
7 "	Little errands in the house. Dusts		
8 "	Errands. Light work. Makes beds	Low	Moron
9 "	Heavier work. Scrubs. Mends. Lays bricks. Cares for bath-room		
10 "	Good institution helpers. Routine work	Middle	
11 "	Fairly complicated work with only occasional oversight	High	
12 "	Uses machinery. Can care for animals. No supervision for routine work. Cannot plan		

One important correction must be mentioned, as it is a matter that bears upon the problem of the feeble-minded. We soon

Does Eugenics Meet the UN's Criteria for Genocide?

- The criteria were written in 1948, when disability was not yet a category the UN conceived of as a possible target of genocide.
- However, revising the standard to add categories disability and sexual identity is a goal of disabled and LGBTQ+ activists.

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

a. Killing members of the group;

b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

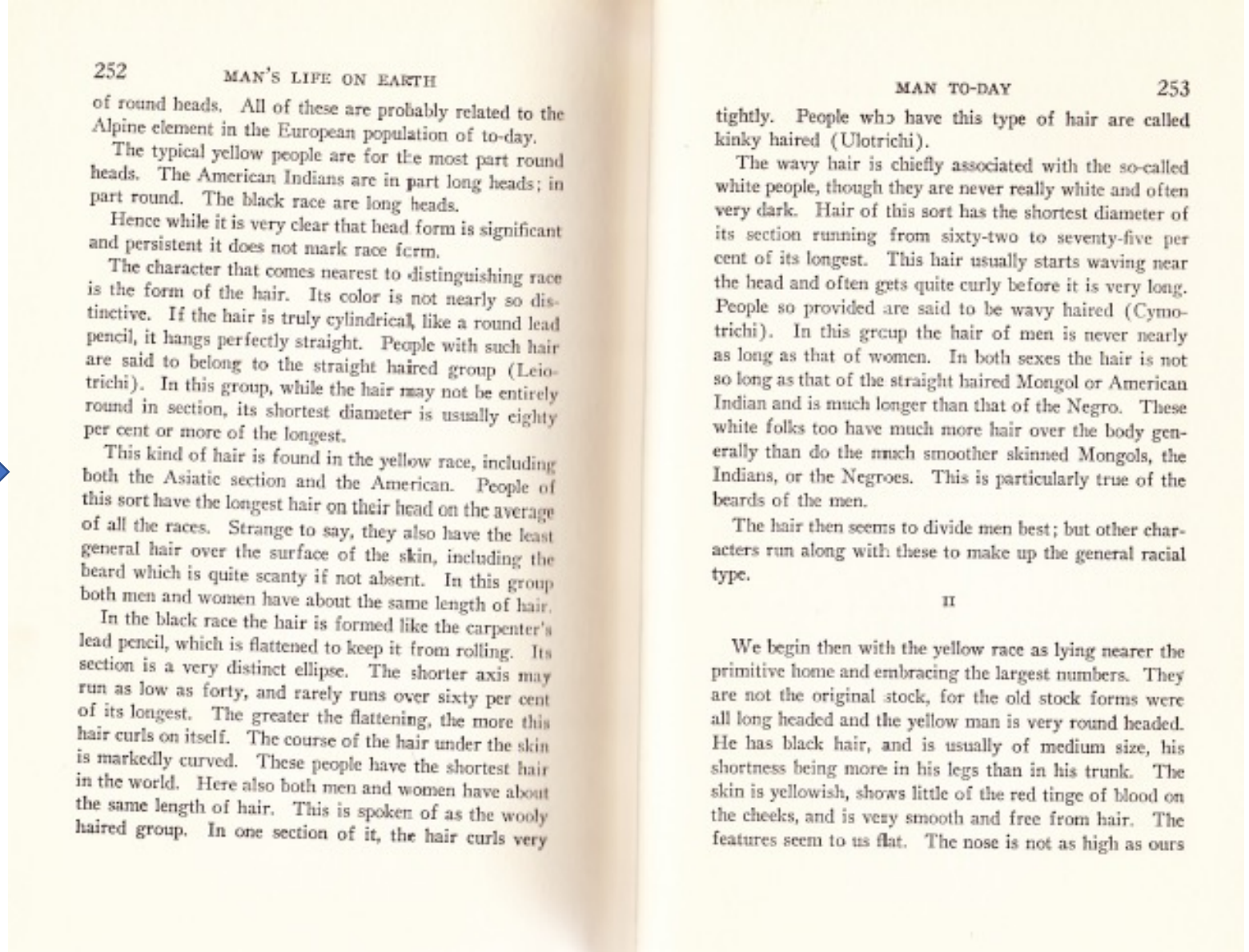

c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

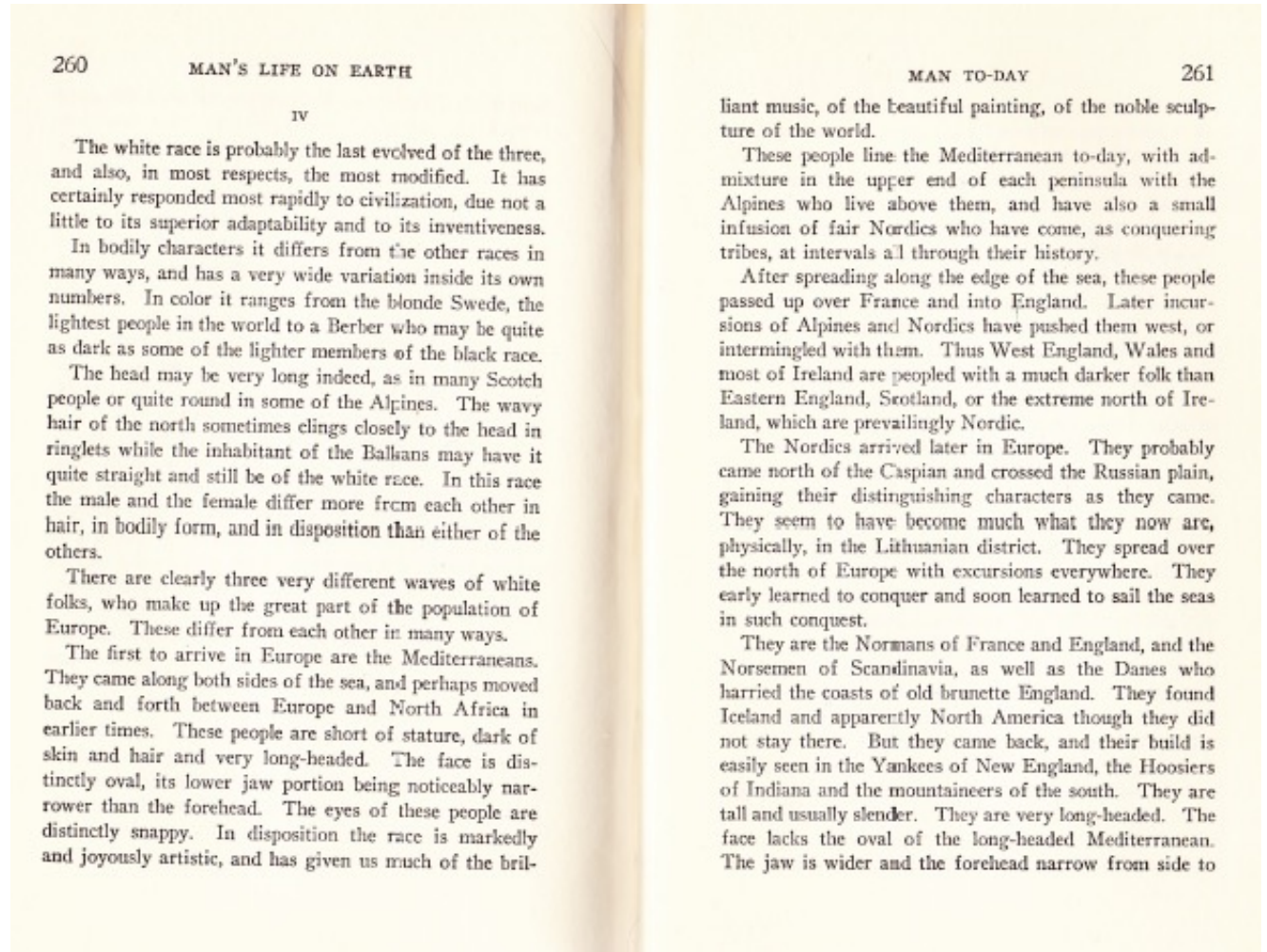
Schmucker on Race, *Man's Life on Earth* (1925)

Several pages discussion of inherent and fundamental biological differences in races, mostly regarding hair type and dimensions of crania



Schmucker on the White Race

“The white race is probably the last evolved of the three, and also, in most respects, the most modified. It has certainly responded most rapidly to civilization, due not a little to its superior adaptability and to its inventiveness.”



Schmucker on interracial mixing

“It is taken for granted by a great many observers that a mixture of any two of the three great races produces a hybrid with the bad qualities of both and the good of neither. There are others who think that matter far from settled. There can be no question that hybrids of the dregs of each race are inferior, and it is the dregs usually that mix. ... As a scientific problem I think most biologists are agreed that the question is quite open whether mixed races, in the absence of social and political stigma, are not entirely the equal of so-called pure races. It will be ages before there will be any larger intermingling of races. We believe religiously in the brotherhood of man; but practically we are far from accepting it as true.”

tion of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1819 he summarized what seemed to him the direction in which discoveries in that field are leading.

He believes the man of the white race owes his strong nose and eye ridges, his prominent chin, his bulk and his height to the unusual quantity of secretion poured out by his pituitary gland. The stronger differentiation between the two sexes than falls to those of other races, he owes to the interstitial cells in the sex glands. The fairness of his skin he owes to his adrenals.

The yellow race, he thinks, owes its marked character to excessive secretion of the thyroid gland.

The black man owes the darker pigment of his skin to the comparative inactivity of his adrenal glands.

But this, after all, only throws the process one step farther back. The big question still is why do fit characters arise? We see how they are preserved, but not why they come.

It is taken for granted by a great many observers that a mixture of any two of the three great races produces a hybrid with the bad qualities of both and the good of neither. There are others who think that matter far from settled. There can be no question that hybrids of the dregs of each race are inferior, and it is the dregs usually that mix. It is equally true that while social ostracism and political inferiority await the progeny of the union, the result will always be pitiful. The instinct to mate with one's kind is millions of years old, and may never pass away. As a scientific problem I think most biologists are agreed that the question is quite open whether mixed races, in the absence of social and political stigma, are not entirely the equal of so-called pure races. It will be ages

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With the rapid progress of science...

Schmucker on Nordics, Alpines

*The Pennsylvania-German Society:
Proceedings and Addresses at
Reading, PA October 6, 1922 v. 33*

”The Nordic Race is a conquering, restless, colonizing race and it has swept repeatedly south through Europe ...so that we find tongues of Nordic blood running deep into the distinctively Alpine population ...

when they [the Alpine race] take to education and scholarly pursuits **they make the most patient investigators and experimenters we have ever had.** For the scholarship which is willing to spend a lifetime on what seems, to those not interested in the study, a pitifully narrow range of detail, these people are famous. ... it is on this careful, painstaking, patient collection of data that all later generalizations must depend”

Racial Composition of Pennsylvania-Germans. 19

Their whole temperament is splendidly adapted to the life of the farm. On the other hand when they take to education and scholarly pursuits they make the most patient investigators and experimenters we have ever had. For the scholarship which is willing to spend a lifetime on what seems, to those not interested in the study, a pitifully narrow range of detail, these people are famous. It must not be forgotten that it is on this careful, painstaking, patient collection of data that all later generalizations must depend if they are to be really worth while. Amongst the agriculturists of the world and the patient scholars of the world, the Alpines will always stand high.

It is to this sturdy, reliable type that the Pennsylvania Germans belong. They are amongst the most dependable people in the population of our country. They are least given to radical outbreaks. They are naturally

How much is this a nod to Madison Grant? A Critique?

Schmucker returns to Eugenics:
Heredity and Parenthood 1929

Wants to improve the reputation of eugenics by disassociating it from sterilization, and

“promulgating the sort of information that will be really helpful in ... forming a favorable public opinion [of eugenics.]”

Note his linking of science, God, eugenics, and human improvement.



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INTRODUCTION

we have based the new, and as yet very imperfectly developed practical science of Eugenics. This has had a powerful appeal, due in part, I fear, to the unwarranted claims of some of the less scientifically grounded of its devotees.

Processes involving the surgeons' knife and the animal breeder's tactics have been advocated until there has come, in the minds of many people, a revulsion against the whole science. This is unfortunate. There is much that is clear, definite, practicable and in no respect unworthy of our earnest attention.

It is the hope of the author of this book that he may be able to show to those untrained in biology, the exact evidence on which our knowledge is based. He also hopes to help in promulgating the sort of information that will be really helpful in the very slow, but by no means hopeless task of forming a favorable public opinion. With the growth of actual knowledge and of high aims, man may really expect to help nature (is it irreverent to say help God?) in lifting human life to ever higher levels.

Schmucker returns to Eugenics: *Heredity and Parenthood* 1929

- Still referencing all the old eugenic studies of “thoroughly degenerate” families like the “Jukes” study, 1874, the “Tribe of Ishmael” (1888) the “Pineys” (1910s), and Goddard’s Kallikak family, again. (1912) (*Kallikak* survey widely discredited in mid-1920s)
- Of 300+ Jukes children who died in infancy: “Who shall say that they and the world were not better for their early slipping away?”
- Still calling for mandatory lifelong institutionalization of all people with I.D. for purpose of eliminating I.D., to be paid for by forced labor.
- First unambiguous rejection of sterilization.

These unfortunate feeble-minded individuals, utterly incapable of taking care of themselves, must be cared for by the state. Not only this, the state must assure itself of the certainty of their having no descendants.

There seems to be but one satisfactory solution of the problem. These helpless creatures must be the wards of the state during their entire lives. Associated in small groups with others of their own grade of mentality, they

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HEREDITY AND PARENTHOOD

lead lives of as near an approach to happiness as their minds can feel. In such cases the boys and girls, for whatever their physical age, mentally they are all boys and girls, are kept in separate parts of the grounds. They are never together except for social or educational purposes when they are in charge of their teachers. They are taught such handwork as their mind permits, which may be quite a little.

he is not helping to furnish the next generation that is to live in it. There are men like this; and they are a wonderful help to a community.

There is a recent type of woman who can solve her problem in exactly the same way as that described for the man. This bachelor maid lives an active business life during working hours. She plays her golf or her tennis as vigorously and regularly as the man. She runs her sport car as skillfully as he, and can serve on civic committees just as ably. She is an interesting type. We have not had her long enough to know what she will do, should she live to be old. Will her bluff break down? Will she reluctantly at last confess that a woman is not a man, and a woman cannot satisfactorily live a man's life to the end? I do not know. In any event, she is interesting while she lasts.

But the natural outlet for a woman's sublimated passions is to rear children even though they are not her own, or care for older people who are helpless. Kindergarden work is ideal. Elementary teaching does finely for many women. Vocational guidance of adolescents is a beautiful outlet if she is genuinely sympathetic and a miserable one if she cover her own loss by sniffing at their sentiment. Nursing is a noble avenue into which to guide her passion for mothering. But in every one of these the misfit is pitiful if the woman is skating along the edge of her own sex enjoyment and fighting back its open expression, dwelling on it in literature and news and scandal and shutting it out of her own activity until she is peevish and fretful and sometimes almost hysterical.

A single life may be, very often is, quite nobly and

Schmucker on Unmarried and Childless Women *Heredity and Parenthood* 1929

“There is a recent type of woman who can solve her problem in exactly the same way as that described for the man. This bachelor maid lives an active business life during working hours. She plays her golf or her tennis as vigorously and regularly as the man. She runs her sport car as skillfully as he, and can serve on civic committees just as ably. She is an interesting type. We have not had her long enough to know what she will do, should she live to be old. Will her bluff break down? Will she reluctantly at last confess that a woman is not a man, and a woman cannot satisfactorily live a man's life to the end? I do not know. In any event, she is interesting while she lasts.”

“But the natural outlet for a woman's sublimated passions is to rear children even though they are not her own or care for older people who are helpless. ... But in every one of these the misfit is pitiful if the woman is skating along the edge of her own sex enjoyment and fighting back its open expression, dwelling on it in literature and news and scandal and shutting it out of her own activity until she is peevish and fretful and sometimes almost hysterical. ... (306) no life has realized its finest possibilities that does not include, amongst its inmost experiences, a happy marriage and some healthy, hearty children.”

helpfully lived. There are certainly some marriages that are much worse than single life. It is foolish to tell a girl that any marriage is better than none. But, just the same, no life has realized its finest possibilities that does not include, amongst its inmost experiences, a happy marriage and some healthy, hearty children.

Recent Reckonings with Eugenic History

Recent state-level
apologies and reparations

[North Carolina](#) (2013)

[Virginia](#) (2015)

[California](#) (2021)

Apologies of Scientific Organizations

[American Society of Human Genetics](#)

[Carnegie Institution for Science](#)

[Nature](#)

[American Museum of Natural History](#)

Renaming of buildings,
removal of statues, plaques;
Apologies

• [Stanford](#)

• [Indiana University](#)

• [Rochester Institute of Technology](#)

• [CSU-Sacramento](#)

• [Emory](#)

• [Montana State University](#)

• [Guelph](#)

• [Berkeley](#)

• [University of Southern California](#)

• [University College London](#)



The Alexander Graham Bell Dorm at Rochester Institute of Technology

See [R.A.R. Edwards, "Chasing Aleck: The Story of a Dorm" *The Public Historian* 29, no. 3 \(Summer 2007\) 87-104](#)

Within the National Technical Institute for the Deaf
college at RIT

Bell Hall

- Built 1974
- Named 1979

Plaque:

“Only six years before his death, Alexander Graham Bell looked back over his amazing life and wrote:

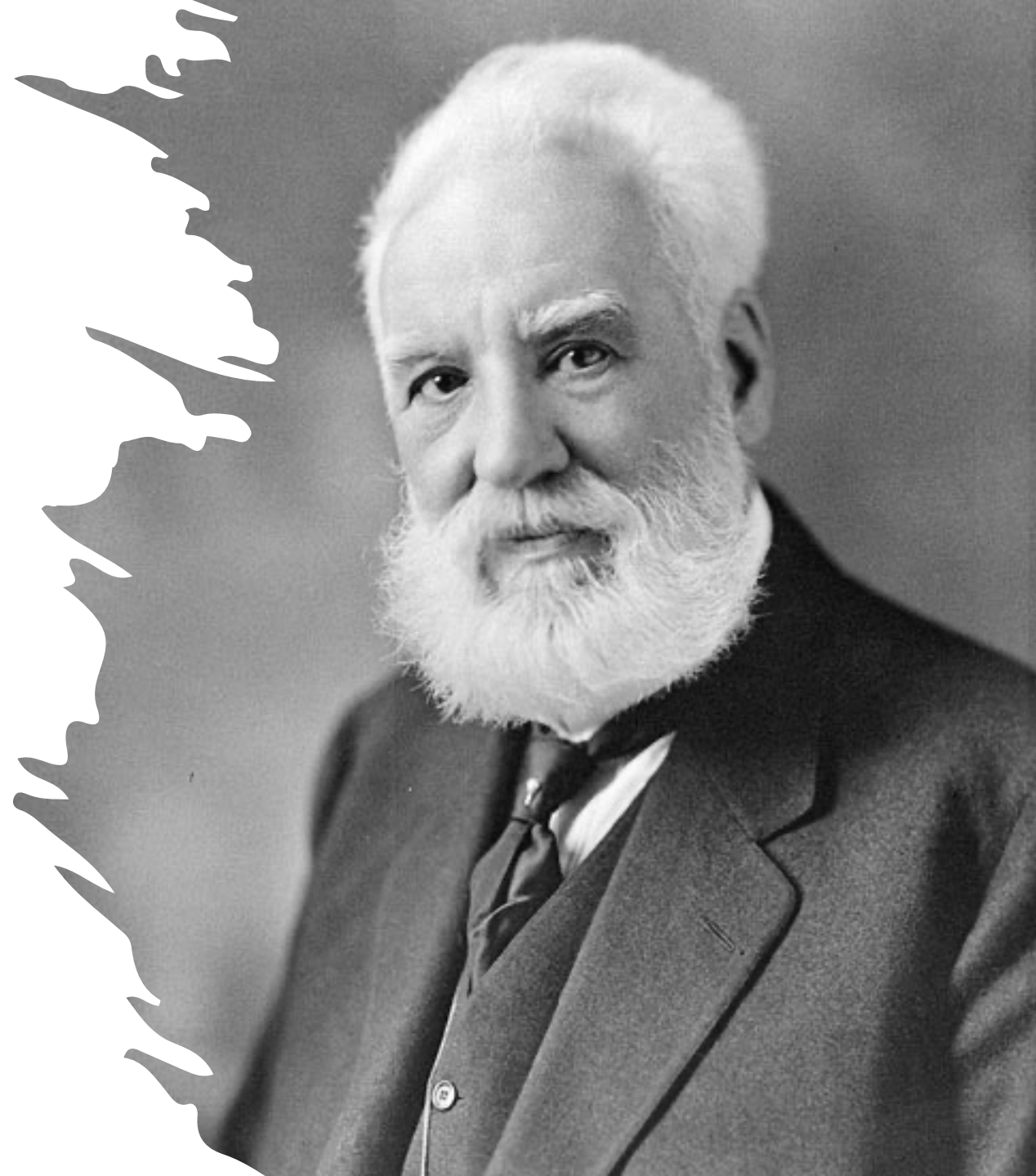
“Recognition of my work for and interest in the education of the deaf has always been more pleasing to me than even recognition of my work with the telephone.” A brilliant and innovative teacher of the deaf, Bell dedicated a great portion of his life to help deaf children develop their potential for listening, speaking, and lipreading. Today, NTID emulates the ideals for which Alexander Graham Bell worked”

– Edwards, 88

(What’s missing from Bell’s “help” to deaf children?)

Bell on Sign Language

- An Oralist
 - Goal of “driving sign language out of existence entirely”
 - Viewed as “akin to other unassimilated foreigners”
 - “increasingly understood to be genetic throwbacks, using a language form, gestures, which had long since been supplanted in evolutionary terms by the far superior form of language, speech. ...preferring to sign made deaf people culturally dangerous.” (Edwards, 89)



Bell on Eugenics

“Memoir Upon the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race,” National Academic of Sciences, 1883

“Sexual Selection is at work among the deaf and dumb. ... Those who believe as I do, that the production of a defective race of human beings would be a great calamity to the world, will examine carefully the causes that lead to the intermarriages of the deaf with the object of applying a remedy.” (Edwards, 90)

Remedies: Marriage bans and minimizing deaf community-formation (mainstreaming schools, ban ASL, ban deaf teachers)



Controversy, Renaming Efforts

- Bell's oralism, eugenicism, known at time of naming
- Potentially a purposefully provocative act to signal school's continuing support of oralism against "the cultural forces that were increasingly promoting Deaf culture and ASL usage." (Edwards, 100)
- Intermittent tensions, protests
- Un-naming, 2008

Photo: [The 1977 Disability Rights Protest That Broke Records and Changed Laws](#)

What is a Building Name Supposed to be a Reflection Of?

Edwards on the Bell Hall Controversy

- “When historical memories clash, whose memory is validated? Whose is ignored? And why?”
- “Whom the building, and its name, is for” (The administration, or the students? The people who get buildings built, or the people who use them?)
- “When different communities share a space, whose memory of history is accommodated and promoted? And by what mechanisms do we decide?” -Edwards, 103-4

“The real question, I suppose, is this: How do we ... decide what’s in a name? I cannot say that I have all the answers. But what I would hope is for all constituencies to learn more about why this name ... went up into our space in the first place and to consider whether or not the reasons that led to that decision are still reasons we affirm today. Is that original statement ... still the statement we wish to make? Is it still indicative of our values today? Are [his] ideals, in whole or in part, still ideals worth emulating?”

As a historian, it is not for me alone to answer. It falls to me only to ask simple questions. And perhaps discover once again that there are no simple answers.” – Edwards, 104.

The Discovery of Schmucker Is an Expression of an Outstanding History Program

Project Assistantship for WCU 150th Anniversary Celebration



Capstone Research Paper Topic in HIS 400, Senior Seminar



Teaching opportunity in HIS 214 History of Medicine



Additional material found by both Gen. Ed. non-majors, and a major with previous internship background in this issue.



Findings become basis for further research, recruitment, with the HIS 450 History Internship opportunities at Elwyn

Our Students' Work on Schmucker is an Expression of WCU's Mission and Values Statements

WCU graduates will:

- Apply scientific reasoning and demonstrate quantitative and qualitative literacy
- Collaborate with others to solve problems and address societal needs
- Communicate effectively and participate in civic discourse
- Engage inclusively in a diverse society
- Understand the ethical implications of decisions and the world in which they live

Our Students' Work on Schmucker is an Expression of WCU's Mission and Values Statements

The University supports and encourages programs which benefit all people and which seek to eradicate discrimination and injustice. We treasure what we believe to be the highest principles of American society: the worth and uniqueness of each individual, the belief that success is to be earned by individual effort put forth in an environment founded on equality of opportunity, and the appreciation of the ideal of an inclusive society.

Board of
Governors
DEI Statement
of Affirmation
April 15, 2021

The Board of Governors of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education affirms its steadfast commitment to ensuring the entire State System operates from a foundation of values that:

- expects that our universities be places where human dignity is never compromised and every student that enrolls and employee or contractor we engage is welcomed