

A (very brief) History of Eugenics

Galton & Eugenics

- 1883: “the science which deals with all influences that improve and develop the inborn qualities of a race”
 - *eu*: Greek, meaning good or well
 - *genos*: Greek, meaning race, kind or stock
- Government incentives for marriage & children among eminent people

The inventor of eugenics had a surprisingly good idea about how to cut cakes

Updated by *Dylan Matthews* on June 18, 2014, 1:50 p.m. ET [@dylanmatt](#) dylan@vox.com

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Nazi Eugenic Policies

- Encouraged awareness of family history of illness
- Whites only allowed to marry whites
- Abortion illegal for 'fit' females
- Illnesses registered → forced sterilization (>400,000)
 - Inspired by US sterilization laws

US Sterilization Programs

- FIRST!!
- 1897, proposed in Michigan
- 1905, passed but vetoed in Pennsylvania
- 1907, enacted in Indiana
- 1927, Buck v Bell: Supreme Court upheld eugenic sterilization for low IQ in Virginia

US Sterilization Programs

- Eugenic (v Therapeutic v Punitive)
 - Aimed to reduce mental illness & low IQ
 - Mostly women
 - Minorities & low income individuals targeted
 - Over 60,000 sterilized
- Public opinion declined after WWII
- 1981, Oregon: Last forcible sterilization
- 2013, North Carolina commits \$10 million in compensation for state-forced sterilizations
 - 7,600 people sterilized 1929 – 1974 = \$1315 pp