

## **PSYC 2530: Eugenics and Psychology**

A primer to historical connections

Matthew J. C. Crump

Last compiled 03/29/22

# Reminders

Read chapter 3 [Eugenics and Psychology](#) from the textbook.

# Roadmap

1 Eugenics Overview

2 Galton's Eugenics

3 The Eugenics movement

4 Influences on society

5 Psychology and Eugenics

# **“Improving” society**

History is full of problematic efforts to “improve” society

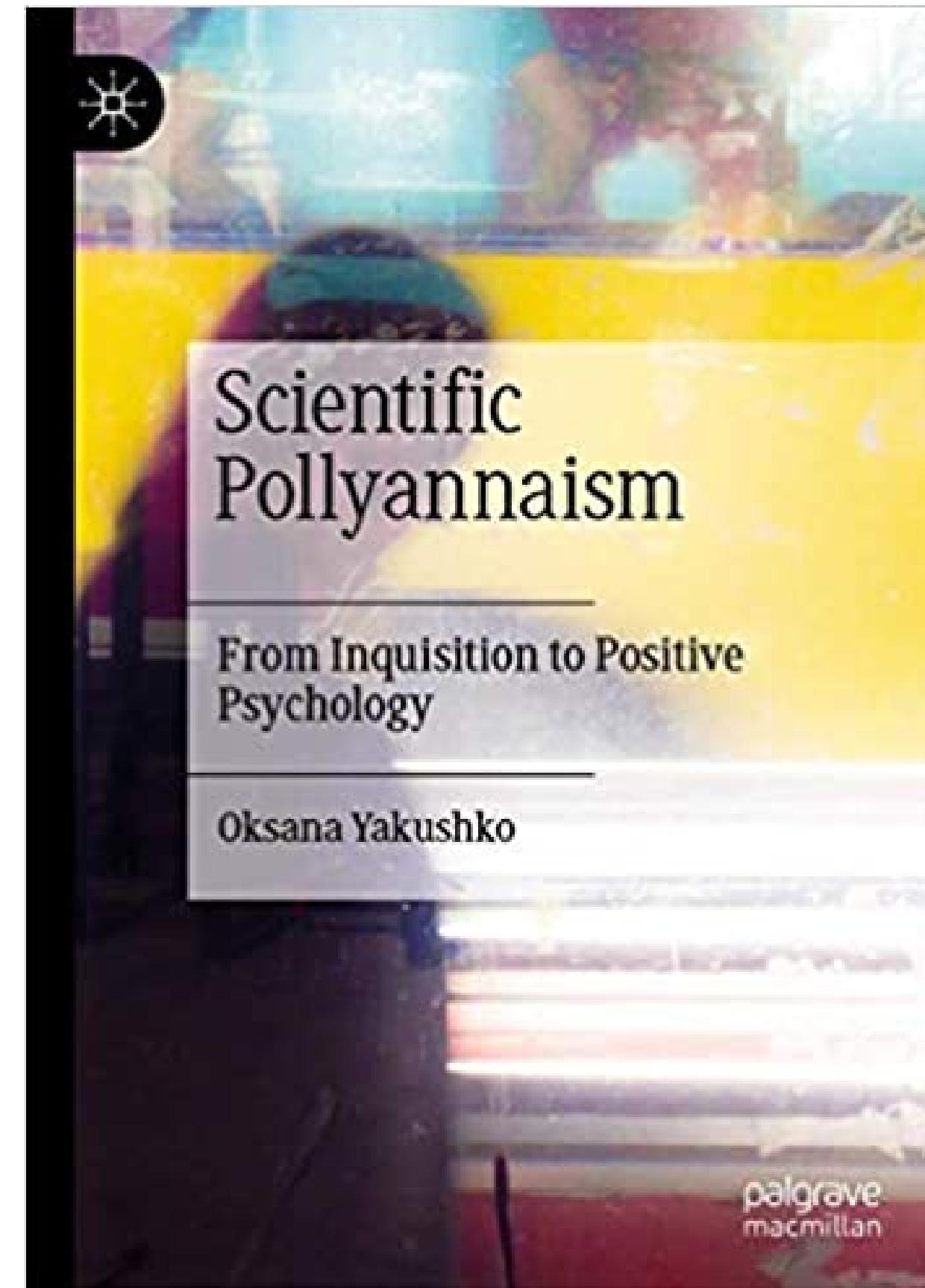
- Problems include inequality and injustices
- Not all groups benefit equally from the improvements
- Oppressed groups have been targets of human rights violations in the name of improvement

# Scientific Pollyannism

Psychology considers itself a progressive science, but also has a long history of promoting problematic ways to improve society

*Chapter 4 Eugenic  
Scientific Utopias Filled  
with Socially Engineered  
Happy Productive People*

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# **What is/was eugenics?**

1. Began as an idea to “improve” society over generational time by breeding humans like other animals
2. Developed into an ideology of socio-cultural purity/supremacy and scientific racism
3. A highly organized, widespread, and well-accepted worldwide movement
4. A system of oppression that led to many human rights violations and atrocities

# **Why are we talking about eugenics?**

1. The methods, research questions, and motivations of many early psychologists, including those interested in cognitive abilities were tied up in the eugenics movement
2. Eugenics provides an example of how cognitive and psychological research in general can have long-term negative implications for society

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# Back to Galton

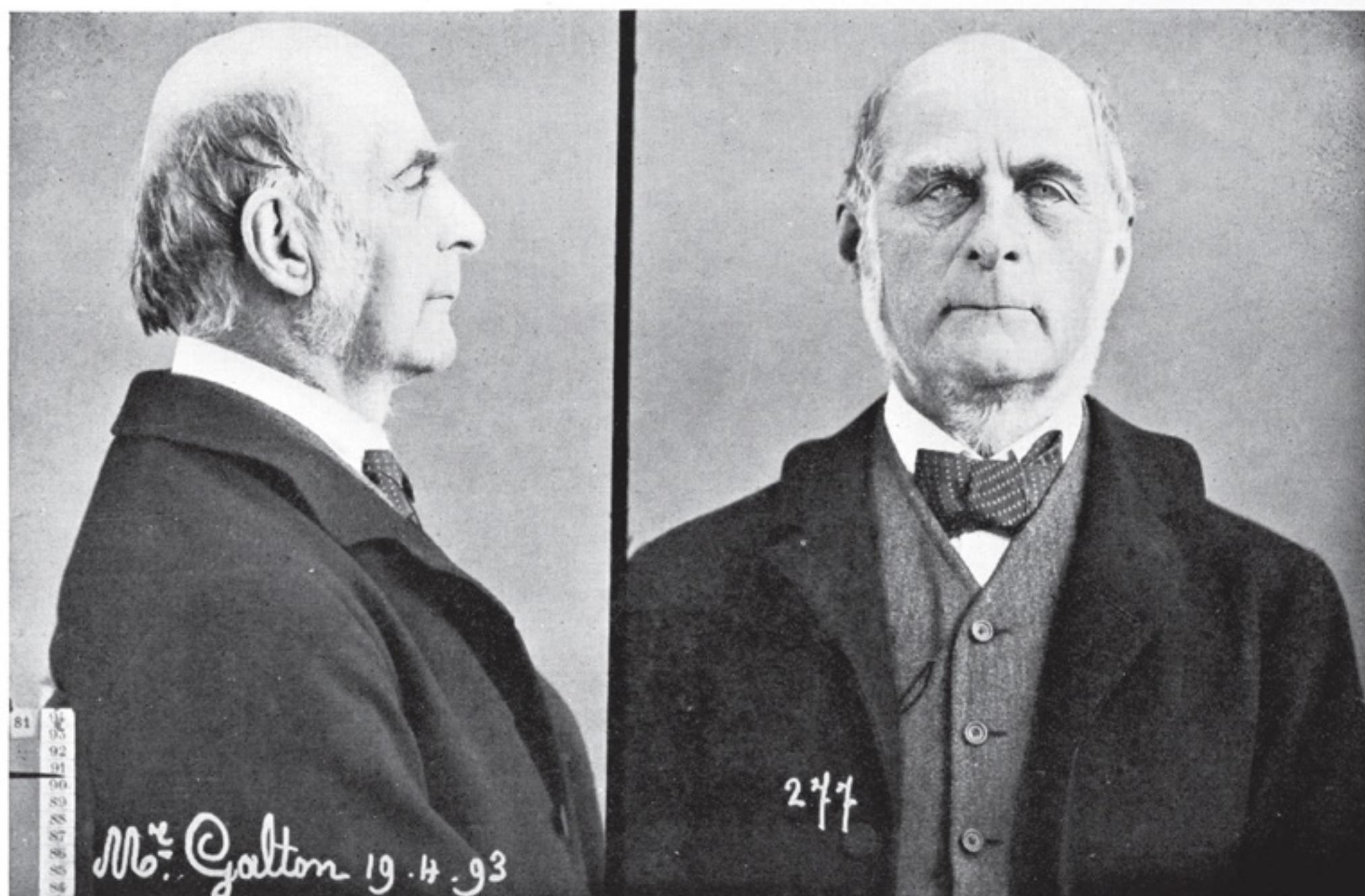
In 1880, why was Galton so interested in mental imagery?

A quote from his paper:

*The larger object of my inquiry is to elicit facts that shall define the natural varieties of mental disposition in the two sexes and in different races, and afford trustworthy data as to the relative frequency with which different faculties are inherited in different degrees.*

# Sir Francis Galton

(Réduction photographique 1/7.)



Front.	Inclin <sup>e</sup>	Racine (cavité)	Bord. o..... s..... p..... f.....	Barbe .....	Color <sup>e</sup> (pig <sup>e</sup> ) .....
	Haut <sup>r</sup>	Dos ..... Base	Lob. c..... a..... m..... d.....	Cheveux .....	'sang <sup>e</sup> .....
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		Part**	Part.....	Sig <sup>t</sup> dressé par M.....	

Francis Galton, aged 71, photographed as a criminal on his visit to Bertillon's  
Criminal Identification Laboratory in Paris, 1893.

# Sir Francis Galton

- An English Victorian era statistician, polymath, sociologist, **psychologist**, anthropologist, **eugenicist**, tropical explorer, geographer, inventor, meteorologist, proto-geneticist, and psychometrician. He was knighted in 1909. (from wikipedia)
- cousin of Charles Darwin
- Proposes Eugenics in: Hereditary talent and character (1865), Hereditary Genius (1869)

# Hereditary talent and character (1865)

Galton suggests that people could be selectively bred to improve the “stock” of the human race

Focused on the “highest, noble” traits of “civilized” mankind, such as intellect and general intelligence

I hence conclude that the improvement of the breed of mankind is no insuperable difficulty. If everybody were to agree on the improvement of the race of man being a matter of the very utmost importance, and if the theory of the hereditary transmission of qualities in men was as thoroughly understood as it is in the case of our domestic animals, I see no absurdity in supposing that, in some way or other, the improvement would be carried into effect.

It remains for me in the present article to show that hereditary influence is as clearly marked in mental aptitudes as in general intellectual power. I will then enter into some of the considerations which my views on hereditary talent and character naturally suggest.

# Genealogical research

Galton studied genealogies of "Englishmen of distinction" to conclude they had inherited superior traits

Number of cases.			Occurrence of near male relationship.	Percentages.	
				Distinguished father has a distinguished son.	Distinguished man has a distinguished brother.
605	All the men of "original minds" (Sir T. Phillips) and of every profession between 1453 and 1853 . . . .		1 in 6 cases.	6 times in 100 cases.	2 times in 100 cases.
85	Living notabilities (Walford's "Men of the Times," letter A) . . . .		1 in 3½ cases.	7 „ „ „	7 „ „ „
391	Painters of all dates (Bryan's Dicty. A)		1 in 6 cases.	5 „ „ „	4 „ „ „
515	Musicians (Fétis Dicty. A) . . . .		1 in 10 cases.	6 „ „ „	3 „ „ „
54	Lord Chancellors (Lord Campbell) . .		1 in 3 cases.	16 „ „ „	4 „ „ „
41	Senior Classics of Cambridge . . .	Averages . . . .	1 in 4 cases.	Too recent	10 „ „ „
			1 in 6 cases.	8 in 100 cases.	5 in 100 cases.

# **“Civilization” vs. “Barbarians”**

- Galton contrasted the “great men of civilized countries” with the “barbarians” and “savages” of “uncivilized countries”
- E.g., American Indians are naturally cold, melancholic, patient and taciturn...contain the minimum of affectionate and social qualities compatible with the continuance of their race
- Invoked fears about “the extent to which moral monstrosities can be bred”
- Advocated that Eugenics become accepted as a worldwide modern religion so that a holy war could be declared against the unfit

# Roadmap

1 Eugenics Overview

2 Galton's Eugenics

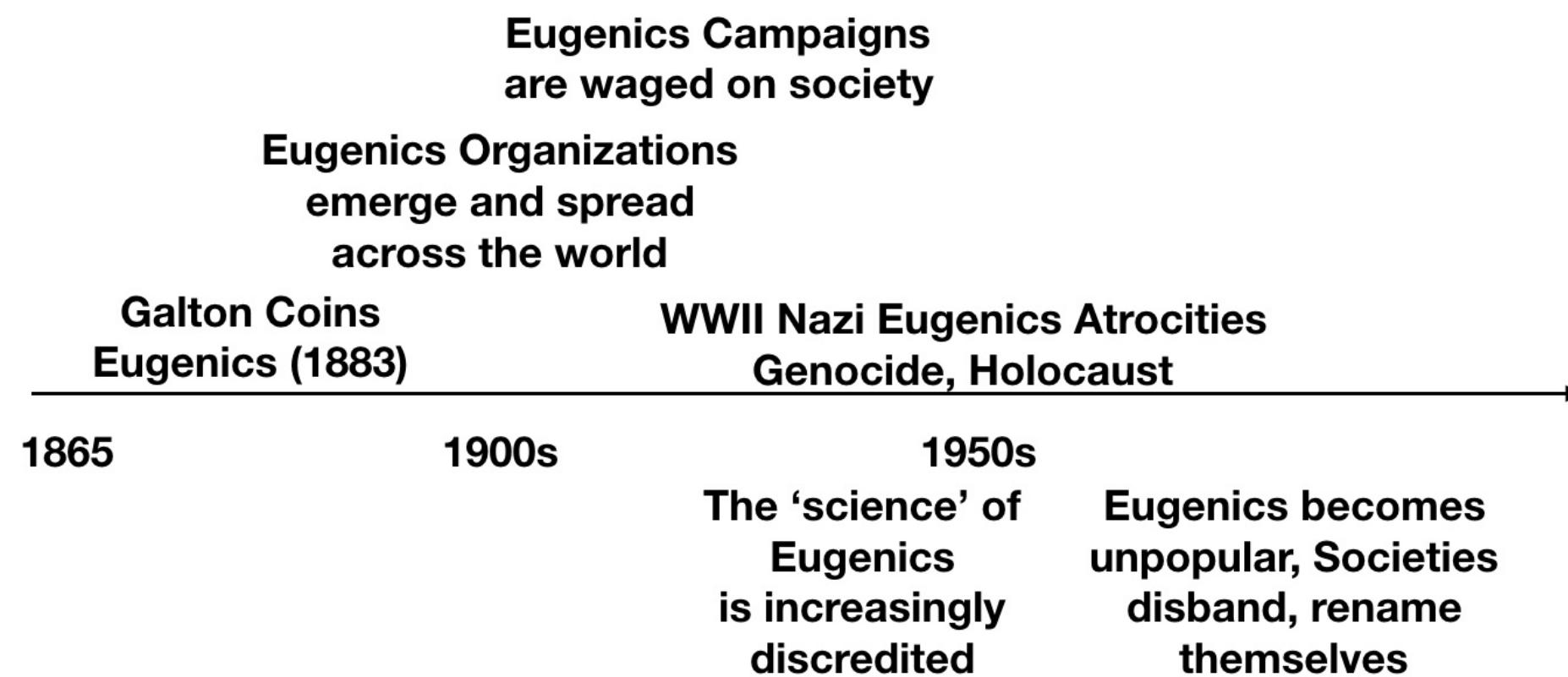
3 The Eugenics movement

4 Influences on society

5 Psychology and Eugenics

# A timeline of Eugenics

<https://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/timeline>



# The spread of eugenics

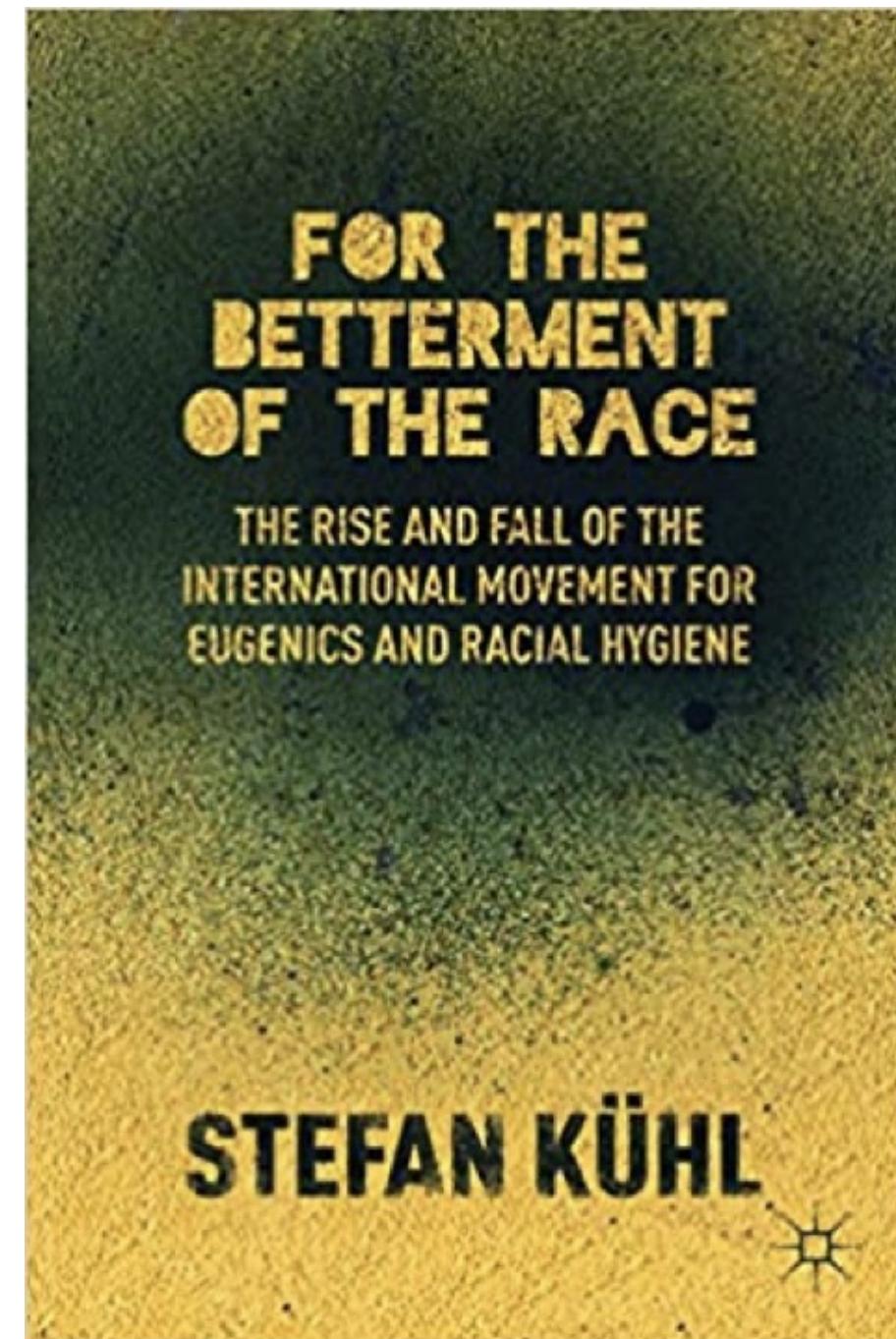


UK  
USA  
Canada  
Germany  
Australia  
New Zealand  
China  
South Africa  
Kenya  
France  
Netherlands  
Dutch East Indies  
Scandinavian States  
Eastern Europe  
Southern Europe  
Japan  
Iran  
Cuba  
Puerto Rico  
Mexico  
Brazil

# Suggested Reading

Excellent overview of the formation, development, and nuances of Eugenics movements in many different countries

Available for download from the BC library



# Oxford handbook of Eugenics

## **Part I explores national/colonial themes:**

Eugenics in Britain: The View from the Metropole

South Asia's Eugenic Past

Eugenics in Australia and New Zealand:  
Laboratories of Racial Science

Eugenics in China and Hong Kong: Nationalism  
and Colonialism, 1890s–1940s

South Africa: Paradoxes in the Place of Race

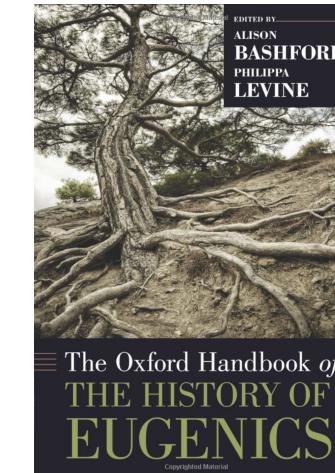
Eugenics in Colonial Kenya

Eugenics in Postcolonial Southeast Asia

German Eugenics and the Wider World: Beyond  
the Racial State

Eugenics in France and the Colonies

Eugenics in the Netherlands and the Dutch East  
Indies



The Scandinavian States: Reformed Eugenics Applied

The First-Wave Eugenic Revolution in Southern Europe: Science sans frontières

Eugenics in Eastern Europe, 1870s–1945

Eugenics in Russia and the Soviet Union

Eugenics in Japan: Sanguinous Repair

Eugenics in Interwar Iran

Eugenics and the Jews

Eugenics Policy and Practice in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico

The Path of Eugenics in Brazil: Dilemmas of Miscegenation

Eugenics in the United States

Eugenics in Canada: A Checkered History, 1850s–1990s

# Oxford handbook of Eugenics

## Part II explores transnational themes:

The Darwinian Context: Evolution and Inheritance

Anthropology, Colonialism, and Eugenics

Race, Science, and Eugenics in the Twentieth Century

Eugenics and the Science of Genetics

Fertility Control: Eugenics, Neo-Malthusianism, and Feminism

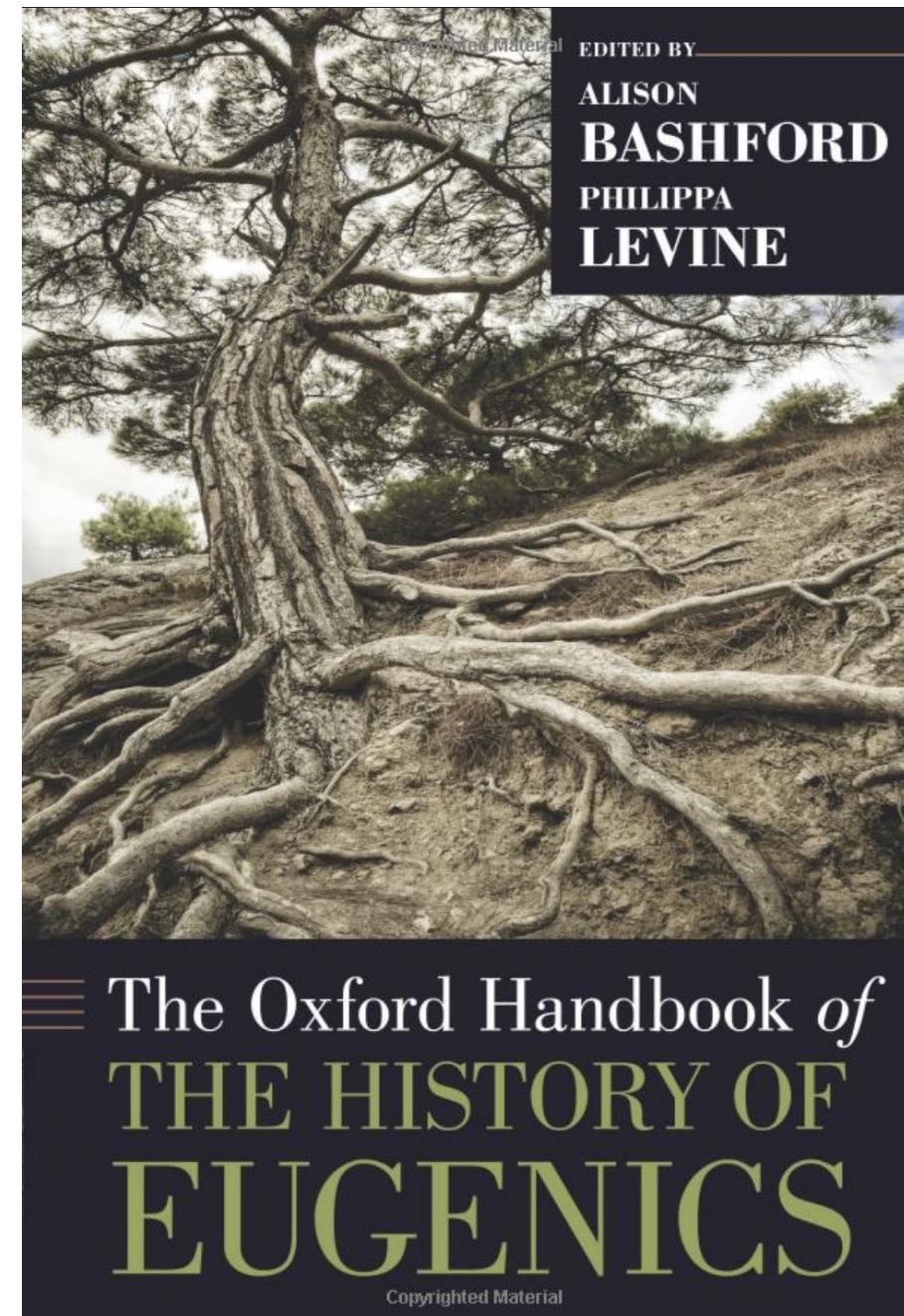
Disability, Psychiatry, and Eugenics

Eugenics and the State: Policy-Making in Comparative Perspective

Internationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and Eugenics

Gender and Sexuality: A Global Tour and Compass

Eugenics and genocide



# Eugenics Journals

A few English language eugenics journals include:

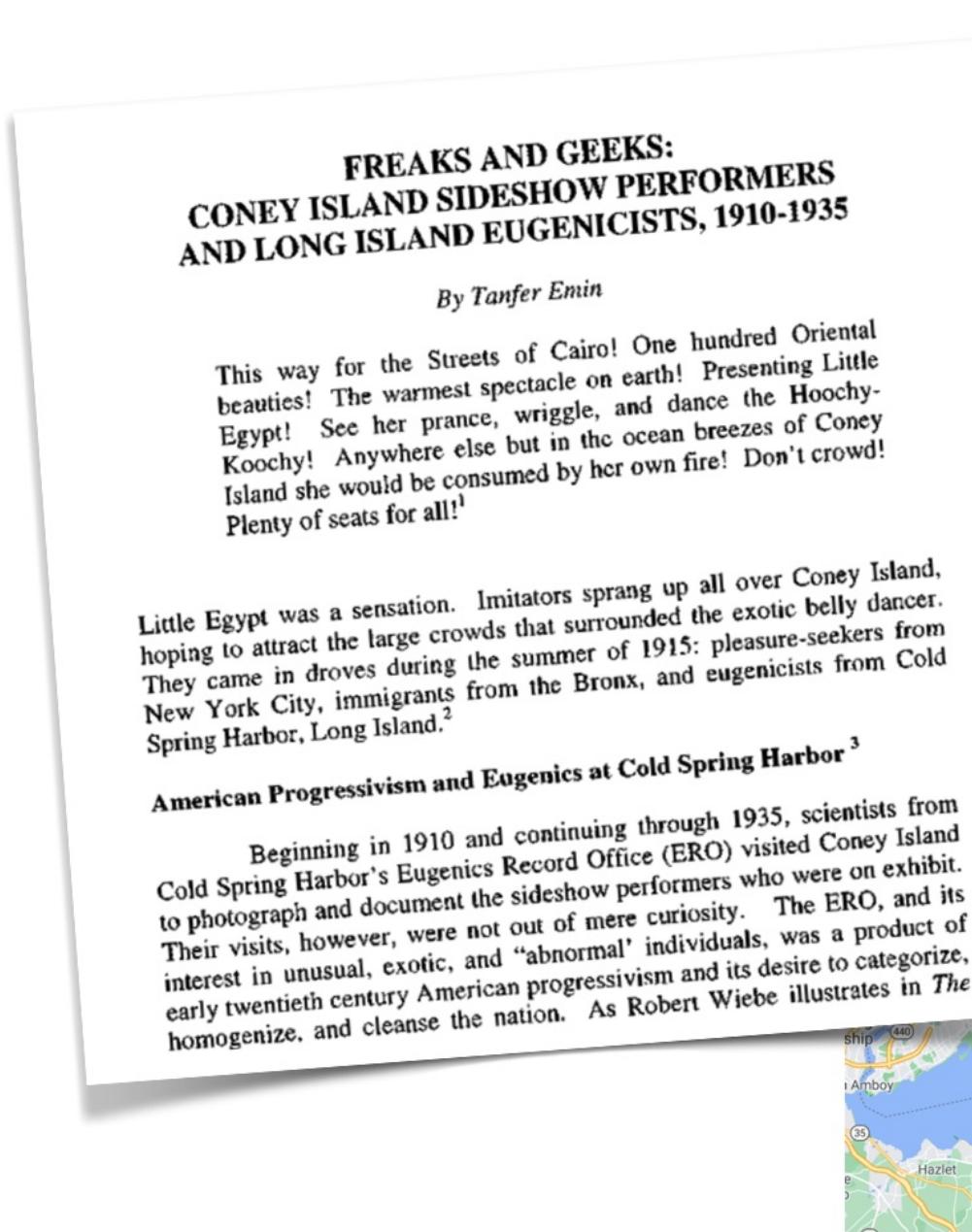
[The Eugenics Review](#)

[The Eugenical News](#)

[The Journal of Race Development](#) (whose first editor was the first president of the American Psychological Association, Granville Stanley Hall)

[Annals of Eugenics](#) (which was renamed Annals of Human Genetics).

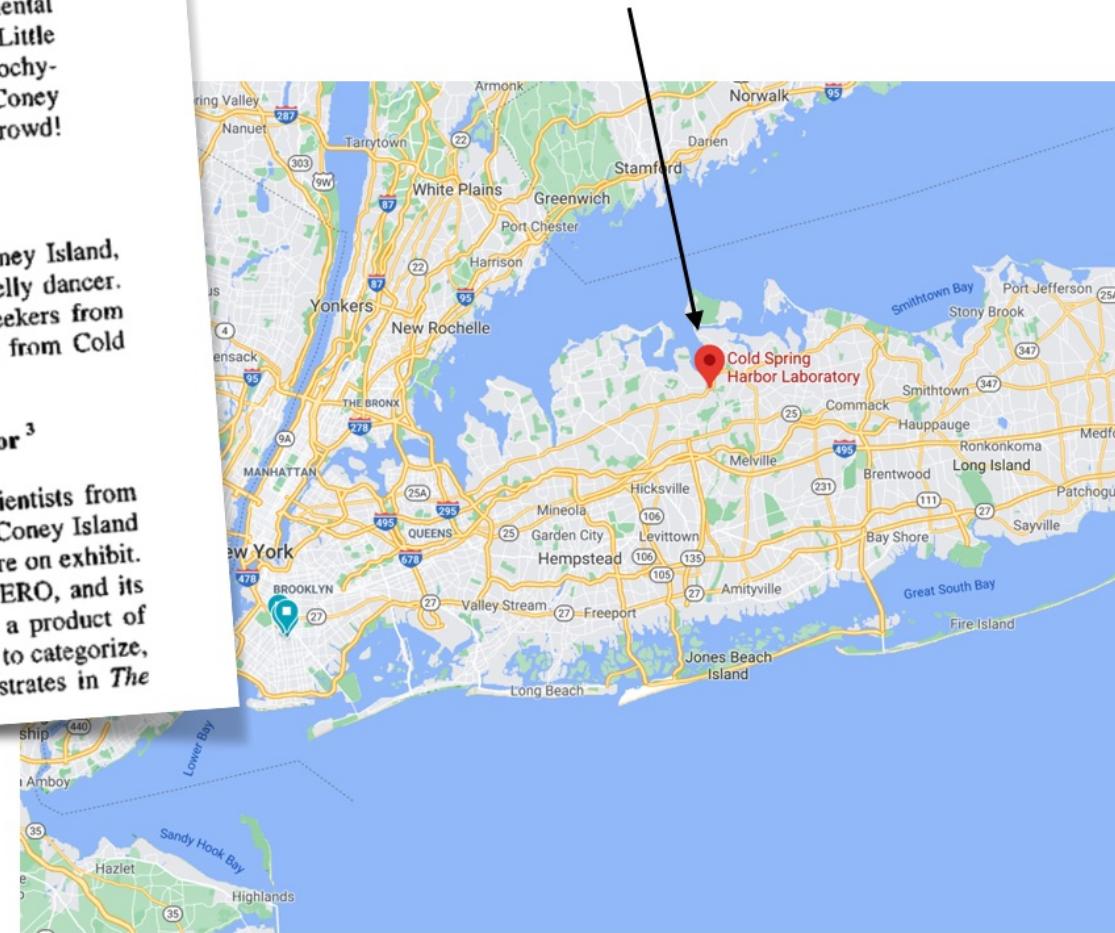
# Eugenics Record Office



## Eugenics Record Office 1910-1939

Kept over a million eugenic fitness cards on American citizens

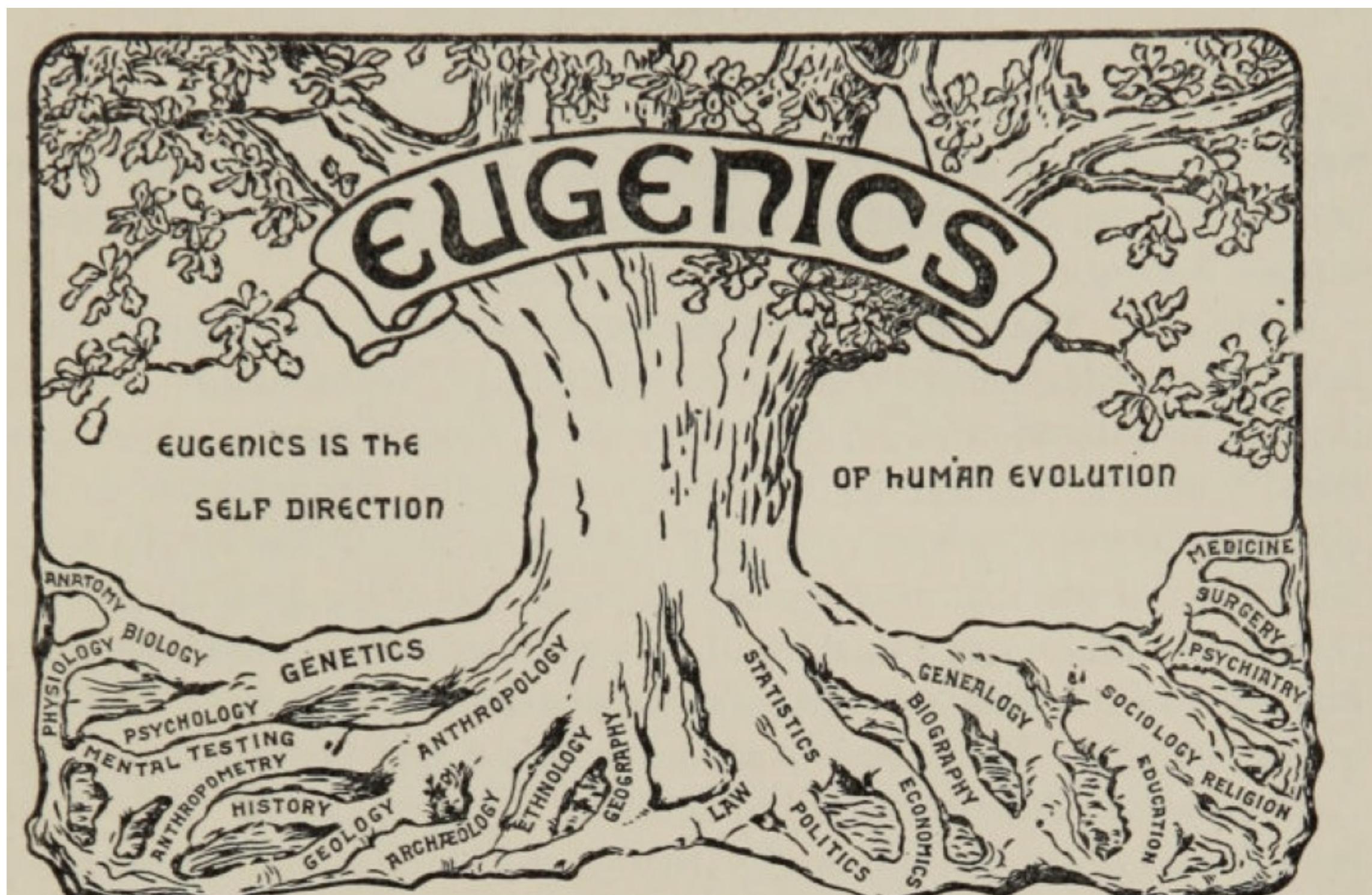
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory  
is still there



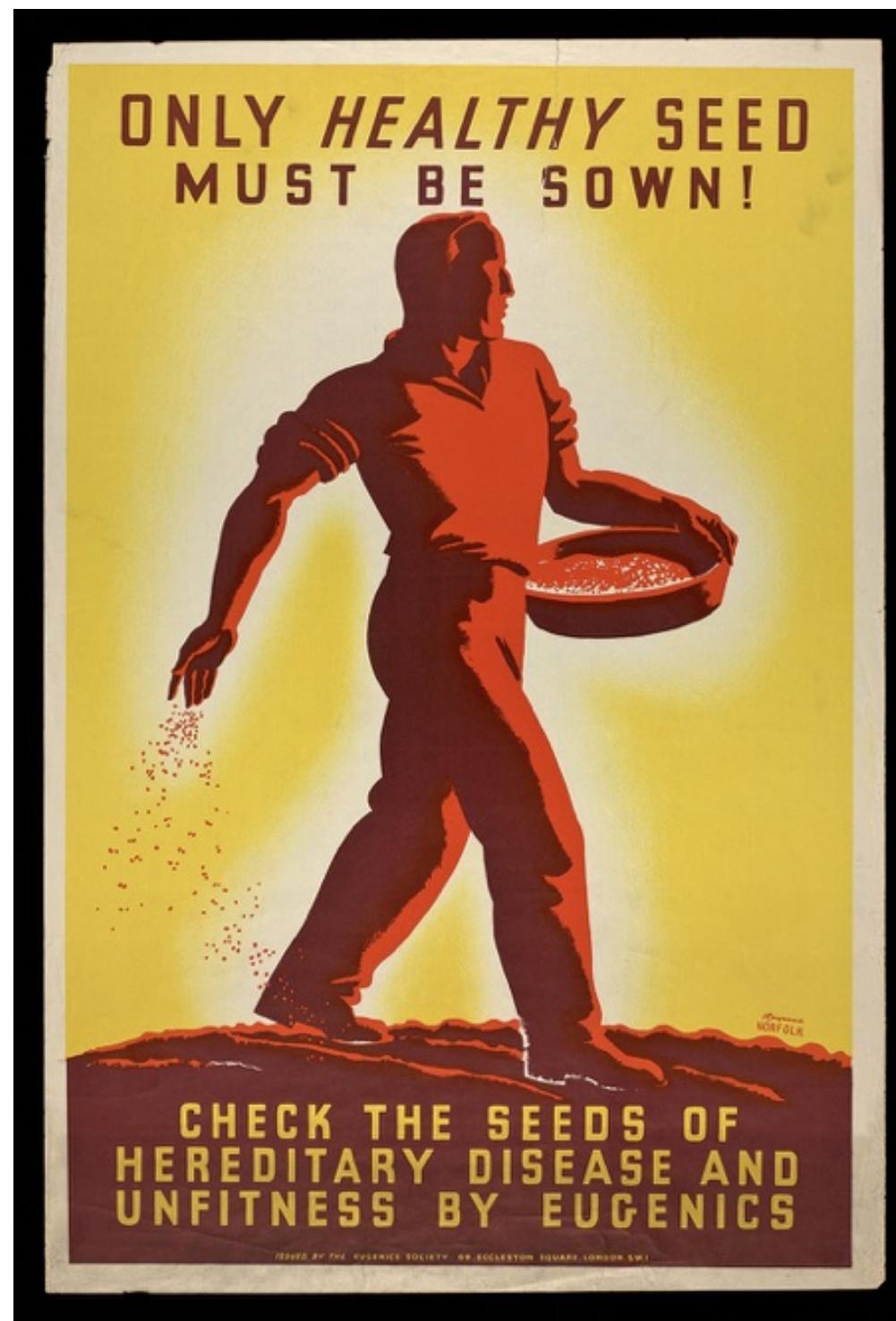
# **Eugenics Propaganda**

Movies, books, posters, state fairs, trained eugenics promoters, textbooks, etc.

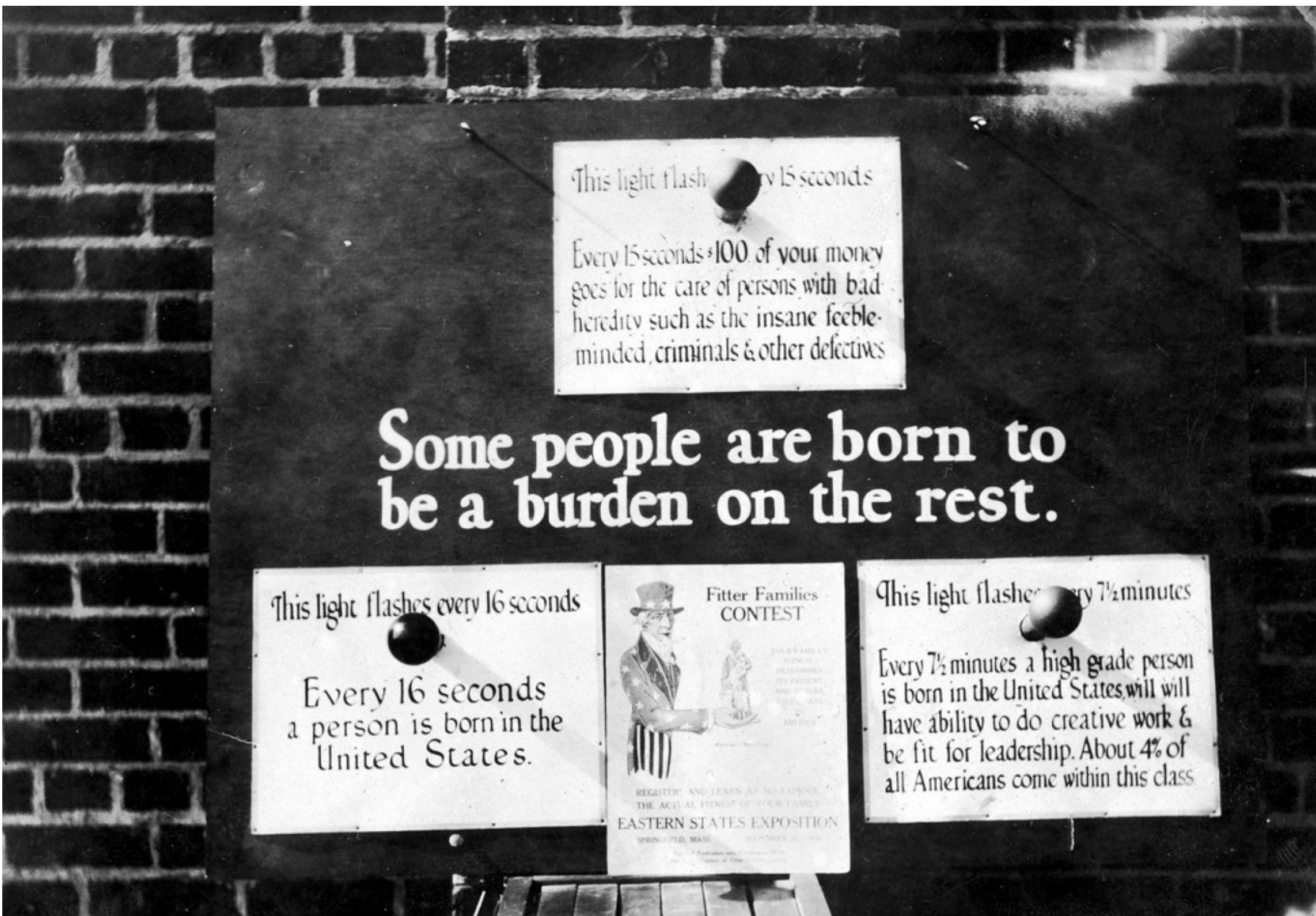
# Tree of eugenics



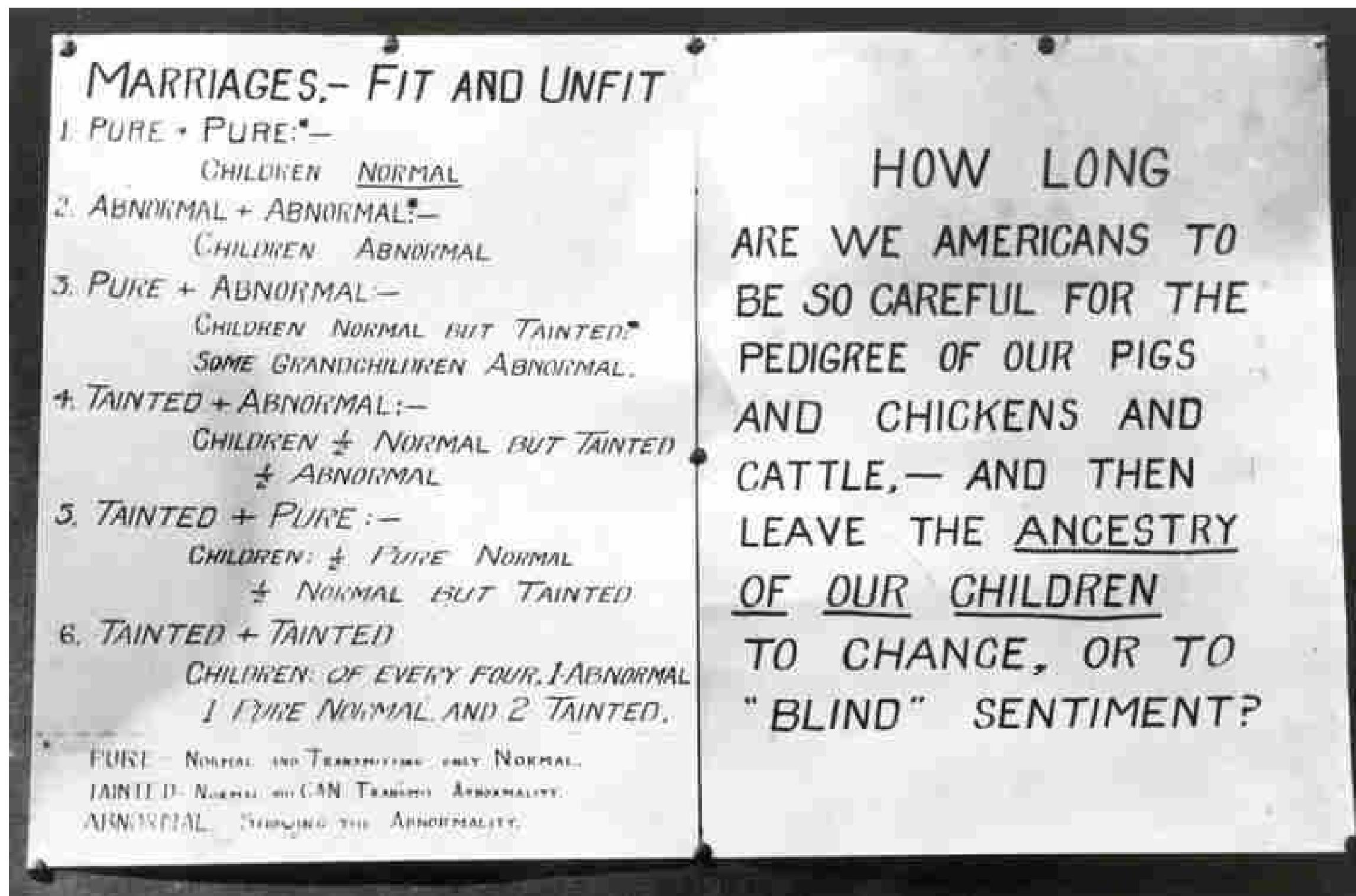
# Posters



# Displays



# Stoking fear



# Fitter Families



# Better Babies

Eugenics tents at State fairs



Judging Families at a state fair



# Books

1877, Richard Dugdale, *The Jukes: A study in Crim Pauperism, Disease and Heredity*

<https://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/timeline/51509ab5a4209be52300>

1912, Henry Goddard, *The Kallikak Family: A study in the Heredity of Feeble-mindedness*

<https://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/timeline/53246c10132156674booc>

Madison Grant's, *The Passing of the Great Race*

<https://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/timeline/53eeago3803401daea00>

# movies

Black Stork (1917)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEh2kz26T1k>

Tomorrow's Children (1934)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEVdAOKjR-s&t=96s>

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# Galton's methodical vision

*a brief word to express the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognizance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had (Galton, 1883, p.17)*

# Galton's Anthropometric Lab

## Basic Eugenics Program

**Testing:** Measure everything you can about people to identify their fitness

**Positive eugenics:** Encourage the “good” people to breed

**Negative eugenics:** find ways to stop “unfit” people from breeding, so they eliminate themselves over generational time



Francis Galton's First Anthropometric Laboratory at the International Health Exhibition, South Kensington, 1884-5.

# Karl Pearson

Statistician who invented  
the correlation coefficient,  
Pearson's  $r$

Galton's protege, took over  
the Galton Chair of  
Eugenics at University of  
London when Galton died

Founded [Annals of  
Eugenics](#)



# Example of Pearson's Applied Eugenics research

Pearson & Moul (1925)

## THE PROBLEM OF ALIEN IMMIGRATION INTO GREAT BRITAIN, ILLUSTRATED BY AN EXAMINATION OF RUSSIAN AND POLISH JEWISH CHILDREN.

BY KARL PEARSON AND MARGARET MOUL.

### PART I.

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# A short list of consequences

- Nazi Atrocities
- Involuntary institutionalization and forced sterilization (Many US States legalized these practices)
- Anti-miscegenation laws and/or selective intermarriage to “whiten” indigenous groups
- Racial segregation policies
- Education: Standardized testing, IQ testing, gifted education programs, residential schools
- Personnel Selection: Massive IQ testing to answer questions like, who should be sent to the front to die? Who should be an officer?
- Eugenicists in positions of power (Presidents, Elected Officials, Government Funding Agencies, University Presidents, Society Presidents, Faculty members, Prominent members of society at large).

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# Yakushko (2019)

Yakushko, O. (2019). Eugenics and its evolution in the history of western psychology: A critical archival review. *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, 17(2). <https://doi.org/10/gg3hsf>

- scroll down for quotes

DOI: 10.1002/ppi.1495

ARTICLE

WILEY

## Eugenics and its evolution in the history of western psychology: A critical archival review

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**Abstract**

Since its inception Western academic psychology has been influenced by and closely affiliated with eugenics, defined by its originators as the "science of racial betterment." The role of eugenics has been minimally acknowledged in historical accounts of Western psychology, although it was fundamental to the establishment of empirical psychology methods as well as its applied theories, specifically behaviorism. The continued influence of eugenics in Western psychology, noted in this article, is traced to biologizing human differences while minimizing the role of social context as well as to dividing individuals into groups according to their supposedly innate fitness levels (such as intelligence and optimism). The impact of eugenics on the practice of psychotherapy is highlighted.

# **Yakushko (2019)**

*Thus, it was American psychology, drawing on British evolutionary and eugenic developments, that became a key force in further expanding eugenic focus in both the discipline and society, including through specific emphasis on what constituted a “healthy” human being.*

# **Yakushko (2019)**

*A review of the official publications of American eugenic societies reveals that 31 presidents of the American Psychological Association between 1892 (Stanley G. Hall's presidency) and 1947 (Carl Rogers's presidency) were publicly listed as leaders of various eugenic organizations. Numerous other American psychology leaders, while not listed in these eugenic leadership rosters, nevertheless produced or openly supported eugenic works. For example, S. Franz (APA president in 1920) and J. Dashiell (APA president in 1938), while not listed as eugenic leaders, published numerous positive reviews of eugenic works with titles such as "The Field of Eugenic Reform".*

# **Yakushko (2019)**

*M. Washburn, APA president in 1921, one of few female APA presidents, not only published positive reviews of eugenic books but also produced studies on supposed differences in national character showing the “striking national difference” apparently found between Jewish participants’ lack of empathy in contrast to their non-Jewish counterparts (Washburn, 1923, p. 429).*

# APA Presidents

<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/former-presidents>

# Psychology Awards

APA gives the [E. L. Thorndike Career Achievement Award](#) to recognize achievements in educational psychology; the [Granville Stanley Hall Award](#) for achievements in Developmental Psychology; and the [Robert M. Yerkes Award](#) for achievements in Military Psychology by non-psychologists.

The Association for Psychological Sciences (APS) gives the [James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award](#) for contributions to applied research

The Society for Experimental Psychology gives the [Howard Crosby Warren Medal](#) for outstanding achievement in experimental psychology.

# APA Apology

<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/racism-apology>

<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/addressing-racism/historical-chronology>

# **Psychological tools**

**IDEALOGY**

EUGENICS JOURNALS

**TOOLS**

PSYCHOLOGY JOURNALS

**POLICY**

LAW & SYSTEMS

# Mental Testing

CATTELL, J. McK. (1890). V.—MENTAL TESTS AND MEASUREMENTS. *Mind*, os-XV(59), 373–381. <https://doi.org/10/dhngnc>

## V.—MENTAL TESTS AND MEASUREMENTS.

By Prof. J. McK. CATTELL.

Psychology cannot attain the certainty and exactness of the physical sciences, unless it rests on a foundation of experiment and measurement. A step in this direction could be made by applying a series of mental tests and measurements to a large number of individuals. The results would be of considerable scientific value in discovering the constancy of mental processes, their interdependence, and their variation under different circumstances. Individuals, besides, would find their tests interesting, and, perhaps, useful in regard to training, mode of life or indication of disease. The scientific and practical value of such tests would be much increased should a uniform system be adopted, so that determinations made at different times and places could be compared and combined. With a view to obtaining agreement among those interested, I venture to suggest the following series of tests and measurements, together with methods of making them.<sup>1</sup>

The first series of ten tests is made in the Psychological Laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania on all who present themselves, and the complete series on students of Experimental Psychology. The results will be published when sufficient data have been collected. Meanwhile, I should be glad to have the tests, and the methods of making them, thoroughly discussed.

The following ten tests are proposed :

- I. Dynamometer Pressure.
- II. Rate of Movement.
- III. Sensation-areas.
- IV. Pressure causing Pain.
- V. Least noticeable difference in Weight.
- VI. Reaction-time for Sound.
- VII. Time for naming Colours.
- VIII. Bi-section of a 50 cm. line.
- IX. Judgment of 10 seconds time.
- X. Number of Letters remembered on once Hearing.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Francis Galton, in his Anthropometric Laboratory at South Kensington Museum, already uses some of these tests, and I hope the series here suggested will meet with his approval. It is convenient to follow Mr. Galton in combining tests of body, such as weight, size, colour of eyes, &c., with psychophysical and mental determinations, but these latter alone are the subject of the present discussion. The name (or initials) of the experimentee should be recorded, the nationality (including that of the parents), and the age, sex, occupation and state of health. [See Remark (a) by Mr. Galton below, p. 380. Ed.]

# What's Next

Read chapter 4 [Intelligence testing](#) from the textbook.

Watch the next mini-lecture in for this learning module, and then complete quizzes and assignments of your choice