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“Six Blacks from Home”: Childhood, Motherhood, and Eugenics in America

In August 1919, a settlement house worker in Columbus, Ohio, filed a complaint in juvenile court against a seven-year-old girl whom I will call “Marie.” The complaint read, “Marie runs the streets continually. She is very irregular in her attendance at school, and is as dirty as a pig. She has been found in a lumber yard with a negro, and it was alleged by her associates that he raped her there. She goes into stores and begs.” According to the surviving records, Marie’s “truancies from home” alerted settlement workers to the case. As a young child she reportedly began staying out late at night and loitering in the company of men and boys, and was threatened with being put out of the house when she was found alone with the African American man. By 1928, after Marie became an unwed mother at the age of sixteen, and had spent nine years in and out of child welfare institutions, a summary report contained the interesting typographical error that Marie’s young life had strayed a distance of “six blacks from home.” As incidental as slipping “blocks” into “blacks” may have been in one sense, it captured a powerful truth. Marie violated key boundaries of sexual, gender, and racial purity that made a woman a candidate for respectable motherhood, and she paid dearly for these transgressions.¹

When Marie and her mother entered the juvenile justice system for the first time in 1919, they denied that she had had sexual relations of any kind. Others presented conflicting evidence. A physician reported to the court that she had gonorrhea, but a probation officer advised the judge that he could find no evidence that Marie had been raped. Contrary to the complaint filed by the settlement house, her teachers reported fairly

regular attendance at school, but they acknowledged that she was old for her grade. On this evidence the judge advised that they visit a nearby clinic at the Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research for psychological testing. Marie scored 78 on the Goddard-Binet intelligence test, well above the feebleminded level, but received the indeterminate diagnosis of "potentially feeble-minded" and a "prognosis that she would probably become an institutional case." Marie and her mother went home.²

Two years later, when Marie was nine, the settlement house made another report to the juvenile court. She was "running the streets without supervision; loitering about with men." This time the juvenile court judge used his power to take custody. He committed her for "extended study and observation" at the Bureau of Juvenile Research's cottages. After five weeks of observation and testing, they diagnosed her again as "potentially feeble-minded" and assigned her 70 on the Stanford-Binet intelligence test. While she was in their custody, the bureau's fieldworker visited Marie's home and concluded that her parents "were unfit to handle a girl of Marie's type." The fieldworker recommended that she be committed permanently to the Ohio Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth. The juvenile court judge disagreed, so the bureau wrote a letter to Marie's aunt in Cleveland hoping that she would agree to adopt the girl. There was no answer. The fieldworker recommended Marie be fostered-out, but no foster home was found. Finally, the judge placed Marie in the Franklin County Children's Home on September 30, 1921.³

For contemporary readers, one of the most striking features of Marie's early involvement with the child welfare system is that none of the professionals seem to have understood her through the discourse of child protection. Instead, her case was framed in terms of whether she was an immoral delinquent *who* could be reformed, or an amoral menace *which* should be quarantined. To understand why social personnel constructed her in these competing ways and to draw general lessons from it, we have to locate her story within wider discourses that related poverty, sex, and reproduction during this period, and in particular we have to understand the twisting currents of eugenics across the first half of the twentieth century.

Put simply, eugenics is the applied science of improving the hereditary characteristics of human beings.⁴ In addition to studying its role as the ideological foundation for coercive sterilization, incarceration, and genocidal policies, historians are currently charting its relationships to more classically liberal elements of the welfare state's rationalization of reproduction.⁵ This has created significant departures from earlier work. First, it is increasingly clear that eugenics did not dissolve between the

world wars, and that the movement did not fall with the Third Reich.⁶ Second, the focus of historical interest in eugenics has expanded from the “myth of the menace of the feeble-minded” into a wider inquiry about a “modern way of talking about social problems in biologizing terms.”⁷ These two developments in the literature suggest that eugenics was not as ideologically rigid as we previously believed, and its core ideas have survived into the present.⁸

This article follows the recent recognition of the broad historical currency of eugenics, but it shows the difficulty of maintaining a state-centered eugenic program in American political culture. Eugenic thought clearly shares the classically liberal assumption that individual competency is the basis of social progress, but eugenics has had considerable difficulty working with the liberal thesis that individual agency (*the consent of the governed*) is the basis of political authority.⁹ Coming to terms with the figure of the liberal agent forms the plot structure of eugenics in modern America; but to understand how eugenics could manage this transformation, one must delve further into the ideas about sex, gender, and reproduction that have framed middle-class liberalism. Previous work has shown that both eugenic and maternal approaches to the welfare state fostered and profited from middle-class anxiety about female virtue.¹⁰ By invoking the widespread middle-class fear of failed feminine virtue, the fear that the nation of agents would be reduced to an unruly lascivious mob, American eugenics found its most enduring connection to liberal discourse. However, this discursive move entangled eugenics with liberal assumptions about self-control, the sanctity of individual consent, domestic privacy, childhood innocence, and the limits of state power. Because these concepts emerged largely through romantic narratives of authentic individual choice and motherly love, they are foreign to the evolutionary basis of eugenic thought and they are antithetical to the establishment of a total eugenic welfare state. The successful casting of mothers alternately as villains and heroes also blunted (without erasing) the roles that either men or children could play in the eugenic social narrative. In the United States, eugenic forces have not altered the cultural construction of the child of poverty in ways that fully suit their agenda. This is true even though poor children were (and are) in the weakest legal position to defend their rights of self-determination, and might have become the easiest targets of eugenic procedures. Instead, working-class women have faced the brunt of the eugenic assault upon the respectability of the poor, and they faced the severest amendments to their core liberal rights to life and liberty.

When the county juvenile court ordered Marie to the Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research in 1919 and 1921, she was being sent to a clinic headed by none other than eugenicist Henry H. Goddard. The clinic proudly displayed genealogical charts of dysgenic families (Fig. 1). Family history charts were a particularly clear way to communicate hereditarian ideas to visitors and patients, but they were secondary to the new intelligence tests for diagnostic and legal purposes. The child in the photograph is probably responding to questions for the Goddard-Binet examination.¹¹ In 1908, Henry Goddard was the first to bring Alfred Binet's intelligence tests to America, and he quickly secured their acceptance as the standard way to assess mental capacity. Goddard claimed that genealogical mapping, combined with intelligence testing, demonstrated that poverty and crime were caused by feeble-minded persons who appeared normal, but who were unable to control their animalistic instincts. He coined a new word, "moron," to label them. He argued that "it is hereditary feeble-mindedness that is the basis of all [social] problems, and it is hereditary feeble-mindedness that we must attack." Goddard's battle plan focused upon child custody, rather than adult sterilization. He believed that the state should administer intelligence tests widely to children: "By suitable mental examination they must be discovered, and discovered as early as possible." Then as many of the mentally defective children as possible should be prohibited from procreating through "colonialization" (custody).¹²



Fig. 1. The Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research at its opening in 1913.

Colonization of poor, allegedly feeble-minded Americans may seem like an extreme, almost diabolical idea, but it was making headway across the United States during the Progressive Era. In 1904 twenty-four states had institutions for the feeble-minded that housed about fourteen thousand inmates. In the next twenty years the number of inmates tripled and nineteen states added institutions. Eugenic work encouraged this expansion because new intelligence tests and terminology increased the identifiably feeble-minded by as much as tenfold, while providing a fearsome story of social degeneration that justified their incarceration. Marie's case notes reflected the ways that eugenic narratives justified institutionalization. When fieldworkers concluded from home visits that Marie's father's "intelligence was not beyond that of a moron, and the mother's mentality was even lower," they were speaking in the terms of Goddard's *Kallikak Family*—the landmark eugenic family study of 1912. *The Kallikak Family* was about a "type of girl . . . rather good looking . . . with many attractive ways. "Goddard warned," If this young woman were to leave the institution, she would at once become prey . . . she has no power of control, and all her instincts and appetites are in a direction that would lead to vice." So too, Marie's case notes claimed she was "small of stature, and talked agreeably. Her light brown, curly hair set off a slender face of fine features," but "she associated with all sorts of persons in all sorts of places, and began to be sexually promiscuous." Their concern that feeble-mindedness could easily go unrecognized encouraged a bureau psychologist to open his case summary of Marie in 1928 with the observation that she "was just another case where looks were deceiving." From the eugenic perspective, the juvenile court, physicians, social workers, and teachers, not to mention parents and neighbors, could not be trusted to see the extent of pathology lurking within defective children and youths.¹³

Goddard and his supporters wanted eugenic psychologists and social workers to have more than advisory powers before the courts. He explained that "the facts" should bind the courts to a set "policy of the state. . . . There is only one answer. They must be removed. . . . They must be segregated, colonized." He realized that the social cleansing he desired would be resisted, particularly since many adults were of "such a high grade of defectiveness that they never get into court and yet have feeble-minded children. We cannot touch these adults. We must somehow get hold of their children." If commitment to the Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth could be secured from the courts, then incarceration in a sex-segregated space could be achieved for the procreative life of the inmate.¹⁴

In Goddard's words—quoted more than once by the board overseeing Ohio's child custodial institutions—"every feeble-minded person is potentially a pauper or a criminal." His followers were so convinced that "more than 40%" of the juveniles at the reformatories were "definitely feeble-minded—that it [was] folly to try and reform them . . . they [were] not immoral; they [were] unmoral," that they invented unusual diagnostic terms like "potentially feeble-minded" and applied them to troubling children like Marie if they scored higher on the tests than expected. Under this thinking, feebleminded children were potential paupers, and pauper children were potentially feebleminded; the intellectual circle equating poverty with a "cognitive underclass" was complete more than seventy years before Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein coined the phrase in 1994.¹⁵



Fig. 2. "Eugenic Forces" Stage Street Theatre on Wall Street 1915. Courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society, #2003.

During the Progressive Era, eugenic discourse was confidently blunt. The bit of street theater shown in Figure 2 was staged by "Eugenic Forces" in New York City out of the office of the editor of the *Medical Review of Reviews* in 1915.¹⁶ It would have been difficult for a single scene to capture more concisely the figure of the vagrant, poor, illiterate man whose rights to public speech could be so cheaply bought and manipulated that he was unfit for citizenship. Whether the representative of the disorderly mob was the unemployed man or the promiscuous woman, eugenics effectively situated poor fathers and mothers as carriers of the bad seeds from which dependent and delinquent children grew. Targeting children as morally degenerate seeds (which was what Henry Goddard sought to do) simply extended this line of reasoning, but it was at odds with increasingly salient themes in American childhood. Specifically, middle-class ideology had

since the mid-nineteenth century progressively figured the child as an innocent, perhaps sacred object, and certainly a less-than-active participant in the social drama. The figure of the poor child could not be transposed easily into the dysgenic position taken by the men in this photograph. This was the lesson that “Eugenic Forces” in Ohio would learn when they tried to open a clinic “where all the children from the Juvenile Courts shall be sent as wards of the state . . . and if found to be feeble-minded, they will be sent to an institution for segregation.”¹⁷

Opposing views of impoverished children confronted Goddard’s Ohio venture from the very beginning. The superintendent of the state’s male juvenile reformatory, Rupert Hastings, wrote in 1914 that “the interested observer” could give conclusions as valid as those of the psychologists. Hastings continued in another essay to call intelligence tests “hasty experiments” that were not reliable enough to be used in public policy. In 1919 he wrote a letter telling Goddard to stay away: “To be frank with you Doctor, it will not be convenient at any time, for any worker to come to the school to make such examination of any of our boys.” Hastings opposed Goddard’s scientific determinism and his eugenic understanding of delinquency. In his 1913 essay, “The Merit System,” Hastings explained that when a boy entered the school he was “plainly told that” his length of stay “depends wholly upon himself”—his conduct. Hastings believed in the romantically individualistic credo that “the desire to succeed . . . is planted somewhere in every breast.” He stressed that “there is hardly a boy who does not respond if you appeal to his sense of reason.” The primacy of individual sovereignty in Hastings’s understanding of social order made Goddard’s work and the bureau’s mission unacceptable to him.¹⁸

Because the eugenic clinic was housed initially on the grounds of Hastings’s reformatory, he was able to close down the facility. He did this against the wishes of the board of his own institution by claiming that dependent children and youth could not lawfully be tested, observed, and evaluated in a place reserved for delinquent youth. The State Attorney General supported his view. It was illegal for dependent youth to be sent to the bureau on the premises of the reformatory designed for youths who were “guilty of immoral conduct” because a dependent child was “found” in places of vice or due to parental “neglect, cruelty, or depravity . . . is prevented from receiving a proper education.” The primacy afforded to the opposition between culpability and innocence in the law signaled a decisive victory of the liberal framework on children’s moral subjectivity over Goddard’s Progressive and “objective” diagnostic categories. It resulted in the removal of the clinic from the reformatory,

and evinced the cultural centrality of personal insight and individual agency that Goddard himself had mocked when he claimed that the causes of delinquency could not be understood by "merely asking the child why he did it."¹⁹

The Ohio Board of State Charities supported Hastings's and the Attorney General's move against eugenic forces in the state. The board tried to place as many children with families as possible. A headline, from the *Columbus Dispatch*, on Christmas Day 1915, which was taken directly from the board's press releases, read, "Many Children Are Given Out as Christmas Gifts." Children are objectified here as they are in eugenic discourse, but from the eugenic perspective "giv[ing] out" dependent children who were of Marie's class courted disaster by spreading bad stock into healthy families. In contrast, the Board of State Charities found the proportion of the "unfit" to be low and believed that its job was to create places where a moral sensibility could be awakened and nurtured within the young. The month before the Christmas Day article appeared, C. V. Williams, director of the child welfare division of the Board of State Charities, spoke to a crowd that packed the Sunday-school room of the Presbyterian Church in Coshocton, Ohio. His message was that "every child is entitled to a chance in life." Williams went on to claim that a proper family life was the road to equal opportunity and that "every effort should be made toward the reformation of parents so that the home might be kept intact." Harry Howett advanced the same argument when he became the director of the division in 1921. He claimed that "the infinite patience of the majority of our [foster] mothers" comprised the strength of the agency. Foster mothers did not care for the children in exchange for the money they received, but for "the knowledge that because of the service which they render so heroically, hundreds of children are saved each year from the blight of institutional life." Williams and Howett wanted each member of the family to serve the maternalist ideal, but unlike eugenics, the purpose of this self-sacrifice was not merely social efficiency but the development of individual autonomy for adulthood.²⁰

Forced out of the reformatories, Goddard was able to build observation cottages for the bureau, and it was here that Marie and her mother came for evaluation in 1919. When the Franklin County Judge received the bureau's recommendation to place Marie in the more permanent custody of the institution for feebleminded youth in 1921, he opted instead to send her to the county home. Like Rupert Hastings, the attorney general, and the Board of State Charities, the juvenile court judges of Ohio were not captured by the newly fashionable eugenic thought. This particular judge was concerned that the "expense" of the bureau's eugenic

approach “was not justified.” Both Goddard and the superintendent of the institution for the feeble-minded had made it known that they believed large percentages of juvenile wards were incurable social menaces who should be incarcerated for life. Even though the mortality rate was twice as high among inmates at the institution for the feeble-minded as in the population at large, the fiscal implications of custodial care under a eugenic philosophy were extensive.²¹

During these years, the bureau found only one in twenty juvenile wards to be normal. They diagnosed 37 percent as feeble-minded, 30 percent as psychopathic, 8 percent as syphilitic, and deferred diagnosis 20 percent of the time. It appears that jurists were unimpressed by such findings. In Richland County, Ohio, less than one percent of the juvenile court records from 1923 to 1932 indicated that the court considered one of the child’s relatives to have been feeble-minded, even though almost one-third of the children were girls who (like Marie) stood accused of sexual delinquency. From 1918 to July 1920, during the period when Marie was first classified as a dysgenic menace at the bureau, the juvenile courts in Ohio referred a meager 472 cases to the Goddard’s clinic. This was less than three percent of the children that came before courts and it was hardly adequate to meet the goal of eugenic sorting for social hygiene. The small percentage of eugenic work done for the courts was not due to the bureau’s limited cottage capacity alone. If judges had desired the opinions of eugenic psychologists, they would have called the bureau’s experts into their courts and the record would show more than 236 cases of court consultation.²²

The vast majority of the bureau’s work up to the time of Marie’s case took the form of group testing or field surveys. They recorded five thousand of these in the three years of operation following establishment in 1914. Goddard’s protégé and the bureau’s first director, Thomas Haines, noted that his ability to draw conclusions from his school survey data was impaired because principals did not follow his sampling instructions and he could not “secure to cooperation” of school medical personnel needed to obtain family histories. Perhaps they resisted because Haines used his surveys of school children to claim that “the presence of these defective children, the non-potential citizens in the public school is a positive waste of social substance.” The high proportion of survey work and the low level of referral work suggest that Goddard’s cadre had difficulty converting other professionals to eugenics.²³

Yet in Marie’s case, the bureau’s fieldworkers found collaborators at the West Side Settlement House and together they won a partial victory in 1921 by getting her moved to the county home, where she could no

Table 1. Cases by referring agency and type of evaluation, Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research 1918–1920

Agency	BJR Cottage Commit	BJR Clinic	BJR Field Surveys (Consultations*)	Total	Percent
County Children's Homes	3	0	1634	1637	46%
Schools	0	61	750	811	22%
Juvenile Courts	193	43	236*	472	13%
Board of State Charities	9	201	NA	210	6%
Hospitals	4	0	199	203	6%
Social Services	0	90	0	90	3%
State Juvenile Institutions	1	UNK	UNK	83	2%
Miscellaneous	7	UNK	UNK	70	2%
Total	217	(400)	(2950)	3576	100%
Percent	7%	(11%)	(82%)	100%	

Note: The figures in parenthesis are approximations accurate within 4% of the total number of cases. Cottage Commitments refers to cases sent to the Bureau for an extended stay, normally one week. Clinic refers to out-patient testing. Field Surveys are the numbers of children tested in groups by visitors to schools, hospitals, and county homes; for the Juvenile Court these are the court-ordered consultations.

The data were compiled from Ohio, Board of Administration, *Publications 19, "Thureau of Juvenile Research, review of the Work, 1918–1920,"* and Henry H. Goddard *Juvenile Delinquency, 1923*; see the draft of Mateer's annual report, Goddard Papers, M31.1, Archives of American Psychology, University of Akron.

longer "stay out late at night and loiter in the company of men and boys." To their chagrin, nine months later she was returned to her mother. The county home could have kept Marie until she reached majority, but if they were like their peers across the state, they would not have shared a eugenic understanding of the case. Goddard betrayed the tension between the county homes and his fieldworkers when he sent a letter to the Homes hoping to sooth "misconceptions" about the motives of the bureau's survey work. He apologetically explained that the "Bureau has no theories to prove and no pet plans to carry through," and contended that they were merely "seek[ing] the facts." Such disclaimers must have seemed disingenuous to the superintendents and matrons who regularly attended the State Conference of Charities and Correction. Some of them must have heard Goddard tell this Conference in 1918 that the menace of the feebleminded was not limited to adult thieves and prostitutes, because "what is more striking the same is largely true of the orphanages and the children's home. . . . It is very doubtful if there is a

children's home in the state 50 per cent of whose inmates ever make good."²⁴

Constructing children as a dysgenic menace sharply divided Goddard's cadre from the maternal language that the Superintendents and Matrons of the Homes used to explain their work. In the annual conference of the State Board of Charities the year following the founding of the bureau, the heads of Homes in Eaton, Cincinnati, Worthington, Lebanon, Springfield, Tiffin, Maumee, Akron, and Norwalk advocated for keeping children of the poor out of institutions and in families. The Reverend A. E. Harford of the Methodist Children's Home in Worthington emphasized "the importance of training the unfortunate child, handicapped by a bad heredity (whatever that may signify) and by a vicious environment" in order to produce responsible citizens. "A good mother should never be deprived of her child, or the child deprived of its mother simply because of misfortune. Such children should be detained in the home with the hope of rehabilitating the family." When a child, due to "defect, either real or imaginary, in their appearance or make-up, cannot be placed with advantage," they should be "fitted for the great responsibilities of life in the cottage home in which the family ideal is carried out." Harford's parenthetical qualifications of the terms "heredity" and "defectiveness" are striking examples of maternalist resistance to a dysgenic understanding of poor children. The county home was a surrogate family created so that orphaned children would learn middle-class family values—a place where children would be "fitted" as competent agents, not merely selected for eugenic heredity. Even if maternalist texts shared assumptions about gender and class with eugenics, they offer a profoundly hopeful understanding of motherhood, childhood, and poverty. Matron Saunders from Akron claimed that the "perfect matron" was "a good housekeeper, [she] is economical, discreet, low-voiced, self-controlled and pleasant." Saunders explained that punishment should never be corporal because "it is far better to help a child to master himself than to master the child." In the spirit of a liberalism that prizes the ownership of one's will above all, even above individual skills and ability, she instructed her peers never to "humiliate a child publicly, for a child's self-respect is a precious possession."²⁵

Although the cultural and political environment in Ohio was not as hospitable to eugenic reform as Goddard's followers would have liked, they did not give up. When Marie was released from the county home in 1922, a settlement house worker who was cooperating with the bureau continued to track her case and succeeded in getting her to come voluntarily to the bureau's clinic for an assessment in January 1923. Her diagnosis was now upgraded to a more definite "feeble-mindedness" and

they "predicted that . . . [Marie] would become a social problem in the community." Soon, Marie was "hauled into Juvenile Court again." The charges were similar to those leveled in 1919, but for the first time in the records Marie admitted "her sex relations with another man." She was only eleven years old. The head of the Gladden Community House, C. H. Brogart, claimed to have "made the mother . . . agreeable to having Marie committed" and "asked the court on Recommendation of the Bureau of Juvenile Research to commit [Marie] to the Institution for the Feebleminded." The judge continued to disagree. Perhaps the court wanted to avoid the expense to the county, but there were ideas at stake as well. The juvenile court was the distributor of Mother's Pensions in Franklin County and the court could hardly have missed the key elements of maternalist thought. According to the state's most prominent reform-minded jurist, Cleveland's juvenile court judge George S. Addams, a mother had a right to special poverty relief because "her services in rearing children are performed for the State; she is caring for its future citizens and doing it as no one else can." Lewis E. St. John, a juvenile court judge in Troy, Ohio, claimed that the court should work with county homes to "conserve the family tie, I want to say in [my] mind this is of inestimable value, for the *home is the true American institution of government*." These men used poverty relief to reinforce middle-class respectability, and try as eugenicists might to tap into a fear of the unworthy poor, which was underbelly of middle-class ideology, Goddard's attempt to remake poor children into the chief figure of this fear was (overall) a losing ploy.²⁶

Instead of yielding to the eugenicists in Marie's case, the judge called in two independent physicians, who pronounced that she was not feebleminded. The judge sided with the physicians and delayed any action. A similar power struggle between physicians and psychologists had raged during the previous two years within Goddard's bureau itself. It ended in a wave of resignations, a scandal of mutual recriminations, a legislative inquiry, and significant reductions in salaries and funding in 1922. The eugenicists maintained control of the bureau, but Goddard resigned and took a professorship at nearby Ohio State University.²⁷

In the context of a larger struggle over ideas and authority, the victory of the physician's assessment in Marie's case brought out a furious reaction from the psychologists. The physicians had been duped by Marie because "the girl had a glib tongue, she was pretty of face." She had no structural pathological abnormalities "seen by the average physician." As was the case with Debora Kallikak, her ability to cloak her incompetence was Marie's special threat to society. Debora was the "type of girl, bright in appearance, rather good looking . . . with many attractive ways." Goddard's

fieldworkers lamented: "It was a real danger . . . that Marie would prove attractive to some well intentioned, but none too experienced young man, who responds more readily to physical charm than to mental stimulation." The result of such a union would be a line of paupers and criminals akin to the Kallikaks. It was urgent that these "types" be removed from contact from unsuspecting men, not to protect an eleven- or twelve-year-old girl from rape as much as to protect society from her sexually permissive instincts and from the reproduction of defective delinquents.²⁸

So great was their dysgenic fear that in March 1923 the frustrated social workers and psychologists on the case held a conference and devised a "scheme to get [Marie] into the proper institution." They urged the judge to commit Marie to the girls' reformatory. This required that the eugenic team withhold psychological evidence during the hearing because the reformatory was "supposedly for girls of normal intelligence" and full disclosure "might lead to her rejection." After the judge committed Marie to the reformatory, the bureau informed them of Marie's subnormal I.Q. and asked them to apply to the court for her transfer to the Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth.²⁹ The scheme failed. The workers at the girls' reformatory were skeptical about eugenic efforts to incarcerate youths permanently. When they received the bureau's report, they placed Marie in a special class for backward girls. The bureau's eugenicists believed they did this out of ignorance of the hidden threat of dysgenic heredity and because "she was not an unmanageable girl from the standpoint of behavior. There are many such girls in [the reformatory] and no one seems to have thought seriously of classifying her as a feeble-minded delinquent who could never get along outside institutional care."³⁰

As Marie grew from girlhood to womanhood during the 1920s, the debate over her fate shifted, not so much because eugenics was being debunked by scientific progress but because it had long been easier for eugenicists to draw on the figure of the lascivious woman than the child of poverty and crime. As Josephine Shaw Lowell explained on behalf of a nascent eugenic movement in 1879, the state needed to establish the Newark Custodial Asylum for Feeble-Minded Women because "one of the most important and most dangerous causes of the increase of crime, pauperism, and insanity is the unrestrained liberty allowed to vagrant and degraded women." According to the same ideas in the mid-1920s, Marie was paroled from the girls' reformatory twice and returned twice. The second time out on parole she admitted to "having sexual relations with several different men and boys." For these offenses she was returned to the reformatory in 1927 at the age of sixteen and there it was discovered that she was pregnant. During her pregnancy she was moved to the County

Maternity Home. At this time, about half of the women in Ohio's penitentiary were sentenced for sex crimes—compared to a five percent level for male offenders. In the contemporary psychological literature, the feeble-minded man was likely to be portrayed as undersexed, "lacking in sex drive as well as attractiveness to the opposite sex, and he is not characteristically a sex offender." This gendered understanding of the cognitive underclass was grafted onto the fostering-out of children between the world wars. In Cleveland, about three-quarters of foster children (with living mothers) had been taken from their mothers because she was declared an unfit parent due to sexual indiscretions or sex crimes, or unfeminine abuse of alcohol or other drugs, or the failure to keep her house in order. Children were not removed from living fathers for these reasons; instead they lost custody mostly for being unemployed, absent, or both.³¹

During Marie's pregnancy, the bureau's fieldworkers repeated to the court their earlier arguments about her dysgenic threat. Unlike many other unmarried poor mothers who scored low on intelligence tests, Marie was able to defend herself against immediate separation from her baby and long-term incarceration. She stated that she was not interested in seeing the child's father again, but hoped to marry a man with a steady job and good savings whom she had known for a long time but who "had not been immoral with her." The matron of the home supported her by telling the court that Marie was "such a nice girl, and the best little mother." The discursive repositioning of Marie as a virtuous mother was not something the bureau fieldworkers could accept. The fieldworkers mocked Marie's claims to a relationship with a reliable male breadwinner as a figment of her imagination. Yet, Marie's story worked for a time. She was allowed to return to her family with her baby in April 1928. Later that year Marie's marriage failed to materialize, and the tide of middle-class domestic ideals turned against her. Young, poor, and unwed, she was sent to a convent, while her mother took care of her baby.³²

At least Marie had avoided being declared mentally incompetent. Once a minor was declared feeble-minded in Ohio, he or she permanently lost the rights adulthood before obtaining them. The state did not have to return to court to obtain custody when the feeble-minded child became an adult. This was the key to Goddard's eugenic plan, but because the bureau's clinic was for children, it was not well situated to connect middle-class fears of unmarried motherhood to eugenics. For example, while Goddard's agency was struggling, organizations such as Cleveland's Women's Protective Association (WPA) were appearing in many American cities. The WPA was founded by middle-class women as part of a crackdown on prostitution and other vice crimes in the city in 1916. It

succeeded in getting the Cleveland police department to establish a women's bureau to handle cases of youth truancy, alcohol consumption, prostitution, and behavior codes at local beaches. This special corps created the first foothold for female police officers to join the force, and was justified under maternal ideals. The new female officers were not allowed to carry firearms or to forcefully apprehend criminals because they were viewed as mothers with badges. Instead they could offer some of the detained girls and young women a motherly alternative to court and jail: a stay at the association's houses of refuge.³³

At these houses of refuge the WPA administered the Stanford-Binet test to the residents. Like Goddard, the association's psychologist, Eleanor Rowland Wembridge, found that most of these young women were subnormal and concluded in 1922 that they "are a menace and that every one agrees that they belong in an institution." She made the ambitious claim that the state should construct adequate institutional space for 30 percent of street women who were "hopeless outside institutions," so social workers could focus their treatment upon those with better prospects. She thought about half of the "normal" women could "stay out of trouble" with various levels of support and supervision from professionals, and that another 10 percent would never have become prostitutes or thieves if agencies had been able to correct their development in childhood and early adolescence. A decade later, Wembridge's successor at the WPA's clinic, Mary Marrow Derby, also embraced the idea of a natural biological hierarchy when she told readers that they should pay more attention to "those who are qualified through their hereditary potentiality to be leaders." But Derby was highly critical of self-serving ethnocentric interpretations of tests scores, stressing "the multiplicity of factors" that created the individual delinquent, and arguing that helping the delinquent was about achieving the "adjustment" that came when a woman "gain[ed] insight into her own personality and her problem." The search for "insight" had little to do with the bureau's eugenic understanding of Marie or most of their other cases in the early 1920s because they saw the poor more simplistically as a menace that needed to be removed from the reproductive pool. Clinicians like Wembridge and Derby were hardly opposed to eugenics, but they had a far more nuanced understanding of human science than Henry Goddard, and they spoke in eugenic tones against young, poor, unwed women, rather than children.³⁴

Along with more nuanced sociobiological thought came a shift in U.S. sterilization policies, which intensified the pursuit of poor unwed mothers. American courts increasingly held that using sterilization for prison discipline and as criminal punishment violated the "cruel and

unusual punishment" clause of the U.S. Constitution. So, in the name of public health, eugenicists rewrote the laws and policies to redirect sterilization toward women who scored poorly on psychological tests. As Justice Holmes wrote in the key Supreme Court case, *Buck v. Bell* (1927): "The principle that sustains vaccination is broad enough to cover cutting the Fallopian Tubes. . . . Three generations of imbeciles are enough." Before 1927, men in the United States faced involuntary sterilization slightly more often than women, but between 1928 and 1932 twice as many women were sterilized as men, and the trend continued into the 1960s. This gendered shift in law and practice gave new life to the eugenics movement. It encouraged Cleveland philanthropist Charles Brush to create the Brush Foundation in 1928 "to improve the human stock." The Brush Foundation was a major donor for the cause of accessible birth-control through the Cleveland's Maternal Health Association, and local newspapers correctly greeted its founding as a "Eugenic Dawn."³⁵

At the death of Marie's mother in 1930, the tide of domestic ideology turned again for Marie as she was allowed to leave the convent to help her sister do the work of the family's household, and consequently she was reunited with her baby. The bureau made a last-ditch attempt to institutionalize her in 1932. They reported to the court Marie's diagnosis: "High grade moron, Goddard classification. Somewhat unstable, Socially incompetent. An example of the so called defective delinquent." In frustration, the bureau's psychologist Francis Maxfield told the judge, "Commit to the Institution for Feeble-minded, or failing that sterilization should be considered, *At least try to get something done.*" Maxfield offered this eugenic indictment at a time when the bureau as a whole had curtailed its previous eugenic alarmism. Four years earlier, in 1928, bureau fieldworker Clair H. Calhoun began a study of delinquent boys with a claim that its workers would not have made when Goddard was the director: "Many dangerous criminals are normal in intelligence, having become criminals due to environmental and emotional factors." Calhoun inverted the idea of a feeble-minded menace by arguing that mal-adjusted boys of normal intelligence presented a greater social problem, by committing more and more serious crimes than troubled feeble-minded boys. The diagnostic statistics also changed. By the end of the 1920s the bureau's fieldworkers offered the incurable diagnoses of psychopathy and feeble-mindedness less than half as often as when the agency was under more unified eugenic leadership. Among the 497 children they evaluated in 1929, they recommended that the court seek foster-care placement or custody by a relative twice as often as they recommended commitment to a state institution. During the early 1930s,

the bureau's director, Clarence H. Growdon, deployed the language of behavioral modification and explained that juvenile delinquency resulted from multiple factors, "physiological, mental, educational, and sociological." At the end of the decade Growdon's successor, Ralph Stogdill, developed a method of interviewing children by having them sort "behavior cards" that listed delinquent acts into "yes" and "no" stacks. Stogdill explained that there was no relationship between I.Q. and the number of cards placed in each stack. The purpose of the technique was to create a less confrontational way for juveniles to admit their transgressions so they might work toward psychotherapeutic "insight." Stogdill developed what his eugenic predecessors had rejected—a way to get the child to consider "why he did it."³⁶

As the bureau was rapidly retreating from Goddard's inflexible positions, why would Growdon choose to compile, review, and summarize Marie's case as an exemplar of why the public should support the bureau? He did this during the same year that he successfully defended psychodynamic methods in his Ph.D. dissertation, "A Study of Free Associations Based on a New Technique." Perhaps he was simply fishing for support by casting the bureau in a way the older supporters would recognize, but Growdon's analysis suggests another type of answer. Along with his claim that Marie was a dysgenic menace, he also believed that her troubles emerged during a traumatic childhood. Marie's family lived with their six children in an unpainted shack in a poor, racially mixed neighborhood. Growdon highlighted that upon the bureau's first home visit, the field-worker found Marie's father "wearing no shirt, and his underclothing and trousers were very dirty." Her mother was "wearing a very soiled wrapper, and the entire house [was] filthy and unkept." He chastised Marie's parents for allowing her to "play with negro children." Marie's mother often sent her to the store alone, exposing her to vice and pleasure. It was not surprising to Growdon, then, that Marie developed a preference for the neighborhood streets, the movie theater, the dance hall frequented by prostitutes, and "several third rate stores." She suffered through a home life with a father who questioned the child's paternity and claimed "to hate her." According to this assessment, Marie lived in a world of biosocial pathologies, all of which contributed to her problems. Assigning heredity as one source of her degeneracy was, for Growdon, entirely consistent with positing environmental or psychodynamic pathologies. He gave weight to the fact that Marie stayed with her grandmother down the street and might be away from her parents for days at a time. Marie was permitted to walk unaccompanied to her grandmother's even though it was a distance of "some six blocks" from home. Whoever

committed this small typographical error, substituting the "a" for the "o," captured the dual transgressions against domestic containment and racial purity that allowed eugenic fears to be unified with middle-class ones.³⁷

Marie's growth into womanhood coincided with a movement at the Bureau of Juvenile Research toward a more nuanced eugenic position, but one that retained its harshest judgments for working-class women. As a result, Marie—the woman—continued to embody the height of dysgenic fear for the more psychoanalytic leaders of the Bureau of Juvenile Research in the late 1920s and early 1930s, just as she had as a prepubescent girl a decade earlier. From Marie's personal perspective, this discursive shift may not have mattered very much; the eugenic professionals were still after her. Historically, it was critically important. The diffusion of eugenic thought may have relaxed its ideological discord with liberalism and strengthened the ability of eugenics to draw upon middle-class domestic fears. If so, the transition helps explain how eugenics survived in American institutions and culture into the present.

The final years of Marie's case suggests that something important was happening to American thought about poverty and hereditary endowment during the interwar period. During the 1930s there was a growing introduction of "positive"—that is, voluntary—eugenic ideas into the movement. For example, popular eugenicist Paul Popenoe maintained an audience from the 1920s into the 1970s precisely because he spoke of eugenics in terms of the "natural" family defined by middle-class assumptions: female domesticity, male breadwinning, marital companionship, and child development. He squeezed eugenics into liberal middle-class discourse by claiming that the unfit could be persuaded to accept eugenics and become "self-supporting, self-respecting, and independent." In his rendition, racial progress through state power could be advanced along with "liberty and pursuit of happiness." Lewis Terman was another eugenicist whose work was widely influential throughout the twentieth century because he justified sorting fit children from unfit ones in terms of increasing school efficiency so that teachers could provide all children with better opportunities. Other eugenicists, such as Henry Goddard and Chicago judge Harry Olson, missed this transition. Olson headed Chicago's Municipal Courts, created a psychopathic laboratory, and sponsored the work of well-known eugenicist Harry Laughlin. His cadre built a eugenic network between Chicago's juvenile courts and the city's Juvenile Protection Association that attempted to use the 1915 eugenic commitment law in Illinois to enforce widespread incarceration of the dysgenic poor. Chicago eugenicists encountered difficulties strikingly

similar to those experienced by Goddard's Ohio project; their plans unraveled during the 1920s at the very time that Popenoe and Terman were rising to prominence.³⁸

Contrasting Goddard and Olson to Terman and Popenoe should not mislead us into seeing a linear transition from a coercive elimination of the unfit to the unencumbered promotion of healthy reproductive choices. This would uncritically reiterate the terms eugenicists used to redefine their field during these years. For example, a poster announcing the Third International Eugenics Congress in 1932 read, "Eugenics is the self-direction of human evolution," and depicted eugenics as a tree rooted deeply in the human sciences. How should we read this? Is this "self" a liberal agent making an individual choice, or is this the human species directing evolution? Is the "direction" coming from parents or experts or the state? Perhaps the poster was intended to bridge these oppositions. To make sense in a liberal political culture, positive eugenics might posit the ideal that genetic-maximizing individuals would enrich the genetic stock of the species; this parallels the way classical political economy relates economic agency to structural progress. Or, positive eugenics might suggest that parents will make reproductive decisions informed by eugenic science; this parallels the educational role of the liberal welfare state. If this recasting of eugenic ideas prevailed generally, as I think it did, the discursive tension between eugenic technocracy and liberal individualism may have been released in accord with the reconfiguration of state and economy under liberal capitalism.³⁹



Fig. 3. Public Eugenic Light Exhibit—1926. The lights blink at intervals to show how frequently mentally defective persons are born in the United States (48 seconds), how often they go to jail (50 seconds), how often \$100 of "your money" is spent to care for them (15 seconds), and how infrequently a mentally "high-grade" baby is born (7 and a half minutes). Courtesy American Philosophical Society.

From early in the century, public eugenic shows, contests, and displays popularized eugenics in ways that were suffused with both liberal ideals *and* mainline eugenics.⁴⁰ A 1926 exhibit (Fig. 3) made the eugenic claim that "Some People Are Born to Be a Burden on the Rest," but answered this problem with the hope of popular education, "Learn About Heredity—You Can Help To Correct These Conditions."⁴¹ The display communicated with blinking lights that would require minimal literacy or intellectual capacity. It makes one wonder whether the eugenicists who constructed this display were, in their minds, directing the eugenic message toward the "morons" themselves. This certainly would fit the shift toward positive eugenics; it would smooth eugenics' disjuncture with liberalism, the necessity of which Goddard had failed to understand. For liberals, self-improvement, self-direction, and informed popular participation are the great sources of legitimacy in-and-of-themselves, but for eugenics individual agency is only means to an end, a eugenic end. If this disagreement about individual agency remained latent, then the liberal American eugenicist could emerge (for example, Popenoe, Terman, or Sanger). The birth-control movement probably demonstrates this latency as well as any. As Margaret Sanger explained in 1919, her goal was to allow mothers access to reproductive technology so that society would get "more children from the fit and less children from the unfit." If women learn to see themselves as agents reflecting upon and controlling their bodies as reproductive objects, eugenics gains its victory completely sheltered within the liberal framework of modernity.⁴²

Regardless of how one understands the most complex relations between eugenic and liberal thought, the story of an end to the eugenics movement, or a clean transition from negative to positive forms of it in the 1930s and 1940s, is too simple to endure historical scrutiny. Prominent American scientists, such as neurologists Foster Kennedy of Cornell and William Lennox of Harvard, continued to speak for state-run eugenics against the grain of American liberalism in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. At least 65,000 Americans were involuntarily sterilized before the 1970s under eugenic doctrines. Although sterilization policies in some states became more "positive" over the period, others became more coercive. Minnesota pursued eugenics with efficient vigor in the 1930s, but in the early 1940s leading social workers and officials in the state opposed efforts to expand the program and rejected "wholesale sterilization" in favor of "selective sterilization" under the idea that a "feeble-minded parent cannot provide a stable and secure family life for his children." While Minnesota was becoming more selective, during the late 1940s and early 1950s the Human Better League and Birthright Inc.

ran campaigns for eugenic sterilization that reportedly increased state enforcement in Iowa, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Georgia by arguing that “no child should be born to subnormal parents—denied a fair, healthy start in life—or doomed from birth to a mental institution.”⁴³

As Marie’s case illustrates, sterilization was not the only and perhaps not the most common type of eugenic intervention in America. The numbers of children institutionalized in America mushroomed to approximately 270,000 by 1967, just prior to the deinstitutionalization movement, which reduced the number to around 47,000 by 2002. Even if most of these wards were not being kept for explicitly stated eugenic reasons, clearly many tens of thousands were. After 1945, we have substantial evidence of widespread disregard for the basic human rights of incarcerated mentally retarded persons. To name just one example, in the early 1950s, at the renowned Fernald State School in Waltham, Massachusetts, Quaker Oats cooperated with M.I.T. in experiments that placed small amounts of radioactive substances in the food of feeble-minded boys. Less shocking but more straightforwardly eugenic reforms abound in the legislative, administrative, or court records of the post-World War II era. Legislation was introduced to advance the sterilization of poor or unwed mothers in Virginia (1956), North Carolina (1957, 1959), Mississippi (1958, 1964), Maryland (1960, 1963), Delaware (1962), and Tennessee (1971). Many other state legislatures considered or passed punitive measures short of sterilization (such as denying aid or taking custody of children from parents) to curtail the fertility of poor or unwed mothers. Outside of statutory efforts, administrative, elected, and legal officials and bodies publicly advocated for or worked within the welfare system to affect greater sterilization of poor or unwed mothers in many states. Prominent examples of this took place in Georgia (1959), California (1961), Virginia (1961), Illinois (1963), Iowa (1963), Mississippi (1964), Pennsylvania (1966), and Maryland (1967). These midcentury efforts did not emerge from marginalized groups of extremists, nor were the ideas behind them unpopular. When asked in a 1965 Gallup Poll what should be done about unwed mothers on relief who have more children, about one-half of Americans reportedly said, “stop giving them relief,” but one out of five answered, “sterilize the women.”⁴⁴

In the examples given above, it is difficult to clearly delineate anger toward the unworthy poor, disrespect for unwed mothers, antinatalism, race hatred, dehumanizing views of the mentally retarded, or a radical faith in individual responsibility from the adherence to formal eugenic reasoning. This is part of the point of this article and much recent scholarship on

eugenics. Emphasizing this point is not done to underestimate the significance of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), which rejected state miscegenation laws by striking down Virginia's 1924 Racial Integrity Act; nor is it given to discount the decline in compulsory and punitive sterilization since the mid-twentieth century. However, *Loving* did not end the debate and it did not repudiate eugenics, just as Marie was hardly the last poor unwed mother to face an oppressive confluence of eugenic and middle-class ideologies. For example, in 1972 the California welfare advisory board recommended that women who gave birth to more than two children while unmarried be declared unfit parents and be required to relinquish any subsequent children to the state. During the same year, Oregon's high court supported the sterilization of a seventeen-year-old girl on grounds that experts determined that she would be an inadequate mother. Take the case of Robin Woody, a young woman with no psychological diagnosis who was sterilized as a condition of her release from an Iowa county home in the early 1970s. The physician at the home admitted that this was a common procedure and justified Woody's sterilization by saying that she was a "questionable risk" for motherhood and an "impulsive, hair-triggered young girl." Woody fought back years later by claiming that officials at the home set her free only because she agreed to give up her "rights to be a person." In North Carolina, Elaine Jessie experienced similar treatment when she was involuntarily sterilized without notification in 1967 based on little more than a social worker's judgment that she could not "care for herself and can never function in any way as a parent. Diagnosis: feeble-minded." Years later, Jessie found the words to reject the state's claims and the will to bring her story to court. She told a reporter in 2003, "They took away my right to have children. They had no idea what type of parent I would be."⁴⁵

Seeing eugenics as a constituent part of an ongoing American poverty discourse, rather than as a bizarre movement tucked neatly away prior to the Nazi Holocaust, is ever more important at the dawn of the twenty-first century. In their 1994 best-selling book, *The Bell Curve*, Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein told us that "incompetent mothers" are the core of social problems because they interfere with social personnel and they "produce large proportions" of children that "tend to have low cognitive ability themselves." Murray and Herrnstein's dysgenic fears of the "cognitive underclass" are neither original nor unpopular, and they comport themselves extremely well with middle-class fears about unvirtuous motherhood that were ubiquitous in Henry Goddard's day. Susan Vergeront, a supporter of Wisconsin's pathbreaking 1992 Parental and Family

Responsibility Act, which reduced benefit levels for children born to families while they were on relief, defended her state's welfare reform by blaming poor mothers. She unwittingly echoed the sentiments of both Justice Holmes's 1927 decree and the bureau's psychologist Francis Maxfield's 1932 report on Marie by claiming, "Nine generations is enough. These women have to learn to control themselves. . . . If they can't do it, or won't do it, then something has to be done." According to New Jersey's leading advocate for "child disincentive programs," Wayne Bryant, the welfare entitlement system encouraged childbearing among the "wrong women" with "perverted morals" who "live year after year off the hard work of those of us who live in good suburbia." These revealing comments, of course, represent only one edge of the welfare-reform debate. And the recent failure of antinatal programs, such as those offering sterilization rebates or requiring Norplant contraceptive patches to be worn by welfare recipients, suggests that there are current limits to the enactment of negative eugenic policies. But there is a lurking continuity. As Bryant confided to a friend, his reforms were designed to "punish welfare mothers." Understood in Bryant's terms, welfare reform seems to be working nationally as Temporary Aid to Needy Families (the federal policy that reformed and replaced AFDC) has made getting aid more humiliating and difficult than before. One report found the program had been renamed "Torture and Abuse of Needy Families" by its recipients. The end of welfare security for poor Americans in 1996 was justified in the name of encouraging "self-esteem" and "personal responsibility"—core liberal values to be sure. As has been the case for a century, the ability of welfare reformers to combine eugenic, middle-class, and liberal cultural elements requires that they focus on the unfitnes of poor mothers, while turning a blind eye to the consequences of their policies for children.⁴⁶

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Notes

1. Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Juvenile Research, Field Clinic, no. 6632, 4. Hereafter cited as BJR, Field Clinic, no. 6632. Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Juvenile Research, "Marie," 1-3. Hereafter cited as BJR, "Marie."

2. BJR, "Marie," 2-3.

3. *Ibid.* See Goddard Papers, AHAP, M31.1, "Annual Report 1918-1919 Department of Clinical Psychology."

4. See the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 3 (1930): 617-21.

5. Frank Dikotter, "Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (April 1998): 467-78; Mark B. Adams, ed., *The*

Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia (Oxford, 1990); Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, 1991).

6. Many have claimed that by the early 1940s, to quote James Trent, "Only among its most diehard supporters did eugenics any longer have a public following" in the United States. James W. Trent, "'Who shall say who is a useful person?' Abraham Myerson's Opposition to the Eugenics Movement," *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001): 34. Support for Trent can be found in numerous studies; see Michael Mezzano, "The Progressive Origins of Eugenics Critics: Raymond Pearl, Herbert S. Jennings, and the Defense of Scientific Inquiry," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 4, no. 1 (2005): 83-97; Ian Robert Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada, 1880-1940* (Ithaca, 1997), 232; Carl N. Degler, *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought* (New York, 1991), 150-53; Daniel Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York, 1985), 164; Hamilton Cravens, *The Triumph of Evolution: American Scientists and the Heredity-Environment Controversy, 1900-1941* (Philadelphia, 1978); Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York, 1974), 272; Donald Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives* (Nashville, 1968), 141-43, 179.

Many recent works convincingly emphasize the continuity and widespread acceptability of eugenic ideas after 1945; see Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*; Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill, 2005); Edwin Black, *The War Against the Weak Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003); Katherine Castles, "Quite Eugenics: Sterilization in North Carolina's Institutions for the Mentally Retarded, 1945-1965," *Journal of Southern History* 68 (November 2002): 849-78; Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001); Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization, and Modern Marriage in the USA: The Strange Career of Paul Popenoe," *Gender & History* 13, no. 2 (August 2001): 298-327; and Allison C. Carey, "Gender and Compulsory Sterilization Programs in America, 1907-1950," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 11, no. 1 (March 1998): 74-105; Amy Vogel, "Regulating Degeneracy: Eugenic Sterilization in Iowa, 1911-1977," *The Annals of Iowa* 54 (Winter 1995): 119-43; Gregory Michael Dorr, "Principled Expediency: Eugenics, *Naim v. Naim*, and the Supreme Court," *American Journal of Legal History* 42, no. 2 (1998): 119-59; Susan L. Thomas, "Race, Gender, and Welfare Reform: The Antinatalist Response," *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 4 (March 1998): 419-47; Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds., *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland* (East Lansing, Mich., 1996).

7. On the widening of the historical study of eugenics, see Dikotter, "Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics," 467-78; Donald J. Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics: Woolf, Eliot, Yeats, and the Culture of Degeneration* (Cambridge, 2001); Kathy J. Cooke, "The Limits of Heredity: Nature and Nurture in American Eugenics Before 1915," *Journal of the History of Biology* 31 (1998): 263-78; Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Saving Babies and Sterilizing Mothers: Eugenics and Welfare Politics in the Interwar United States," *Social Politics* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 136-53. On the importance of the "myth of the menace of the feeble minded" for eugenics, see Mark H. Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick, 1963), 96, 110; Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Mind*, 155-82.

8. On the cultural complexity and continuity of eugenics, in addition to Stepan, Schoen, Kline, Cooke, and Ladd-Taylor, cited above, see Mark M. Smith, "Finding Deficiency: On Eugenics, Economics, and Certainty," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 64, no. 3 (July 2005): 887-900; Cynthia R. Daniels, "Procreative Compounds: Popular Eugenics, Artificial Insemination, and the Rise of the American Sperm Banking Industry," *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 1 (2004): 5-27; Kelly Dahlgren Childress, "Genetics, Disability, and Ethics: Could Applied Technologies Lead to a New Eugenics?" *Journal of Women and Religion* 19/20 (2003): 157-78; Ian Dowbiggin, "'A Rational Coalition': Euthanasia, Eugenics, and Birth Control in America, 1940-1970," *Journal of Policy History* 14, no. 3 (2002): 223-60;

William H. Tucker, *The Funding of Scientific Racism: Wickliffe Draper and the Pioneer Fund* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Johanna Schoen, "Between Choice and Coercion: Women and the Politics of Sterilization," *Journal of Women's History* 13, no. 1 (2001): 132–56; Angela Gugliotta, "'Dr. Sharp with His Little Knife': Therapeutic and Punitive Origins of Eugenic Vasectomy in Indiana, 1892–1921," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 53 (October 1998): 371–406; Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* (Baltimore, 1995); Edward J. Larson, "'In the Finest, Most Womanly Way': Women in the Southern Eugenics Movement," *American Journal of Legal Studies* 39, no. 2 (1995): 119–47; Richard A. Soloway, "The 'Perfect Contraceptive': Eugenics and Birth Control Research in Britain and America in the Interwar Years," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30 (1995): 637–64.

9. On the grounding of individual agency and consent as ideals in American political culture, see Holly Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill, 2005); James E. Block, *A Nation of Agents: The American Path to a Modern Self and Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002).

10. See Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Claims-Making and Socio-Cultural Context in the First U.S. Eugenics Campaign," *Social Problems* 39, no. 1 (February 1992): 21; Gwedolyn Mink, "The Lady and the Tramp: Gender, Race, and the Origins of the American Welfare State," in Linda Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Madison, 1990): 92–122. On "motherhood-eugenics," see Atina Grossmann, "The New Woman and the Rationalization of Sexuality in Weimar Germany," in Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, eds., *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York, 1983), 153–71.

11. The photograph is from the Ohio Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth. *Fifty-Sixth Report of the Institution for the Feeble-Minded; Second Annual Report to the Ohio Board of Administration* (Columbus, 1913).

12. For a defense of Henry Goddard, see Leila Zenderland, *Measuring Minds: Henry Herbert Goddard and the Origins of American Intelligence Testing* (New York, 1998). For interpretations contrary to Zenderland's and similar to the one here, see Degler, *In Search of Human Nature*, 59–211; Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Mind*, 155–80; William H. Tucker, "'A Scientific Result of Apparent Absurdity': The Attempt to Revise Goddard," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 22, no. 1 (January 1999): 162–71. On the origins of the bureau, see Edison J. Emerick, "The Problem of the Feeble-Minded," in *Publications of the Ohio Board of Administration*, no. 5 (1915), 11; Henry H. Goddard, *Feeble-Mindedness: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York, 1914), 562–66, 568, 573, 585, 586–90. For a concise statement of Goddard's views on how to solve feeble-mindedness and the consequent social problems, see Henry H. Goddard, "The Elimination of Feeble-Mindedness," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 37 (March 1911): 505–16.

13. For the national figures quoted here, see Haller, *Eugenics*, 129. Henry Goddard, "The Basis for State Policy," *The Survey* 27 (March 1912): 1853–55. Henry H. Goddard, *The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness* (New York, 1912), 11–12; BJR, "Marie," 1, 3, 5. Henry Goddard, "The State's Program for Juvenile Research," An Address to the State Conference of Charities and Correction, 17–18 December 1918 in Ohio, *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 25, no. 2 (July 1919): 36–38. On the medical acceptance of Binet's tests, see Leila C. Zenderland, "Henry Herbert Goddard and the Origins of American Intelligence Testing" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1986); Steven A. Gelb, "Social Deviance and the 'Discovery' of the Moron," *Disability, Handicap, & Society* 2, no. 3 (1987): 247–58.

14. Goddard, "The Elimination of Feeble-Mindedness," 513. "Imbecile Peril and the Cure," *Cleveland Press*, 12 December 1912, Mental Care-Cleveland and Cuyahoga Co, at the Cleveland Press Collection, Newspaper Clippings, Cleveland State University. See also Henry H. Goddard, "Responsibility of Children in the Juvenile Court," *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology* 3 (1912): 365–75. Goddard was invoking the judicial principle of *parens patriae* (the idea that the state holds a kind of eminent domain over children); see John Sutton, *Stubborn Children: Controlling Delinquency in the United States, 1640–1980* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), 11.

15. Henry H. Goddard as quoted by Edison J. Emerick, *Annual Report of the IFMY*, 1913, 21. Henry H. Goddard as quoted by Joseph P. Shaffer, OBA, *Annual Report*, 1914, 26. OBA, *Publication*, no. 5, 1915. OBA, *Annual Report*, 1914, 30. For eugenic thinkers, social opportunity creates not social mobility but genetic castes: a "cognitive underclass." See Richard Herrnstein, *I.Q. in the Meritocracy* (Boston, 1971); Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York, 1994).

16. Underwood and Underwood, "Advocates of Eugenic Forces with Signs," New York City, 27 October 1915. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Visual Materials Archive, ID #2003. Writing on the back of the photograph provides the term "Eugenic Forces," as well as information about its source.

17. On the image of the childhood innocence, see Anne Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence* (New York, 1998); on the sacralization of childhood, see Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton, 1985). Ohio, *Annual Report of the Institution for Feeble-Minded Youth*, 1913, 21.

18. See OBSC, *Correspondence*, OHS, 2504. OBSC, *Scrapbook*, OHS, 1004. OBA, *Annual Report*, 1914, 340-59. OBA, *Annual Report*, 1914, 340-59. Rupert U. Hastings to Henry H. Goddard, 15 September 1919, Goddard Papers, AHAP, M-31. OBA, *Annual Report*, 1913, 95-97. OBA, *Annual Report*, 1913, 95. Cleveland Press, "Boys Ruled Best by Reason," 4 January 1913, Cleveland State University, Press Collection.

19. Ohio, *Opinion of the Attorney General*, no. 2047, 16 November 1916, 1799. See Allison C. Carey, "Gender and Compulsory Sterilization Programs in America: 1907-1950," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 11, no. 1 (March 1998): 92. "Research Bureau Marks New Era Says Dr. Goddard," date unknown (1919?), M31.1 Goddard Papers; Charles B. Davenport, "Hereditry, Culpability, Praiseworthiness, Punishment, and Reward," *Popular Science Monthly* 83 (July 1913): 33-39. For a more detailed analysis of the institutional and political troubles faced by Goddard's eugenic forces in Ohio, see Patrick J. Ryan, "Unnatural Selection: Intelligence Testing, Eugenics, and American Political Cultures," *Journal of Social History* 30 (Spring 1997): 669-85.

20. Harry H. Howett, "Division of Child-Care," *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 28 (December 1921): 36, 39; Harry H. Howett, "Physical Difficulties of the Visitor," *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* (November 1912): 27; C. V. Williams, "The Children's Bureau," *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 22 (1916): 115-21. *Coshocton Tribune*, 8 November 1915, OBSC, *Scrapbook*, OHS 1004. "The Children's Welfare Department of Ohio Board of State Charities Plays Stork to Many Ohio Families," in OBSC, *Correspondence*, OHS, 2504, f. 1-2.

21. For the cottage construction process, see OBA, *Proceedings*, 10 March 1919, 22 July 1919, 20 October 1919, OHS, 467. The county had to "bear all expenses incident to the transportation of each child from such county to such 'bureau of juvenile research.'" *The Laws of Ohio*, OL 103, HB 214, 1913. Ohio, *General Code*, 1920, section 1841-6. See also Hastings H. Hart, "The Ohio Children's Code," *The Survey*, vol. 10, July 19, 1913, 518. For a study of mortality at the Ohio Institution for the Feeble-minded between 1901 and 1925, see Eugene W. Martz, "Mortality Among the Mentally Deficient," *Training School Bulletin* 31 (February 1934): 185-97.

22. The data were compiled from Ohio, Board of Administration, *Publications*, 19, "The Bureau of Juvenile Research, review of the Work, 1918-1920," and Goddard, *Juvenile Delinquency*, 1923; see the draft of Mateer's annual report, Goddard Papers, M31.1, Archives of American Psychology, University of Akron.

23. A survey of Cleveland's social agencies in 1926 found that 1,590 "psychometric" tests had been administered to Clevelanders (most to juveniles). Only 19 tests (1.2%) were administered by the Bureau of Juvenile Research, whereas the juvenile court's own Child Guidance Clinic administered 151 tests in the county. Western Reserve University, *The Social Adjustment of the Feeble-Minded: A group thesis study of 898 feeble-minded individuals known to Cleveland's social agencies* (Cleveland, 1930), 36. Cuyahoga County contained about 1 million of the 5 million Ohioans in the 1920 census. The juvenile court in

Cuyahoga dealt with 3,778 cases in 1920 and 3,151 in 1921. This would project to 34,645 youths being handled in the two-year period of 1918–20. Based on national averages of about 350 juveniles who were before the courts per 100,000 population in 1919, that would project to 37,000 in the state of Ohio. See the U.S. Census, Ohio, 1920, and *Annual Report, Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, 1929*. “Research Bureau Marks New Era Says Dr. Goddard,” newspaper clipping in Goddard Papers, M31.1, AHAP.

24. See “Mental Examination of Juvenile Delinquents,” “Mental Survey of the Ohio State School for the Blind,” “The Increasing Cost of Crime in Ohio,” “Crime Prevention: The Study of Causes,” all by Thomas Haines, and “The Family of Sam Sixty” by Mary Storer Kostir, in Ohio. Board of Administration, *Publications*, nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Morris Gilmore Caldwell, “Recent Trends in Juvenile Delinquency,” *Journal of Juvenile Research* 17 (1933): 179–90. Most of the testing (61.6%) was being done by the public schools to help sort students. Thomas H. Haines, “Detecting the Feeble-Minded in a City School Population,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 10 (December 1919): 501–8.

25. BJR, “Marie,” 2, 4. Henry H. Goddard to Superintendents of County Children’s Homes, date unknown (1919–21), Goddard Papers, M-33, AHAP. Henry H. Goddard, “The State’s Program for Juvenile Research,” *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 25, no. 2 (July 1919): 36.

26. A. E. Harford, “The Aims and Methods of the Church Home in Child Saving,” *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 21, no. 12 (January 1915): 110–14. See the essays between 91–115. (First name unknown) Saunders, “Children’s Home Matrons,” *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 25, no. 1 (1917): 116–17; Saunders, “Discipline and Recreation of Children, Or Reward Better than Punishment,” *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 20, no. 2 (1914): 77–80.

27. BJR, “Marie,” 4. George S. Addams, “Mother’s Pensions,” *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 21, no. 1 (January 1915): 19; Lewis E. St. John, “The Inter-relation of the Children’s Homes and the Juvenile Courts,” *Ohio Bulletin of Charities and Correction* 21, no. 1 (January 1915): 119.

28. For the national shift, see Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Mind*, 180–82. At the bureau, the physicians, under Gertrude Transeau, led a revolt against the psychologists and Florence Mateer that resulted in eleven resignations on 4 April 1921 and a subsequent House probe into the operations of the bureau. (Goddard Papers, M-33.) Goddard described the resignations to the Columbus media as a result of “Mob Psychology,” *Ohio State Journal*, Columbus, 29 April 1921, Goddard Papers, AHAP, M-31.1. On the House probe’s recommendation, Goddard’s salary was cut from \$7,500 to \$4,000, staff salaries from \$59,000 to \$25,000, and capital outlays from \$16,400 to \$9,800. “Bulletin No. 16,” Ohio Institute for Public Efficiency, Goddard Papers, AHAP, M-31, Goddard Papers, AHAP, M-31.1.

29. BJR, “Marie,” 3–6. Goddard, *The Kallikak Family*, 11–12. A “defective delinquent” was someone who was by virtue of their feeble-mindedness more likely to be involved in delinquent or criminal social behavior. Walter Fernald may have been the first person to use this phrase in 1912. See R. C. Scheerenberger, *A History of Mental Retardation* (Baltimore, 1983), 152; Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Mind*, 155–83.

30. BJR, “Marie,” 5.

31. BJR, Field Clinic, no. 6632.

32. Carl Murchison, “Mental Tests and Other Concomitants of Some White Women Criminals,” *Pedagogical Seminary* 33 (1926): 521–26. Lowell as quoted in Nicole Hahn Rafter, “Claims-Making and Socio-Cultural Context in the First U.S. Eugenics Campaign,” *Social Problems* 39, no. 1 (February 1992): 21. Otis Castle writing for the American Bar Association in 1928, as quoted by Carey, “Gender and Compulsory Sterilization” (note 19 above), 86. Patrick J. Ryan, “Shaping Modern Youth: Social Policy and Growing Up Working Class in Industrial America” (Ph.D. diss., CWRU, 1998), 189–91. In 1939, 61 percent of mothers receiving aid for dependent children were widows. This did not change until the late 1950s, and by 1961 the figure had fallen to 7.7 percent.

M. Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (Boston, 1988), 321.

33. BJR, "Marie," 5.

34. For the case law that established authority to incarcerate feeble-minded adults committed as children, see "Doren v. Fleming," *Ohio Law Bulletin* 50 (1905): 135. Ohio, *Circuit Court Reports, New Series*, vol. 6, 1905, 81–86. On the Women's Protective Association, see David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (Bloomington, 1996). More generally, see Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill, 1995).

35. Eleanor Rowland Wembridge, "Work with Socially Maladjusted Girls," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology* 17 (1922): 79–87; Mary Marrow Derby, "The Upper Fifths," *Mental Hygiene* 14 (1930): 12–39.

36. On the shift in sterilization, see Reilly, XXX *The Surgical Solution* (1991), 98; Guliotta, "Dr. Sharp with His Little Knife"; Carey, "Gender and Compulsory Sterilization," 84. See Ohio Race Betterment Association, "Race Betterment: A Symposium," *Brush Foundation Publication no. IV*, in Brush Foundation Drawer no. 4 at Planned Parenthood of Greater Cleveland. On the Brush Foundation and maternal health in Cleveland, see Jimmy Meyer, "Birth Control Policy, Practice, and Prohibition in the 1930s: The Maternal Health Association of Cleveland, Ohio" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1993), 108, 114.

37. BJR, Field Clinic, no. 6632, 4. BJR, "Marie," 7. C. H. Growdon, "A Preliminary Study of the Effectiveness of a State-Wide Behavior Clinic," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Managing Officers Association (Ohio)* 12, no. 1 (1935): 6–12. Ralph M. Stogdill, *The Behavior Cards: Manual of Directions of a Test-Interview for Delinquent Children* (Columbus, 1941).

38. Clarence Holmes Growdon, "A Study of Free Associations Based on a New Technique" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1928). Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Juvenile Research, "Marie", 1, 3. See also case report no. 6632, Bureau of Juvenile Research, Department of Field Clinics, OHS-2510, B 21 8E, 2.

39. Popenoe as quoted in Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization, and Modern Marriage in the USA," 306. Ladd-Taylor, "Saving Babies and Sterilizing Mothers," 143. On Terman and schools, see Paul D. Chapman, *Schools as Sorters: Lewis M. Terman, Applied Psychology, and the Intelligence Testing Movement, 1890–1930* (New York, 1988). Michael Willrich, "The Two Percent Solution: Eugenic Jurisprudence and the Socialization of American Law, 1900–1930," *Law and History Review* 16 (Spring 1998): 63–111; Michael A. Rembis, "I ain't been reading while on parole': Experts, Mental Tests, and Eugenic Commitment Law in Illinois, 1890–1940," *History of Psychology* 7, no. 3 (2004): 225–47.

40. C. Ben Mitchell, "Hurtling toward Eugenics . . . Again," *Ethics & Medicine* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 3–5; Christine Stolba, "Overcoming Motherhood: Pushing the Limits of Reproductive Choice," *Policy Review* (December 2002–January 2003): 31–41. Announcement to the Third International Eugenics Congress as shown in Steven Selden, "Transforming Better Babies into Fitter Families: Archival Resources and the History of the American Eugenics, 1908–1930," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 149, no. 2 (June 2005): 203. See note 6 above for more on the interwar transition debate.

41. "Flashing Light Exhibit at Fitter Families Contest," 1926. American Philosophical Society, AES, Am3, 575.06, 44. [Accessed 26 October 2006] online at <http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/html/eugenics/static/images/5.html>

42. On the human sciences as a project where "man appears in his ambiguous position as object of knowledge and as subject that knows," see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, 1970), 312. Margaret Sanger, "Why Not Birth Control in America?" *Birth Control Review* (May 1919): 10–11; See Angela Franks, *Margaret Sanger's Eugenic Legacy: The Control of Female Fertility* (McFarland, 2005). XXX

43. M. Lewis Offen, "Dealing with Defectives: Foster Kennedy and William Lennox on Eugenics," *Neurology* 61, no. 5 (9 September 2003): 668-73. The Human Betterment League and Birthright materials are shown in Vogel, "Regulating Degeneracy," 135.

44. Norman Fost, "America's Gulag Archipelago," *New England Journal of Medicine* 351, no. 23 (December 2, 2004): 2369-70. On the radiation experiments at the Fernald School, see Michael D'Antonio, *The State Boys Rebellion* (New York, 2004); Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, *Final Report* (Washington, D.C., 1995). On eugenic reforms, statutes, and cases in the 1950s and 1960s, see Julius Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization Proposals: Current Attacks on Illegitimacy and the AFDC Program," *Law and Society Review* 3, no. 1 (August 1968): 77-106; Gregory Michael Dorr, "Principled Expediency: Eugenics, *Naim v. Naim*, and the Supreme Court," *American Journal of Legal History* 42, no. 2 (1998): 199-159.

45. Susan L. Thomas, "Race, Gender, and Welfare Reform: The Antinatalist Response," *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 4 (March 1998): 419-47. See the Applied Research Center's "The False Foundations of Welfare Reform, 2001" at <http://www.colorado.edu/journals/standards/V7N2/FEATURE/reform.html>. J. L. Morrison, "Illegitimacy, Sterilization, and Racism: A North Carolina Case History," *Social Science Review* 39 (1965): 1-10. Ruth Macklin and Willard Gaylin, *Mental Retardation and Sterilization: A Problem of Competency and Paternalism* (New York, 1981), 69, 75-76. As quoted in Amy Vogel, "Regulating Degeneracy" (1995): 140-41. As quoted in *Howard v. Des Moines Register and the Tribune Company, and Dr. Roy C. Sloan, and Margaret Engel* 283 N.W.2d 289. Jessie quoted in Thomas Fields-Meyer and Steve Helling, "Sterilized by the State, a Woman Fights Back" *People*, 18 August 2003, 87-88.

46. Herrnstein and Murray, *The Bell Curve* (New York, 1994), 519. See Thomas (1998); J. Mertus and S. Heller, "Norplant Meets the New Eugenists: The Impermissibility of Coerced Contraception," *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 11 (1992): 359-83.