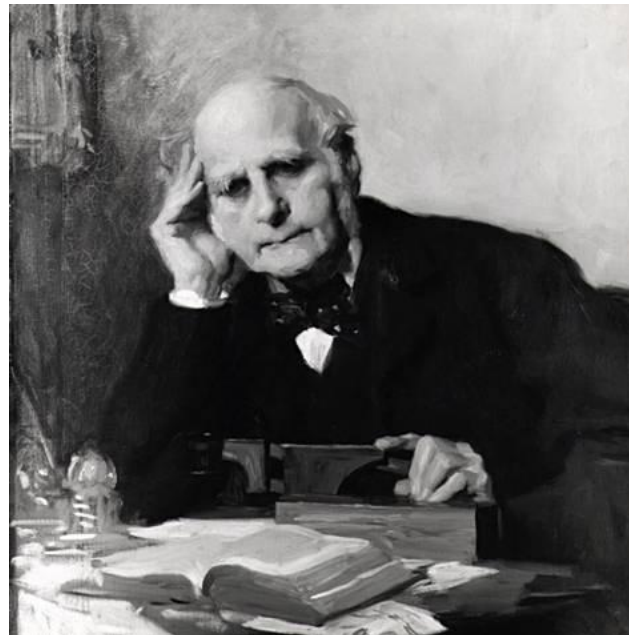


# EUGENICS

“IS THE STUDY OF THE AGENCIES UNDER SOCIAL CONTROL, THAT IMPROVE OR IMPAIR THE RACIAL QUALITIES OF FUTURE GENERATIONS EITHER PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY.”

SIR FRANCIS GALTON.





# Eugenics = “well-born”

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- Francis Galton 1860s
- Genetic determinism.
- Concern about which heritable traits are spreading thru the human population.
- Policies to “rationally” improve biological quality by controlling reproduction.
- Artificial selection is more “humane” than Social Darwinism because it aims to prevent births of the “unfit.”



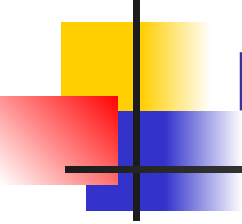
# Eugenics movement

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- 1900-1940s (and beyond WWII)
- 30+ countries had own versions.
- Considered politically progressive = use of rational science to “improve.”
- Organizations of social reformers and scientists (geneticists, doctors).
- Science of human heredity at the time.

# The costs of "degeneracy": hospitals, asylums, prisons, feebleminded colonies, poverty, unproductive citizens





# How to improve the hereditary make-up of the “race”?

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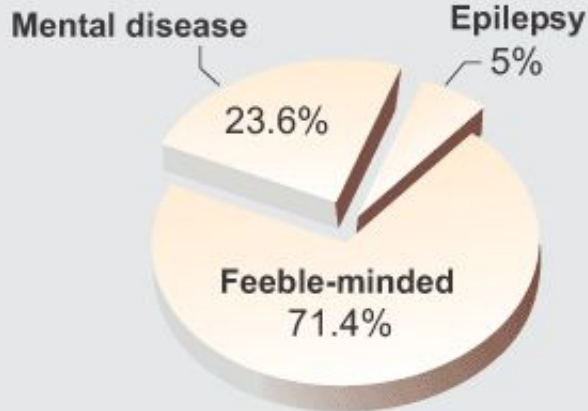
- Voluntary & coercive policies.
- “Positive” eugenics
  - Encourage, educate “fitter” people to have more offspring.
- Negative eugenics
  - Persuade, pressure, or compel “unfit” people to have no offspring, not pass on their “defective” genes. Compulsory sterilization.



# 60,000 legally sterilized 1907-1970s. Who? Mental illness and mental deficiency (feeblemindedness)

## Reasons for sterilizations

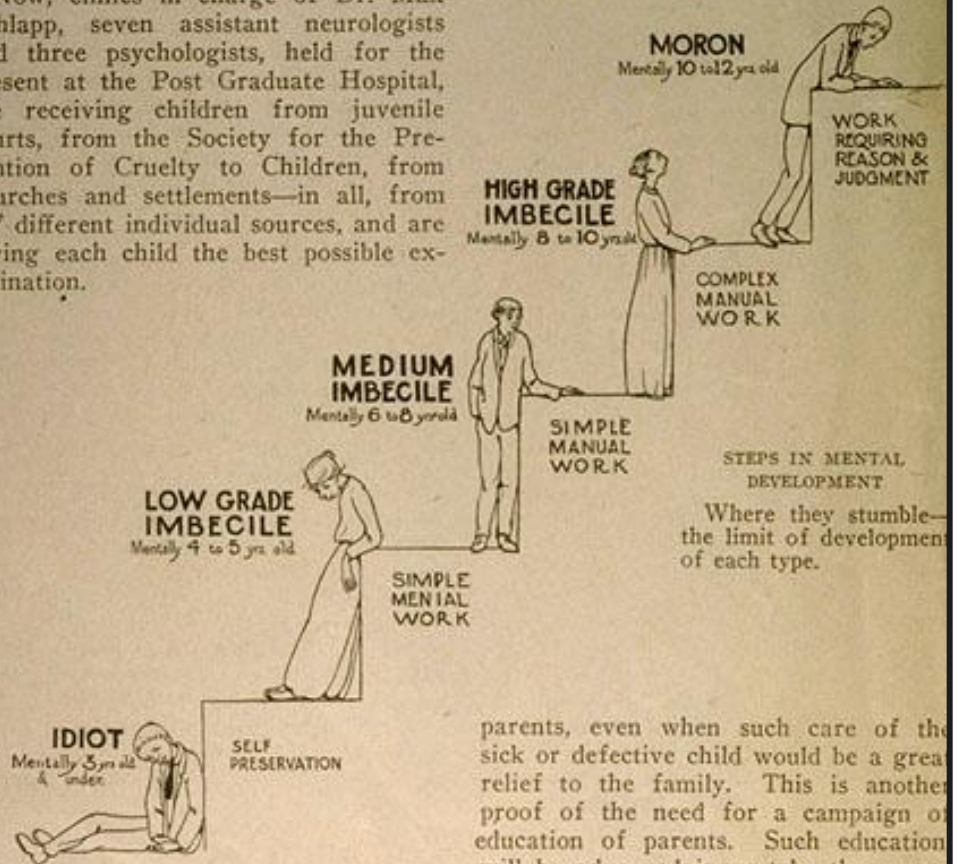
1929-1968



Source: Eugenics Board of North Carolina

comparison.

Now, clinics in charge of Dr. Max Schlapp, seven assistant neurologists and three psychologists, held for the present at the Post Graduate Hospital, are receiving children from juvenile courts, from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, from churches and settlements—in all, from 147 different individual sources, and are giving each child the best possible examination.



parents, even when such care of the sick or defective child would be a great relief to the family. This is another proof of the need for a campaign of education of parents. Such education will be advanced in part by the nurses who visit the homes in an attempt to

The child's family history is sought,

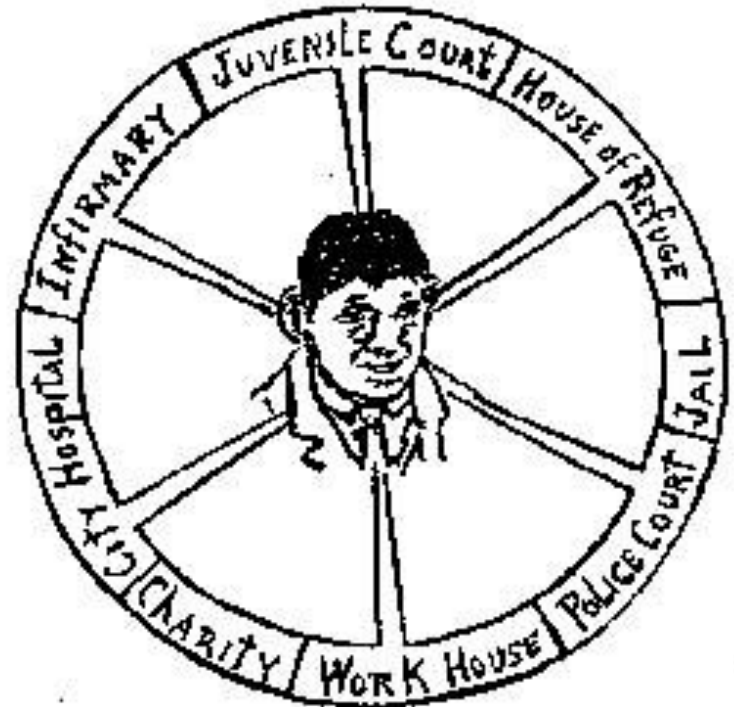
# Menace of the Moron

- Moral defect leads to crime, laziness.
- Financial burden on the "normal."
- Disabled as "an evil stalking beast that was going to devour society" (historian Martin Pernick)

## THE FEEBLE-MINDED

OR THE

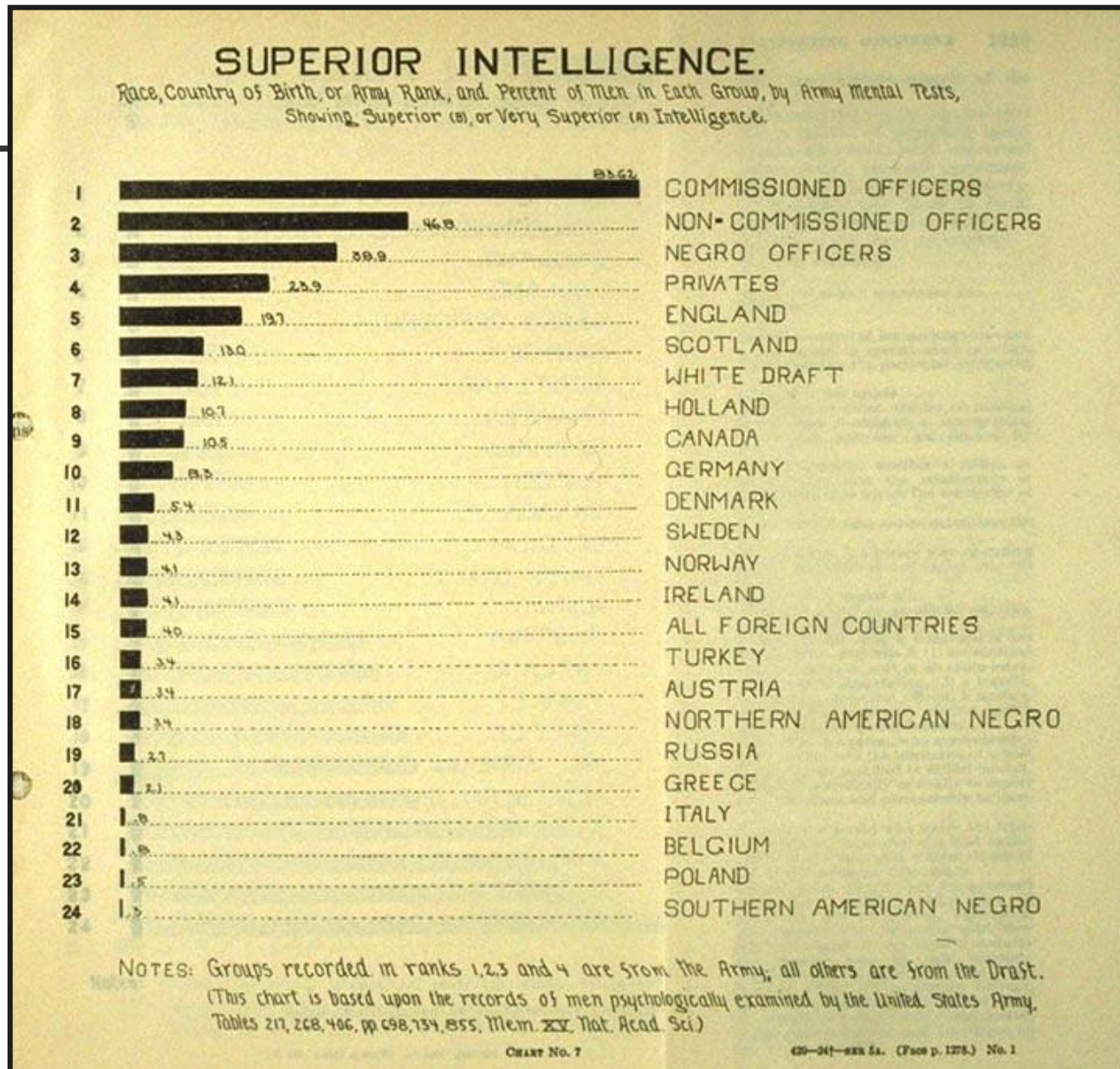
HUB TO OUR WHEEL OF VICE, CRIME  
AND PAUPERISM



*Cincinnati's Problem*



# WWI Army Mental Tests: Racial Rankings



1913 Ellis Island mental testing

80% immigrants scored "feebleminded"

Deportation rate increased



Exhibit I (a)

BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF IMMIGRATION

HEARINGS

BEFORE

THE COMMITTEE ON  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-SIXTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—  
APRIL 16-17, 1920  
—

STATEMENT OF HARRY H. LAUGHLIN



- Eugenicists' expert testimony on race & IQ led to the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act (quotas).



# Constructing the Defectives

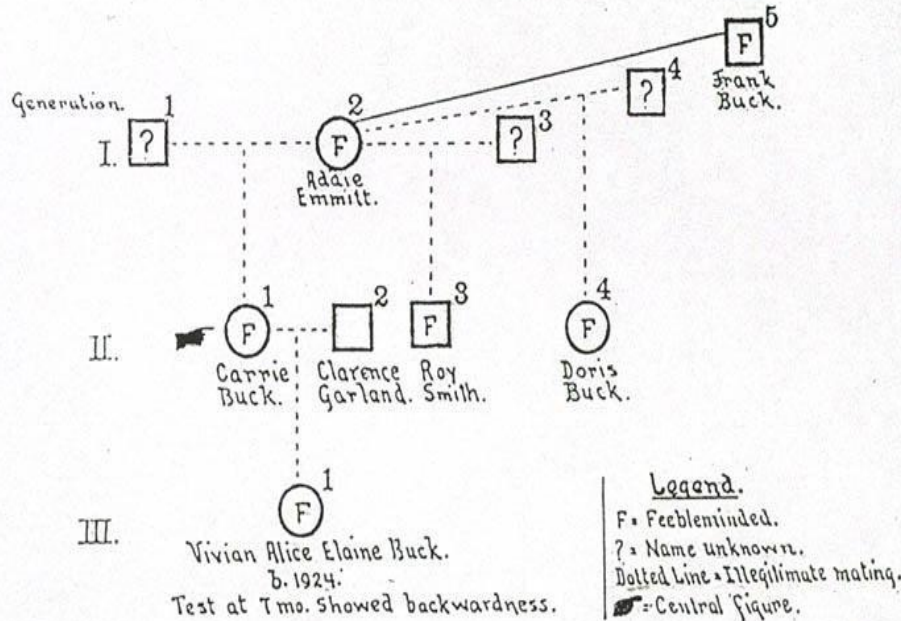
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- Actual mental impairment?
  - Often no valid evidence.
- Who was diagnosed as feebleminded?
  - Socially undesirable traits and social control.
  - Behaviors more than medical conditions.
  - (Alcoholism, sexuality, criminality)

# Supreme Court ruling, Buck v. Bell 1927

## "Three generations of imbeciles are enough"

Most Immediate Blood-kin of Carrie Buck.  
 Showing illegitimacy and hereditary feeble-mindedness.



Carrie Buck and her mother



No. 1307 Subject. **CARRIE BUCK**...  
**ACE PHOTO SERVICE, Inc.**  
 JOHN F. SWEENEY & SON, New York City.



## Oliver Wendell Holmes decision 1927

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“There can be no doubt that so far as procedure is concerned the rights of the patient are most carefully considered. We have seen more than once that the public welfare may call upon the best citizens for their lives. It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the state for these lesser sacrifices, often not felt to be such by those concerned, in order to prevent our being swamped with incompetence. It is better if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind.”

# State fair exhibits to promote eugenics awareness

This light flashes every second  
Every second crime costs  
America  
\$100,000.

## Learn About Heredity You can help to correct these conditions

This light flashes every 48 seconds  
Every 48 seconds a person is born  
in the United States who will never  
grow up mentally beyond that stage  
of a normal 8yr old boy or girl

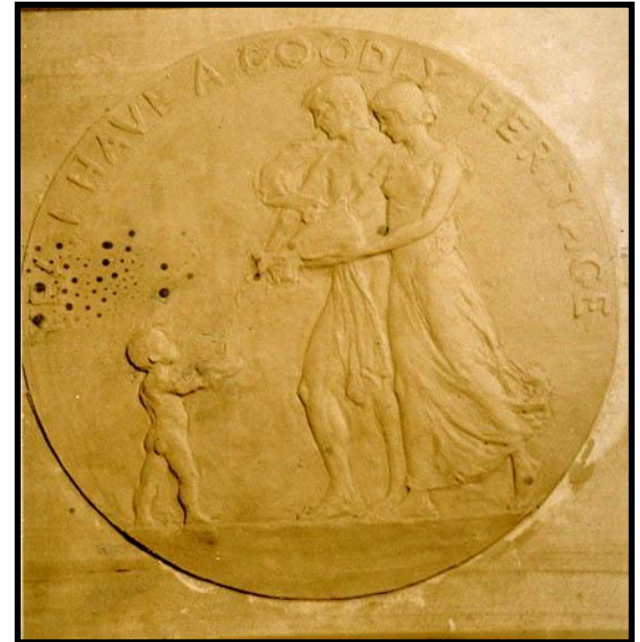
This light flashes every 50 seconds  
Every 50 seconds a person is  
committed to jail in the United  
States. Very few normal  
persons ever go to jail.



American Philosophical Society. Noncommercial, educational use only.



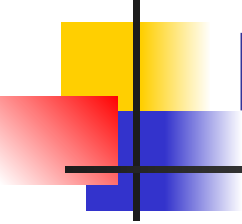
# Fitter Families Contests



# Measuring up to Eugenic Ideals



- Health
- IQ
- Education, occupation
- Special talents, tastes
- Church, politics
- Clubs, activities



# Most extreme: eugenics in Nazi Germany, 1933-45

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- Forced sterilization law for “hereditary defectives.” (400,000+)
- “Lives not worth living,” “useless eaters”

Institutionalization

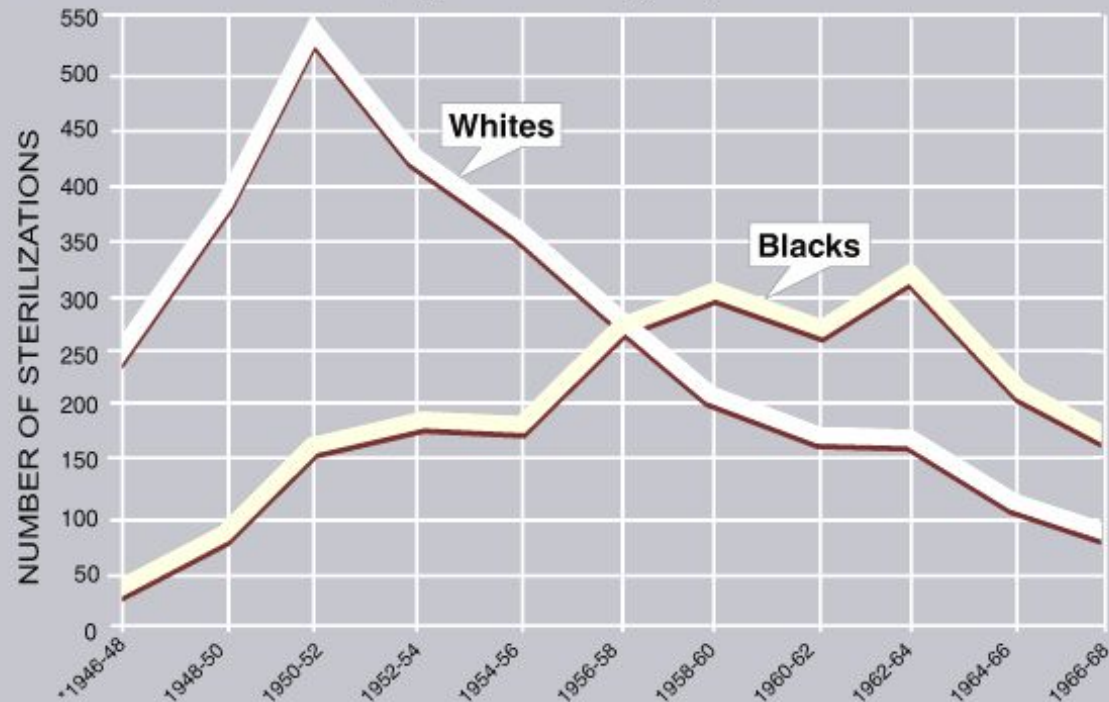
Killing programs (“euthanasia”)

- 200,000+ adults and children with disabilities.
- Final Solution against the Jewish people.

# US eugenics being practiced into 1970s

## Racial shift

While the civil-rights movement gathered momentum in the 1950s and '60s, the North Carolina sterilization program increasingly targeted blacks.



\*1946-48 was the first two-year reporting period in which racial data was compiled as a separate, non-cumulative category.

Source: Eugenics Board of North Carolina