University of Alberta

The Never-Ending Story:
The Lengthy History of Sterilization Surgery in Alberta and California

by
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This study is dedicated with love to my late father,

Stephen Barr,

who continues to encourage me to succeed.

Abstract

This study examines sterilization surgery in Alberta and California throughout the 20th century. There has been no comparative study of these two places, which were both actively involved in the eugenics movement. During the 44 years that the Alberta Sterilization Act was in place, over 2800 men, women and even children were surgically sterilized. In the United States, California performed over 20 000 sterilizations, or 1/3 of all sterilizations completed in the United States. Three large questions are examined: why did the two sterilization programs begin; why did they continue after World War Two; and who were the eugenicists behind the two programs? I demonstrate that the progressive nature of Alberta and California allowed the province and state to begin the sterilization programs, however, it was the force of individual men that pushed the programs to continue throughout the 20th century. This comparative approach will give insight into how and why Canadian and American societies maintained these sterilization programs for such an extended period of time.

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Introduction

". . . without any elements of torture accompanying its execution, it appears to me that the sterilization of degenerates . . . would not violate our constitutional guarantee."
– The Honourable U. S. Webb

During the first half of the twentieth century, eugenics was a persistent ideology in North America and Europe. Sir Francis Galton coined the term "eugenics" in 1863, and described it as "the study of all agencies under human control which can improve or impair the racial quality of future generations."[1] Both *positive eugenics*, which is the practice of encouraging reproduction among those deemed genetically 'superior', and *negative eugenics* , which aims to lower fertility among the genetically 'inferior', were rampant throughout North America during the early 20th century. Most states and provinces chose the positive eugenic approach to promote fertility amongst the so-called genetically superior by, among other things, hosting "Better Baby Contests" and encouraging reproduction with financial prizes.[2] Some states and provinces, however, used the negative eugenic approach to restrict reproduction of supposed undesirables through such practices as sterilization, deportation, immigration laws and institutionalized segregation.

In this thesis, I focus on the negative eugenics programs in the province of Alberta and the state of California. California and Alberta were among the many states and two provinces that chose to submit their residents to negative eugenics through government sterilization laws. Beginning with a law passed in 1909, California sterilized both the mentally disabled and repeat criminals in the state-run hospitals and prisons.

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[1] Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003): 18.
[2] N/A, *Better Babies Contests,* http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/topics_fs.pl?theme=43&search=&matches=. Accessed February 1, 2012.

This law was not repealed until 1979. During the 70 years that the government of California sanctioned sterilization, over 20 108 men and women underwent the surgery or approximately one-third of all sterilizations performed in the United States during the 20th century.[3] Thus California's law was lengthy and enabled a substantial number of eugenic sterilizations.

Alberta's sterilization program was also in place for decades and responsible for over 97% of all government sanctioned sterilizations in Canada. The Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act was passed in 1928 and remained in place for 44 years. Over the four decades, over 2 822 residents were sterilized. The 1930s saw the largest number of sterilizations performed in both Alberta and California. California carried out surgery on approximately 450 residents each year during the 1930s, or thirteen people sterilized per 100 000 residents. During the same decade, Alberta sterilized approximately 60 men and women per year, and due to the much smaller population, the sterilization rate was similar to California: for every 100 000 people, nine were sterilized. The numbers, however, raise more questions than they answer.

This thesis developed from the years that I thought about and evaluated the government of Alberta's choice to implement forced sterilization. Questions emerged through years of history classes and for my final undergraduate paper I researched the University of Alberta's involvement in the sterilization program. That paper left many questions unanswered, as well as directing my attention to other states and provinces that also had sterilization laws. This study is my attempt to join in on the research that has steadily grown since the 1990s. My approach, which is comparative history on a smaller, local scale, is on par with the current trends in eugenics scholarship. To my

[3]California. http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/CA/CA.html. Accessed February 1, 2012.

knowledge, however, no historian has ever directly compared Alberta and California as the main focus of study.

The main objective of this study is to closely examine the sterilization programs of Alberta and California, and the men and women involved, without criticizing their behaviour based on present expectations. Eugenics rightfully became a polarizing issue from the 1940s onward. After the Nazi atrocities committed during the Holocaust came to light after World War Two, eugenics lost its lustre to much of the world. In North America, the 1950s through the 1970s was a time period of social action and change, and negative eugenics programs, such as sterilization surgery and anti-immigration laws, were justifiably vilified. As a historian, however, it is important to analyze each historical period within that era's frame of mind, no matter how recent. When California and Alberta adopted their sterilization programs, many Canadians and Americans agreed with at least some of the 'science' that the eugenics movement was proclaiming. Eugenic thought was omnipresent, throughout politics, economics, medicine and many other areas of ordinary North American life. This study does not excuse nor attempt to justify the surgeries that left more than 22 000 people in Alberta and California infertile. Like other historians before me, I believe that eugenics and sterilization programs must be researched and studied to properly understand their importance in our past and present. History demands a critical examination, whether or not the findings make us, the researcher and the reader, uncomfortable.

There were many unfortunate events that took place because the two governments sanctioned sterilizations. Throughout this paper, I answer multiple questions concerning eugenics and Alberta and California's sterilization programs. Each chapter examines different questions pertaining to the sterilization programs: Chapter

One, how the programs began; Chapter Two, who was involved and how; and Chapter Three, why the programs ended during the 1970s.

In the first chapter, I examine how Alberta and California's sterilization laws came to pass. Why did the two places adopt their sterilization laws when they did? Who was involved in the legislation? What were the motivations for the eugenicists and the politicians who were involved? California and Alberta had different purposes for forcing their residents to undergo sterilization surgery, although the governments shared a preference for sterilization over institutionalized segregation.

California embraced forced sterilization for a multitude of reasons. As residents of a Western state, Californians put their faith in scientific answers and environmentalism. In the early twentieth century, supporters proclaimed that sterilization was the answer to how to clean up California society, while saving money by releasing the mentally ill from state institutions. Sterilization was viewed as a much cheaper alternative to life-long segregation in institutions.

California also welcomed sterilization as a punitive measure. Some doctors claimed that since 'degeneracy' was hereditary, the sterilization of prisoners was necessary as a form of negative eugenics. However, because many non-violent, non-sexual offenders were sterilized in exchange for early parole, as well as prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment, there was little consistency for the 'hereditary' argument. Instead, sterilization was part of the punishment.

Although Alberta never went as far as to sterilize inmates in prisons, eugenics advocates also subscribed to the idea that sterilization was a more logical choice than segregation. Not only was it cost-effective, in the eyes of the government, but negative eugenics promised to soon rid Canada of the influx of mental diseases brought by the

waves of new immigrants. Although Alberta's reasons to begin government sanctioned sterilization programs varied, both Alberta and California soon broadened the scope of their programs after the creation of the eugenic laws. Later, both governments also removed the need for consent, from the patient or a legal guardian, officially making both programs 'forced'.

The second chapter investigates six men who were influential in North American eugenics and how and why they became involved. Was there only one career path for a eugenicist, or multiple? What did these men have in common, and what made them dissimilar? What does the variety in eugenic leaders demonstrate? Although these men had similar backgrounds and job descriptions, it is more remarkable how different each man was. Some were involved in academia, and some in the medical field. Some performed surgeries, while others fundraised for their cause. There was not one specific field that was directly associated with eugenics, but a multitude. This variety among the men was true of both sides of the border as well. This variation between the six men demonstrates the pervasiveness of eugenics during the early and mid 20th century. Eugenics leaders were not a monolithic group.

Although Chapter 2 focuses on men, women were also heavily involved in eugenics and held positions of power and influence. However, I chose to highlight these individual men based on the great amount of detail known about their lives, and for Fred Butler and Leonard Le Vann in particular, their specific career positions. Alberta women, such as Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy, or the women involved in the United Farm Women of Alberta, had a great deal of influence over the province in matters of politics, public health and economics. However, both Murphy and McClung were involved with so many other social and political programs and debates, that eugenics

work was but a small portion of their contribution to Canada. In contrast, the six men examined in Chapter Two spent almost their entire lives dedicated to the promotion of eugenics and sterilizations.

The third chapter explains why California and Alberta continued to sterilize their residents for so long, and what eventually led to the end of their programs. Additionally, I examine how the Nazi sterilization programs were influenced by North America, and how North America was in turn influenced by the aftermath of the Holocaust in regards to eugenics. The catalyst to end the eugenics program for the province and the state was different. For California, the change came from within the medical community. After a change in management and legislation in the early 1950s, ordering sterilizations became a cumbersome chore for physicians and was no longer seen as a priority by the superintendents of the state hospitals. Sterilization in California mostly came to a swift halt in the early 1950s, although the law was not repealed until 1979. Some residents, mostly ethnic minority women, were sterilized in later decades, but the grand era of eugenics in California had come to an end, without a bang, or even much of a whimper.

Meanwhile, in the province of Alberta, it was the sitting government that pushed to finally end the systematic sterilizations. J. M. MacEachran and Dr. Le Vann continued to control the Alberta Eugenics Board and the program of sterilization remained active until 1965. By the early 1970s, various members of the Conservative party of Alberta began researching whether the sterilization act was a violation of the proposed Alberta Bill of Rights. As soon as the Conservatives came into power in 1972, the Alberta Sterilization Act was repealed.

I examine eugenics at the level of provinces and states because the sterilization regulations were controlled by the provincial and state governments. Eugenic laws were

not federal and therefore each state and province enacted its own distinct sterilization legislation. Researching two places with separate governments, instead of focusing on a single area or event, produces opportunities to evaluate each location both separately and jointly. Since the 1960s, comparative history has earned favour and popularity. The uses of comparative history are varied. In 1980 in "The Uses of Comparative History in Macro-social Inquiry," Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers identify three distinct applications of comparative history with their own strengths and limitations. First, in the "parallel demonstration of theory," a historian juxtaposes historical events to convince the reader that a specific theory, such as class conflict or agrarian revolutions, can repeatedly produce similar outcomes in different time periods and places.[4] Second is the "contrast of contexts." According to Skocpol and Somers, this method showcases the unique features of the particular historical events and how these varied characteristics affected the historical process.[5] The final approach that Skocpol and Somers examine is the "macro-causal analysis," which employs statistical analysis in order to make causal inferences. In comparing and contrasting two similar historical events, the historian attempts to establish that the casual factors leading up to the particular events were also parallel.[6]

The goals of comparative history are also multiple. Skocpol and Somer's "macro-causal analysis" can help to identify how similar influential developments can lead to analogous historical events. Comparison can be used to examine how different societies managed their basic needs, such as food production or shelter, in similar or divergent ways. Additionally, comparative history can be used to tie together different places and

[4] Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* vol. 22, no. 2 (April 1980): 176.
[5] Skocpol, "Macrosocial Inquiry," 178.
[6] Skocpol, "Macrosocial Inquiry," 182.

time periods into a singular subcategory, such as regions under the control of feudalism or fascism.

In researching Alberta and California, I use a combination of comparative historical methods to realize multiple goals. The method identified as "contrasts of contexts" by Skocpol and Somers will be used primarily, as I am examining sterilization laws that were comparable in their development and subsequent use, yet both places varied immensely in how legislation was enacted and how the sterilization process was ultimately carried out.

Transnational history is another popular method used by historians, where two or more nations are examined together. This method is useful when studying an idea or a movement that crosses national borders and are not contained to one specific country. Although eugenics was a movement that spanned both countries, I do not consider my study to be 'transnational.' The two sterilization programs were divergent and the commencement of the programs was not interdependent.

I examine Alberta and California because of their high sterilization rates, and similar provincial and state control over the negative eugenic practices. Although many historians choose to research single nations, examining smaller, local jurisdictions, such as states or provinces, can provide a different and beneficial point of view. In Dawn Nickel's study, "Dying in the West: Health Care Policies and Caregiving Practices in Montana and Alberta, 1880-1950," she found that the geographic region that connected Alberta and Montana had a deep influence on how medicine developed and was practiced in that particular localized area.[7]

[7] Dawn Dorothy Nickel, "Dying in the West: Health Care Policies and Care-giving Practices in Montana and Alberta, 1880-1950," (PhD thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 2005). See also:

Historical studies that investigate smaller areas as opposed to an entire nation can provide more specific information. Many monographs have been written on the subject of eugenics in the United States. During the 1930s, when eugenic thought was at its peak, over thirty states held completely separate compulsory sterilization laws. Some states, like California, used this law to sterilize thousands of citizens. Other states, such as Idaho, had the sterilization law on the books but actually sterilized few individuals. Other states enacted a law, but chose to never sterilize a single person, and New York repealed its law only nine years after its inception, due to questions of its constitutionality. It is clear that there was no national consensus on whether, or how to implement negative eugenics and sterilization laws in the United States.

The same can be said for Canada: there was no national eugenics consensus. Although the governments of Ontario and Manitoba debated whether a negative eugenics bill would be suitable for their provinces during the 1920s, only British Columbia and Alberta ever enacted a compulsory sterilization act. In order to precisely examine negative eugenic policies, historians must research at the state and provincial level. Medical history articles, such as "Mapping Region in Canadian Medical History: The Case of British Columbia" by Megan J. Davis, advocate examining even smaller socio-economic locales. [8] However, provincial and state level examination suits the topic of sterilization due to the local control. The different hospitals and institutions in Alberta and California varied in their sterilization rates, yet they were controlled by single state and provincial governmental boards.

Sarah Carter, *The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region* (Edmonton: Athabasca University, 2010).

[8] Megan Davies, "Mapping Region in Canadian Medical History: The Case of British Columbia*," Canadian Bulletin of Medical History,* vol. 17 (2000): 75.

The national influence is also examined throughout this thesis. What role did nation play during the modern eugenics era? As demonstrated above, individual states and provinces were in control of their own sterilization bills. Sterilization legislation did not appear in a vacuum, however, and as more states and provinces enacted these laws in the early 20th century, more information was available for other places to draw upon. In 1909, California was the third state to pass a sterilization law, and it influenced numerous states to take the same measures. Historians have discovered that California's influence was so far-reaching that it even inspired various laws in Nazi Germany and gained praise from Hitler himself.[9]

When Alberta enacted the first Canadian eugenics bill in 1928, California had already forcefully sterilized over 5,800 people in prisons, hospitals, and mental institutions. Although the Alberta government was pushed into action by progressive social groups, such as the United Farmers of Alberta and Social Gospellers, there was no stopping the influx of eugenic information that came flooding over the border. By 1928, the Alberta government was well aware that more than twenty states in the United States had eugenic legislation and most of them were actively sterilizing their citizens at that time.[10]

The eugenic information flowed on a double highway between Canada and the United States. The United States and Canada had much influence over one another. The close proximity and similar cultural values allowed the two countries to examine and build off of the sterilization laws of the other. Although California and Alberta differed on many aspects of their individual sterilization legislation, these differences stem from

[9]Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism and German National Socialism* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1994): 124.
[10] "Sterilization Bill is Given 2nd Reading," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 24, 1928, p. 1.

the provincial or state level, and not due to dissimilarities in the national attitudes towards eugenics.

Before examining Alberta and California, I will first investigate the research previously done by historians of eugenics. By consulting their papers, monographs and essays prior to writing my thesis, I was able to identify what was missing in North American eugenic scholarship and the best way to insert my own research into the academic field.

Throughout my research, I used primary documents from both Alberta and California. Much of my primary materials came from medical journals from the early 20th century: public health journals, nursing journals, medical association journals, etc. Other public records, such as state records and eugenic group bulletins, were used. For research in Alberta, I consulted archival records and primary sources, such as MacEachran's notes and writings regarding his work on the Eugenics Board, which are located in the University of Alberta Archives. I also examined the Alberta Department of Health fonds, as well as some of the Eugenics Board case files, minutes and administrative records, which are located at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. I relied more heavily on secondary sources for my research on California. There was, however, a good deal of primary source material to be found online from California newspapers and books on the topic of sterilizations published in the early 20th-century.

My study concentrates on the legal and medical aspects of eugenics more than the social and personal. Every person sterilized had a unique life story and outlook on how their sterilization changed their life. Although this is an important topic, I chose to research eugenics with an emphasis on the policy-makers.

Historiography

During the 1960s, academics greatly expanded scholarship on eugenics in North America. At the same time as the province of Alberta and the state of California continued to perform sterilizations in hospitals and institutions, historians, anthropologists and biologists began to study and investigate the phenomenon of eugenics.

Authors attempted to recount the events of eugenics within a specific country (United States, Great Britain, or Canada), with exact start and end dates.[11] American historians alleged that the modern incarnation of eugenics began in one of two time periods: either the late 1800s, when American doctors began to push for the sterilization of violent, sexual criminals, or the middle of the first decade of the 1900s, when certain states, such as Indiana, began to discuss creating a sterilization law, which was later pushed through in 1907. The historians from the 1960s and 1970s agreed on a firm end date for modern eugenics: the Second World War effectively ended eugenic practices.[12]

An important and early example of a scholarly book written on the history of American eugenics was Mark H. Haller's *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* written in 1963. Haller's book chronicled the movement from 1870 until just after World War Two. A variety of topics connected to eugenics were touched upon throughout the monograph, including religion, politics, sociology and biology. This broad overview of the American movement typified how American scholars were studying eugenics during the 1960s and 1970s.

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[11] Mark H. Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963); Donald Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives* (Vanderbuilt Press, 1968); and Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Genetics and American Society* (Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 1972).
[12] Haller, *Eugenics*, 1963.

During the 1960s, Canadian authors took a different approach to eugenic research. Instead of historical monographs, authors K. G. McWhirter and J. Weijer released an article that criticized Alberta's continued use of sterilizations for eugenic purposes. In the Summer 1969 edition of *The University of Toronto Law Journal*, "The Alberta Sterilization Act: A Genetic Critique" declared that Alberta's law was poorly constructed and a blemish on Canada. Although this article was written by lawyers, not historians, it was a critical piece as it set the trend for Canadians scholars who examined eugenics. In the following decades, articles, not monographs, became commonplace for Canadian historians. Additionally, Canadian historians tended to focus on the legal issues surrounding sterilizations within the country.

By the 1980s, scholars of the subject of eugenics expanded it to include new perspectives of the movement in both Canada and the United States. For example, Daniel Kevles, author of *In The Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (1985), noted that earlier historians had ignored the continuation of eugenic ideas and initiatives after World War Two. To counter this absence, Kevles extended his own study into his present day. He also compared the similarities between the eugenics movement of the United States to that of Great Britain. Kevles believed that British and American people in the early 1900s were drawn to eugenics because of its supposed 'scientific' methodology, similar to how Mendelian genetics was aiding botanists to breed better plants. *In the Name of Eugenics*, however, was still an oversimplification of the topic. Kevles divided eugenicists into two groups. He identified "mainline" proponents, such as Charles Davenport and Madison Grant, who began the movement at the turn of the 20th century and "reform" eugenicists who were motivated by liberal social values and transformed eugenics during the 1930s. This generalization ignored

the extensive and varied political, professional, and lobby groups that supported eugenics, either vocally, financially, or in principle. While Kevles advanced research on the history of the eugenic movement in America and Great Britain with an important comparative approach, there was still much to explore.

The eugenics historiography branched out even further during the 1990s. Different topics were examined within eugenics and historians began investigating smaller areas instead of nations. In 1994, a young German scholar, Stefan Kühl, published *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism and German National Socialism*. The author connected the California sterilization law of 1909 to the Nazis' 1933 law, the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring." In Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1926), the future dictator even went so far as to mention and commend the United States on the Immigration Act of 1924 (or the Johnson-Reed Act). *The Nazi Connection's* thesis was that America, and specifically California, helped shape the Nazi sterilization law. The author developed this idea from what he believed was the inability of eugenicists to separate racism and eugenic scientific principles. Kühl's work was one of the first and most extensive monographs to track American scientists' and politicians' involvement and collaboration in European, specifically German, eugenic programs. Until the 1990s, historians had underemphasized American influence on the global eugenic movement. Interestingly, Kühl mentions in the preface that his book arose from a newfound concern that eugenic ideals were being revived by the work of geneticists around the globe in the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1995, Edward Larson wrote the first full length historical monograph that focused on eugenics in the Southern United States. Not only did *Sex, Race and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* augment the historiography of the South, it also added much

information concerning the policy-making behind eugenic laws. Over his 20th-century timeline, Larson examined the goals that encouraged eugenicists, how their actions led to government legislation, and the eventual repeal of these laws.

Larson illuminated the fact that eugenic ideas came to the Southern states in the 1930s and 1940s, which was later than in the North or West. Based on his research, Larson argued that Southern eugenicists directed their campaigns against poor white Americans, not African Americans, as white Southerners were concerned with the purification of their own Caucasian race. However, he unfortunately did not consider the gender issues concerning black women in the South and their experiences with both positive and negative eugenics. Later historians, such as Johanna Schoen and Dorothy Roberts, add to the gender and racial analysis within eugenic historiography.[13]

Dorothy Roberts' *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (1999) explored how African American women's bodies and, more specifically, reproductive organs, have often been central to legislation. Although her monograph focused more on birth control than eugenics, Roberts used one chapter to examine the ways in which negative eugenics (such as sterilization, forced birth control and anti-miscegenation laws), were used to limit the amount of children for black women. Some black women, who were oppressed by countless children they could not afford, saw birth control as a blessing. Roberts believed that eugenicists saw hormonal birth control as a method with which to dominate black women in a different way. Roberts discussed that this domination is still seen in contemporary America, as black women are

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[13] Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (Pantheon Books, 1999); and Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in the Public Health and Welfare* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

sometimes coerced into long-term birth control options, such as Depo-Provera or Norplant, or have them implanted without their knowledge.[14]

Larson theorized that eugenics did not take hold as quickly or, in his point of view, as aggressively, in the South as in the North due to the Southern states' inherent conservatism, religiousness, and unwillingness to change. However, once eugenics was accepted by the medical community and, more importantly, women's groups during the 1930s, the Southern states began to sterilize their 'undesirable' citizens with eagerness.

Canadian scholarship on eugenics had a slightly different pattern than the American scholarship during the 1980s and 1990s. A Professor of Health Law, Bernard Dickens, added to the Canadian historiography in the summer of 1985. Again in *The University of Toronto Law Journal*, Dickens released "Reproductive Law and Medical Consent." The paper examined the legality of patient consent forms from the Eugenics Board of Alberta, especially dealing with minors, and people with mental disabilities. The paper reinforced the fact that Canadian scholars were more interested in the legal issues than their American counterparts. Dickens used his background in law, instead of history, to examine the experiences of thousands of Canadians who had been sterilized, or come across other problems with their reproduction or fertility. Eugenics was seen, by Dickens, as part of the reproductive issues of his day.

The 1990s saw the first full-length scholarly monograph examining the eugenics movement in Canada. Angus McLaren's *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada* (1990) was a combination of a narrative social history and an overview of the scientific

[14] The idea that sterilization can be just as liberatory as it can be oppressive is not examined in this study. For work that deals with voluntary sterilizations, please see: Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (Pantheon Books, 1999); and Ian Dowbiggin, *The Sterilization Movement and global fertility in the twentieth century*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

methodologies used by eugenicists. McLaren highlighted Canadian medical professionals who had a significant impact on the development of Canadian eugenics programs. While McLaren gave a detailed and inclusive overview, he wrongly concluded that the movement had little impact on Canada since only two provinces (Alberta and British Columbia) had sterilization legislation. That assumption ignored the provinces (Ontario, Nova Scotia) that sterilized members of their population without any government regulation. However, he still provided an important argument regarding how a minor group of social advocates promoted change on a large scale (positive and negative eugenics) within a country. *Our Own Master Race* remains one of the very few monographs published that focuses on Canadian eugenics.

Released seven years following *Our Own Master Race*, Ian Robert Dowbiggin's *Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada* (1997) also added to the Canadian eugenic scholarship and to comparative studies of Canada and the United States. It allowed students to review the similarities and differences surrounding the two nations' leading psychiatrists and psychiatric programs. Dowbiggin's central thesis revolved around Canadian and American psychiatrists and their involvement in eugenics in hospitals and institutions. *Keeping America Sane* put forward the idea that North American psychiatrists were more actively involved in eugenics than previously thought and had recommended not only sterilization policies, but marriage and immigrant restrictions. This transnational focus on psychiatry helped set a new trend in eugenic scholarship that began in earnest at the turn of the 21st century: a narrow focus on certain aspects of eugenics, such as state studies or case studies. Although examining a specific focus of eugenics allows the historian to uncover

an unprecedented amount of information, the danger was that the study would become too narrowly focused and would disregard connections to the larger eugenics analysis.

Turning to a patients' perspective, Deborah C. Park and John P. Radford published "From the Case Files: Reconstructing a History of Involuntary Sterilization," in the journal *Disability and Society* in 1998. They believed that analysis done on the Canadian eugenic movement had not progressed further than brief examinations of legislation, and that legal issues had been too central to the historiography. To correct this, Park and Radford analysed the actual case files from the Eugenics Board of Alberta, held at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. They enlightened the reader to the individual stories of patients who went before the Eugenics Board. The article also concluded that although the Eugenics Board made what the authors believed were professional decisions, they were also coldly clinical and often shockingly brief in their patient interviews.

During the late 1990s, there was an explosion of articles published on eugenics in Alberta. The conservative weekly newsmagazine, *Alberta Report*, took a particular interest in the subject and printed five pieces on eugenics between 1995 and 1999. Interest in Alberta's history of eugenics was piqued by Leilani Muir's 1995 trial, the first person who successfully sued the Alberta government for wrongful sterilization. These articles examined the history of eugenics from a journalistic angle, and the flurry of activity surrounding the court case. Additionally, the articles investigated the University of Alberta's decision to strip J. M. MacEachran's name off several scholarships and a

department library in an attempt to distance itself from the legacy of the Chairman of the Eugenics Board of Alberta.[15]

The turn of the 21st century saw an even bigger increase in historical monographs focusing on North American eugenics. Wendy Kline began her 2001 monograph, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom*, with a discussion of the re-evaluation of the importance of eugenics to North Americans after the influx of books published during the 1990s. A steady stream of monographs from across the globe challenged the theory that eugenics was a conservative social movement restricted to first world nations. In actuality, eugenics was a pervasive, global movement with variations on every continent. Kline's approach to eugenics came with a well-defined gender angle. She wished to "place eugenics in the center of modern re-evaluations of female sexuality and morality."[16] While Robert's *Killing the Black Body* examined gender and the issues surrounding reproduction, Kline's monograph was unique in the way she examined the eugenic movement as a whole, and introduced gender analysis.

Issues of gender, sexuality and race were also examined at length in Nancy Ordover's *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* (2003). Historian Ordover disclosed that she is both Jewish and queer, which gave her narrative a unique voice. Like Kühl, Ordover was concerned that negative eugenic practices were returning to mainstream culture through the Human Genome Project during the 1990s. As discussed earlier by Roberts in *Killing the Black Body*, Ordover also

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[15] Chris Champion, "Cashing in on victimhood," *Alberta Report,* Vol. 24, No. 2, (December 24, 1996): 40-43; and Joe Woodard, "No end to doing good," *Alberta Report,* Vol. 22, No. 29, (July 3, 1995): 38-42.

[16] Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (University of California Press: Berkley, 2001): 6.

gave examples of eugenic motivations when underprivileged mothers were secretly implanted with Norplant or given shots of Depo-provera without their consent. In other chapters of *American Eugenics*, the author discussed how an unwavering belief in the infallibility of "science" and the medical field has led to a dependency on easy and cheap medical solutions. Ordover also believed that the eugenics movement's longevity was due to the great variety of people and groups that were connected to the movement. When one group became disreputable, the others remained intact to continue support of eugenic ideas.

In 2005, Alexandra Minna Stern released her monograph on American eugenics, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America.* It focused on the importance of the activities on the West Coast of America, as opposed to the traditional viewpoint that the East Coast took precedence. Throughout her book, Stern examined issues pertaining to immigration, legislation and eugenics as tools in institutionalized medicine, with a focus on California, the largest contributor to sterilization in the United States. While genetic research in the 21st-century has the potential to help millions across the globe, there is also controversy that surrounds the field, much like eugenics. Stern believed that this apprehension should cause genetic researchers to tread with caution to avoid crossing the line into unethical territory.

As we have seen, eugenics and unethical behavior was rampant throughout North America. Another example of this is highlighted in Johanna Schoen's *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (2005). This monograph examined black women during the 20th century, primarily in North Carolina. Expanding on what was previously written by Roberts, Kline and Ordover, *Choice and Coercion* focused on women's control over their sexuality and reproduction.

Schoen detailed how the women of North Carolina attempted to control their health in a system where technologies, such as sterilizations and hormonal birth control, could produce more options for certain women, while removing opportunities for others.

Although Edward Larson asserted that African Americans were not specifically targeted in the Southern states for sterilization during the 1950s and 1960s, Schoen countered that lower class women, especially poor African American women, were targeted during those decades and faced more difficulties in maintaining authority over their bodies and reproduction. *Choice and Coercion* discussed women's agency, and why some North Carolina women actively sought out sterilizations. However, to access the desired surgeries, women would have to request them through eugenic boards and admit to mental deficiencies, whether or not they believed in such labels.

While many historians were researching particular areas and specific individuals in conjunction with eugenics, Mark A. Largent chose to examine eugenics in the style of earlier historians, in a generalized overview. In his 2008 monograph, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States,* Largent wrote a broad overview of eugenics from the middle of the 19th century to the turn of the 21st. He criticized historians who had examined eugenics as 'great man history': histories where particular men and women are highlighted as the ringleader or cause of eugenics. Largent discussed previous monographs written on the subject, and their slow evolution from Whiggish history to a more critical social and cultural history. In his introduction, Largent took a clear stance: "Eugenics was not isolated to a few places, it was not an aberration, and it did not disappear after World War II."[17] While he was not the first historian to consider eugenics as widespread and enduring, Largent used his monograph

[17] Mark A. Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2008): 2.

to synthesize previous scholarship and plainly explain how eugenics was a global issue that continued to plague individuals and specific groups and minorities, such as African American women, after World War Two.

Two of the most recent additions to eugenics historiography are by American historian and lawyer Paul Lombardo. In 2008, he published his historical monograph, *Three Generations, No Imbeciles: Eugenics, the Supreme Court and Buck v. Bell*, which chronicled the Buck v. Bell lawsuit in Virginia in 1927. Carrie Buck was portrayed by the opposing lawyers and doctors as a feeble-minded sexual delinquent along with her mother and her infant daughter. The decision of Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. to uphold the sterilization of Buck has been viewed as one turning point in the eugenic movement. Since Judge Holmes ruled that the State of Virginia was legally allowed to decide Buck's sexual reproduction without repercussions, other states were quick to join Virginia, Indiana and California with sterilization legislation. During the peak of eugenics popularity in the 1930s, thirty-three American states had sterilization laws.

Most recently, Paul Lombardo has edited a collection of essays on American eugenics*. A Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era*, which was released in early 2011, includes chapters from historians, biologists, and geneticists. The essay topics range from early eugenics theories, economic struggles during the 1930s and four separate state case studies to the reappearance of eugenics in the human genome project at the end of the 20th century.

Canadian eugenics historiography also expanded in the 21st-century. In 2004, another article examining Canadian eugenics was published by Alberta scholars. The article, "Sterilizing the 'Feeble-minded': Eugenics in Alberta, Canada, 1929-1972" in the *Journal of Historical Sociology,* focused attention on Alberta. The authors, Jana Grekul,

Harvey Krahn and Dave Odynak, two of whom are professors of Sociology at the University of Alberta, believed that women, young adults and Indigenous Canadians were specifically targeted by the Alberta Eugenics Board. This article was an overall summary of the background information to eugenics in Alberta. The 1928 legislation, the two amendments in 1937 and 1942, and the subsequent repeal of the law in 1972 were all documented. This article was an important addition to Canadian eugenic historiography because it provided in-depth information about eugenic policies in Alberta's history. However, the authors did not maintain a strong sense of objectivity traditionally found in historical articles. Their lack of attention to the historical context portrayed eugenics as a movement that should shame Albertans, and not as a historical movement that must be studied and examined in its context. Although most of the historians discussed above rightfully included their belief that forced sterilization was not justifiable, the authors of "Sterilizing the 'Feeble-Minded'" chose to judge the actions of the eugenicists against the backdrop of 21st-century knowledge and belief systems, instead of considering the mindset of the early to mid 1900s.

In 2005, historian Cecily Devereux added new ideas and insights into the Canadian eugenics historiography. *Growing a Race: Nellie McClung and the Fiction of Eugenic Feminism* explored Nellie McClung's legacy in Canada, as well as other well known Canadian feminists, such as Emily Murphy. Early 20th-century feminist and eugenic ideas were evaluated by Devereux. She asserted that McClung took the anti-feminist concepts of earlier eugenicists, such as male dominance over females, and promoted the notion that women had a duty to their race to conceive better children. Devereux also calls attention to McClung's resistance to anti-immigration legislation,

and her desire for voting rights for all women, despite her support of eugenics. Devereux added a unique, feminist perspective to Alberta's eugenic historiography.

Historical scholarship on eugenics has changed a great deal since Haller wrote his monograph almost 50 years ago. American scholars have narrowed their focus from a broad overview down to case studies at the regional levels. Canadian historians have expanded from examining solely legal issues to encompass more themes surrounding eugenics. While research has increased, both countries could benefit from more investigation, especially through comparative history.

This master's thesis compares the history of sterilizations in Alberta and California. There has never been a study that compares and contrasts the U.S. state and Canadian province that sterilized the highest number of residents in North America. It is important to recognize how Alberta and California, two of the most progressive and forward-thinking places in North America during the first half of the twentieth century, could have started down a path that led to the forced sterilization of over 22 000 people.

This study of Alberta and California will be of interest beyond the academic community because eugenics remains a contemporary issue. Within the past two decades, Alberta has received global attention due to the lawsuits brought forth by many of the men and women who were sterilized. The impact of the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act of 1928 and the California State Sterilization Act of 1909 is so great that it continues to spark debates decades after they were repealed. The men, women and children who were sterilized in both Alberta and California were almost exclusively the socially vulnerable, such as young women, immigrants, and the mentally ill. Connecting

the circumstances in Alberta and California will give future historians and students a better idea of how good intentions can produce such harmful consequences.

Chapter One – How the Sterilization Programs Began

"When adequate measures are taken by a province to prevent an increase of its abnormal population, and when suitable facilities are employed to control existing cases, there ensues a considerable diminution of social distress and human suffering."
- Dr. Clarence Hincks

This chapter investigates how the sterilization laws came to pass in California and Alberta. Many men, women and organized interest groups helped to push the bills through in the early 20th century. By knowing the process of how these proposals became legal, historians can better understand how eugenics and sterilization surgery became a mainstream answer to society's problems.

Eugenicists in Alberta and California touted loudly that forced sterilization would benefit all of society by ridding North America of the mentally disabled or 'disturbed'. Another agenda soon developed from the information that eugenicists were pushing. Eugenicists agreed that sterilization would also cut spending costs for the governments, as fewer people would be incarcerated in state-run institutions and hospitals. For a dedicated eugenics advocate, the money saved was not the main issue. For politicians, however, lowered costs greatly increased their interest in eugenics. Politicians in both Alberta and California emphasized the financial benefit that eugenics offered their province and state.

The people of California were interested in eugenics and compulsory sterilization for economic reasons before the state of Indiana passed the first American sterilization bill in 1907. In 1903, Dr. Alden Gardner wrote a scathing depiction of California's mental health facilities. Five state hospitals were caring for over 5,000 patients, most for under 3 ½ cents per day, per patient, to clothe, feed, shelter, and

medicate them.[18] The facilities were overcrowded, underfunded and physicians and workers watched as the number of incoming patients climbed higher on a yearly basis.

To California's physicians, psychiatrists, and mental health workers, such as nurses, orderlies and social workers, sterilization provided solutions to many problems facing their facilities. Gardner suggested that the average duration of a person in a mental care facility was twelve years, and each person cost the California government $6,000 in 1903.[19] Alexandra Minna Stern discussed in *Eugenic Nation: Faults & Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* that many reformers, psychiatrists and even patients agreed that reproductive sterilization could be the path to an early parole and a method to save money for the state.[20]

Sterilization implemented for eugenic purposes would hopefully lower the rate of other 'mental deficients' being born and admitted to the five state hospitals at a later date. Additionally, physicians viewed sterilization as a bargaining measure. They believed that if certain non-violent inmates of prisons would agree to sterilization, they could be released into society and lower the cost of running the facilities.

In Stern's monograph, *Eugenic Nation*, she drew attention to why California embraced sterilization as enthusiastically as it did. The influx of pioneering and progressive Americans who settled in the vast land of the west coast at the turn of the 20th-century put their trust in scientific solutions to social problems.[21] Science in the early 1900s was rediscovering Mendelian genetics and heredity and these scientific breakthroughs were being applied to agriculture all over the United States. Progressive

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[18] Alden M Gardner, "State Hospital Care and Treatment of the Acute and Convalescing Insane," *California State Journal of Medicine,* vol. 1, no. 3 (1903): 77.
[19] Gardner, "State Hospital Care," 78.
[20] Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults & Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (University of California Press: Berkley, 2005), 100.
[21] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 85.

Californians, those who embraced new and evolving ideologies, such as environmentalism and social justice, concluded that if selective breeding improved livestock and vegetation, the same principles should be applied to humans.

American attitudes toward the arrival of tens of thousands of European, Asian and Mexican immigrants also played a role in California's eugenic laws. By 1900, the United States had already introduced restrictions on immigration from Asian and Latin American countries. Stern believed that California nativism led to the popularity of eugenics in general, and in combination with views of the importance of heredity in crime and social problems, negative eugenics and sterilization struck a chord with many Californians. [22]

Additionally, Stern stressed the importance of the wide variety of public groups that supported eugenics. Although the most outspoken Californians on the subject of sterilizations were physicians and psychiatrists, Stern discussed the "multilayered matrix of educational organizations, civic groups, business associations, medical societies, and philanthropies that subscribed to eugenic philosophies."[23] California's nativism, combined with an attraction to scientific methodology, formed a state that was ripe for eugenic ideals to take hold in 1909.

Although California did not pass the sterilization law until 1909, the government of California's interest in mental disease began in 1897 with the founding of the California State Commission in Lunacy. The Commission's purpose was to provide a single management force for the state mental hospitals that cared for and housed

[22] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 85.
[23] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 86.

hospital patients and prison inmates.[24] Its biennial reports on the conditions of the asylums kept detailed logs of fiscal use, incoming patients and their country of origin, as well as the patients who had died, usually from some sort of disease (consumption or diphtheria). Later reports included the surgical work done on the patients. In the 1921-1922 report of the State Commission in Lunacy, for example, each of the five mental hospitals performed more sterilization surgery than any other kind.[25]

Once the five state mental hospitals were under the same management in the late 1890s, it became easier for the psychiatrists and physicians who worked there to appeal for a sterilization law to be put in effect. The sterilization bill was first envisioned by secretary of the State Commission in Lunacy, F. W. Hatch.[26] The original design was to grant the medical superintendents of the state hospitals and prisons the ability to sterilize a patient or inmate.[27]

The California Sterilization Bill did not need much pressure to become a law, even though it gave the medical superintendents of state hospitals and prisons a tremendous amount of power. Hatch's bill was sponsored by Senator W. F. Price of Santa Rosa on February 8, 1909. The act passed through the Senate with only one opposing vote on March 16, 1909, and passed the House unanimously on March 22, 1909. Finally on April 26, 1909, Governor James Gillett approved the Sterilization Law.[28]

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[24] California Commission in Lunacy*, Biennial Report of the State Commission in Lunacy* (California State Print, 1917).
[25] California Commission in Lunacy, *Biennial Report of the State Commission in Lunacy* (California State Print, 1921): 59.
[26] Stern, *Eugenic Nation,* 99.
[27] Alexandra Minna Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health: Race, Immigration and Reproductive Control in Modern California," *American Journal of Public Health,* vol. 95, no. 7 (July 2005): 1129.
[28] Harry Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10B: Report of the Committee to Study and to Report on the Best Practical Means of Cutting Off the Defective Germ-Plasm in the American Population. II.The Legal,*

The law proclaimed that a medical superintendent of a state hospital or a general physician of a state prison could sterilize any inmate or patient, so long as it would be beneficial to their physical, moral or mental health.[29] However, the superintendent of a hospital or prison must first secure the consent from the General Superintendent of the California State Hospitals and the secretary of the state board of health. The law allowed for prisoners of state prisons to be sterilized without their consent if they had committed a sexual offence more than twice or any other offense more than three times, or had been sentenced to life in prison.[30] Medical superintendents could now sterilize patients and inmates for therapeutic, punitive and eugenic measures. Although the original law did not require consent to sterilize prison inmates, consent from a guardian was required for the sterilization of anyone in a mental institution.

Although there were no debates over the Sterilization Law when it was passed in 1909, the constitutionality was questioned soon after. In 1910, the California Attorney General, the Honourable U. S. Webb, and his deputy the Honourable R. C. Van Fleet wrote a letter to address the constitutionality of the law, at the request of F. W. Hatch, then the General Superintendent of the California State Hospitals.[31] Throughout the letter, Webb discussed degeneracy as a defect that cannot be cured and confirmed the right of the State of California to sterilize its residents:

> Considered, then, as a health measure, and as a rational and undoubted protection to society, without any elements of torture accompanying its execution, it appears to me that the sterilization of

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Legislative Administrative Aspects of Sterilization (Eugenics Record Office: Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, New York, 1914): 15.

[29] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 15.

[30] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 15.

[31] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 61.

> degenerates by the method which I have described would not violate our constitutional guarantee.[32]

In the 1914 *Bulletin* from the Eugenics Record Office in New York, which reported on the legal, legislative and administrative aspects of sterilization, author Harry Laughlin, secretary of the Committee, credited California with the best enforced sterilization law in the United States due to the Act's provision that allows the sterilizations to take place swiftly.[33] Hatch believed that the statute's success was due to sterilizations being performed for not only eugenic reasons, but for "the physical, moral and mental benefit of the patient."[34] Although Hatch may have believed that the benefit of sterilization would fall on the patient, it is clear that the government would reap the most benefit, due to the lowered costs from fewer patients in the state's mental hospitals.

By 1914, the California sterilization law had undergone changes. The statute was repealed in June of 1913, and a replacement law went into effect on August 10, 1913.[35] These changes were brought about because the original law was not considered to give broad enough power to the state. The Second Sterilization Law of California stated that before a patient or inmate could be released from any state hospital for the insane, the Commission in Lunacy can investigate his/her case, and sterilize the patient at the Commission's discretion.[36] In 1913, the government of California took away the need for patient or guardian consent.

The 1913 Amendment was not the final one to the Sexual Sterilization Bill. The state hospitals and prisons felt that the requirements of patients and inmates to be

[32] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 61.
[33] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 83.
[34] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 84.
[35] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 16.
[36] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 16.

eligible for sterilization were too narrow. Up until 1917, fewer than 200 patients were sterilized per year.[37] In 1917, however, the law was amended again to focus more on eugenic rationales for surgery. After the amendment, sterilization was recommended for any person with a "mental disease which may have been inherited and is likely to be transmitted to descendants," "various grades of feeblemindedness" or a "marked departure from normal mentality."[38] By 1921, 2248 people had been sterilized. Even before the progressive groups of the province of Alberta had began their campaign for eugenic laws, California had sterilized almost as many people as Alberta would throughout the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act's entire 44-year duration.

Eugenic ideas in Alberta took more time to become accepted by the government and the public. At a meeting of the Canadian Medical Association in Edmonton on May 13, 1912, Dr. J. G. Adami discussed the medical and scientific premises that suggested that how parents raised their children (nurture) had a much greater effect than heredity (nature). At this time, however, North America was awash with views that valued the importance of heredity and inherited influences. Dr. Adami therefore suggested that Albertans and Canadians examine these new ideas of the influence of heredity, since future generations of children were at risk of being born 'mentally unfit'.[39]

Seven years after Dr. Adami's lecture, one of the local newspapers, the *Edmonton Bulletin,* reported that the Secretary of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Dr. Clarence Hincks, would be visiting Alberta and expected to complete a survey of the 'feebleminded' in the province. [40] In November 1921, his findings and

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[37] Largent, *Breeding Contempt,* 82.
[38] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name," 1129.
[39] J.G. Adami, "Unto the Third and Fourth Generation: A Study in Eugenics," *Canadian Medical Association Journal,* vol. 2, no. 11 (November 1912): 957.
[40] "Specialist on Mental Disease to Visit Province,"*Edmonton Bulletin,* February 22, 1919, 1.

judgements were published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Hincks found a close connection between criminality and mental abnormality, and he believed that 30-50% of Alberta's criminals were mentally handicapped.[41] He concluded that mental asylums were not properly training those Albertans who fell into their care. Hincks argued that early training in normal social behaviour might lower anti-social behaviour, and allow for the parole of various prolonged patients.[42]

Canadians, especially Albertans, were anxious about the findings across Canada. Hincks had emphasized the large number of immigrants that populated Canada's mental institutions. In a 1923 issue of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, the editor praised the Western provinces for taking the threat of mental deficiency and immigration very seriously. Preventative medical attention was necessary to slow the spread of venereal diseases and the birth of unhealthy babies.[43] Although sterilization was not mentioned outright in this article, the eugenic discussion had begun in Canada.

The notion that non-Anglo Saxon immigrants were a large part of Alberta's mentally 'unfit' did not sit well with the majority of Albertans. The influx of immigrants had already, as settled Albertans viewed it, 'threatened' their employment and lifestyle. Assimilation was proposed prior to 1914, yet after the First World War, segregation and sterilization became the commonly suggested solutions to what Albertans felt was a mental health problem.[44] Although segregation had been previously viewed as effective, it was not believed to be a long term solution as it was expensive and, with the

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[41] C. M. Hincks, "Recent Progress of the Mental Hygiene Movement in Canada," *Canadian Medical Association Journal,* vol. 11, no. 11 (November 1921): 824.
[42] Hincks, "Recent Progress", 824.
[43] "The Problem of the Feebleminded," *Canadian Medical Association Journal,* vol. 13, no. 6 (June 1923): 444.
[44] Terry L. Chapman, "Early Eugenics Movement in Western Canada," *Alberta History,* vol. 25, no. 4 (Autumn 1977): 10.

discovery of hereditary factors, its successfulness was questioned. To the 1920s Alberta eugenicists, segregation meant that a 'mentally defective' individual would be forcefully kept in a hospital or institution until they were past their reproductive years. The cost to house, feed and clothe all these individuals would have been astronomical, as many sterilization advocates emphasized. In 1922, the Canadian Bureau of Social Research urged the sterilization of the 'mentally unfit' currently in the care of the government, either in hospitals or institutions. However, the Bureau concluded that while debates about sterilization should begin in earnest, Canadian public opinion, for reasons unknown, was not favourable yet.[45]

After Dr. Hincks and the Canadian National Council on Mental Hygiene published their findings in 1921, the idea of sterilization attracted the interest of numerous Progressive groups in Alberta. Hincks had declared that:

> [The mentally disabled] are rightly regarded as a social liability, and when neglected may contribute to criminality, vice and pauperism. When adequate measures are taken by a province to prevent an increase of its abnormal population, and when suitable facilities are employed to control existing cases, there ensues a considerable diminution of social distress and human suffering.[46]

Social Gospellers (Canadians who believed they could build a society based on Christian principles) and women's suffragists had previously advocated that scientific progress be applied to society.[47] In the early 1920s, the United Farmers of Alberta also got involved. In Bradford Rennie's *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm*

[45] Chapman, "Early Eugenics", 15.
[46] Timothy J. Christian, "The Mentally Ill and Human Rights in Alberta: A Study of the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act, 1973," (PhD Thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1973).
[47] Chapman, "Early Eugenics", 9.

Women of Alberta, *1909-1921,* he explained that the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) interest in eugenics sprang from fears that the healthiest and most able-bodied men were lost during the Great War and measures had to be taken to keep Alberta strong.[48]

The United Farmers of Alberta and the United Farm Women of Alberta became heavily involved in the fight for marriage restrictions and sterilizations to curb, what they viewed as the rising numbers of mentally disabled. Their concern was that the 'mentally unfit', if allowed to propagate, would hinder the development of Alberta as a province. Originally, the UFA and the UFWA called for the Alberta government to force institutionalization onto the mentally ill and 'feebleminded'. Another demand put forward was that all Albertans needed to apply for a health certificate before marriage, to lessen the birth rate of the mentally 'deficient'.[49] Although the marriage certificate law never passed, the UFA and the UFWA were undeterred and soon turned their sights to compulsory sterilization. Rennie suggested that the UFWA sponsored eugenics and sterilization due to racial issues with immigrants from eastern Europe, such as the Ukrainians and Polish, and due to class fears.[50] Although the UFWA may have suggested that sterilization would safeguard mentally handicapped young women from abuse, sterilization only protected women from pregnancies that the UFWA thought immoral and unnecessary. In 1924, the UFWA began a campaign to promote sterilization. At the 1925 annual meeting, the United Farm Women of Alberta declared their resolution: "That in view of the alarming increase in the mentally deficient, the danger thereof to

[48] Bradford James Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (University of Toronto Press, 2000): 119.
[49] Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 120.
[50] Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 120

the population, and the cost to the state, that sterilization be compulsory by law, as a means of stopping the morally deficient from reproducing their kind."[51]

In the years directly before the Sexual Sterilization Act of 1928 was passed in Alberta, many groups got involved in the debate. According to Jana Grekul, in her dissertation "The Social Construction of the Feebleminded Threat," the idea that problems such as criminality, alcoholism, epilepsy, in addition to mental illness, were hereditary gave reformers reason to consider sterilization over segregation.[52] Family physicians and psychiatrists, who had previously been relatively quiet on the matter, joined in the debate in 1927. Although some doctors felt that segregation was the more moral choice, as the body was left untouched and whole, others believed that after examining the points involved – practicality, cost, and quality of life – sterilization was a better decision.[53] Physicians were sure that neither sterilization nor segregation could totally prevent a mentally handicapped child from being born, yet they believed that sterilization was the most cost-effective solution. Saddled with these arguments, the progressive groups of Alberta and many of the family physicians and psychiatrists approached the government of Alberta and demanded a sterilization law be put in place.

The influence that the United Farm Women of Alberta held over the government was tremendous. Although the UFWA remained active throughout the 1920s, the United Farmers of Alberta had thrown its hat into the provincial government ring and emerged victorious after the 1921 election. In 1926, Premiere Brownlee led the

[51] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 9.
[52] Jana Grekul, "The Social Construction of the Feebleminded Threat: Implementation of the Sexual Sterilization Act in Alberta, 1929-1972," (PhD Thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 2002), 21.
[53] Editorial, "Mental Disease in Relation to Eugenics," *Canadian Medical Association Journal,* vol. 17, no. 8 (July 1927): 834.

UFA to its second majority government win. Their resolutions and lobbying pushed the Minister of Agriculture and Health, the Honourable George Hoadley, to introduce a sterilization bill on March 25, 1927. In Hoadley's words, the bill would "provide for the sexual sterilization of mentally deficients, which is necessary owing to the appalling growth of the mental defectives in the various provincial institutions."[54] Hoadley's bill did not receive a second reading in 1927. Due to the unclear nature of the bill and the crowded session, it was pulled from the 1927 schedule.[55] Hoadley vowed to reintroduce the bill the following year.

After the dismissal of the 1927 bill, Hoadley attempted to garner public support for sterilization. At the 1927 annual meeting of the United Farm Women of Alberta, Hoadley asked the women to drop their support of segregation as the cost would be too burdensome for the province of Alberta.[56] After Hoadley's impassioned speech, they vowed their support and commitment to the sterilization bill. On March 9, 1928, the *Edmonton Journal* released a list of other organizations and individual Albertans who had all agreed to publically endorse the sterilization bill. The list included the women's section of the Dominion Labour Party in Calgary, the Edmonton chapter of the Canadian Social Hygiene Council, the Local Council of Women, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.[57]

On February 23, 1928, the Honourable George Hoadley submitted the sterilization bill for a second time. The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported that even though the government ranks were evenly divided on both side of the issue, it was still passed

[54] "Sterilization Bill," *Edmonton Bulletin,* March 26, 1927, p.1.
[55] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 3.
[56] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 13.
[57] "Sterilization Act has Much Backing," *Edmonton Journal,* March 9, 1928, p. 1.

to a second reading.[58] The sterilization bill now had clearly defined boundaries. The operation could only be performed with the consent of the patient (or his/her guardian) in the institution.[59] A Eugenics Board was to be created, which was to consist of four members – two doctors and two lay people. At the time the bill was introduced, three out of the four members of the Eugenic Board had already been selected.[60]

Actions elsewhere were part of the discussion in Alberta. During the Legislative Assembly session, Hoadley called attention to the other provinces and states that were considering sterilization or that had already passed legislation. In 1928, British Columbia was considering a eugenics Act, as well as Ontario and Manitoba, although no province had passed a law yet. Directing attention towards the United States, Hoadley mentioned that twenty-three states had already passed sterilization laws, including California. California was a prime example for Alberta, according to Hoadley, because it had already sexually sterilized thousands of Californians.[61] This is an example of how information between Canada and the United States traveled and how the two countries influenced each other. Eugenicists in Alberta, such as Hoadley, were inspired by the government of California's dedication to their sterilization program, and believed that Alberta should attempt to emulate it.

As mentioned above, the Legislative Assembly was divided fairly evenly on the issue. After Hoadley had listed all the states that had passed a sterilization law, Liberal party member George H. Webster asked a burning question: Why had New York State repealed its legislation only nine years after its inception?[62] Although Hoadley admitted

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[58] "Sterilization Bill is Given 2nd Reading," *Edmonton Bulletin,* February 24, 1928, 1.
[59] *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 24, 1928, 1.
[60] *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 24, 1928, 1.
[61] *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 24, 1928, 1.
[62] *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 24, 1928, 1.

that he did not know (the court system of New York had ruled the law unconstitutional), this did not sway the resolute advocates who supported sterilization.[63]

The only UFA member that spoke out against the proposed legislation was Landas Joly from St. Paul. An article in the *Edmonton Journal* quotes him as strongly opposing the bill and lists numerous reasons why it should not be passed. He claimed:

> it was unfair, as it would not reach all mentally disabled people; that it will open the door to abuse; that it will not accomplish that for which it was intended; that it gives too much power to the Board which would be created, and finally that it offered mutilation as the price of liberty for the inmates of a mental hospital.[64]

Joly's arguments are interesting because they are contradictory. Although he disagrees with the surgery because it gives the Alberta Eugenics Board too much power, and mutilates the hospital patients, he also disapproves of the bill because it "would not reach all mentally disabled people." Joly most likely disagreed with the bill for a particular reason, perhaps in support of human rights, but listed all arguments he could come up with against the bill to appeal to a variety of people opposed to the bill. Despite firm opposition to the bill, it was given a second reading the following night, on February 24, 1928.

The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported on February 25, 1928, that despite resistance from the opposition parties, the UFA decided that the sterilization bill would proceed to the next stage.[65] Conservative member C. Y. Weaver protested to the assembly that no major body of medical opinion, such as the Canadian Medical Association or the

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[63] "Lengthy Discussion Ensues in House on Sterilization Bill," *Edmonton Journal,* February 24, 1928, 1.
[64] *Edmonton Journal*, February 24, 1928, 1.
[65] "Sterilization Bill Proceed to Committee," *Edmonton Bulletin,* February 25, 1928, 1.

American Medical Association, had unanimously agreed with the idea of subjecting citizens to sterilization.[66] Other complaints voiced about the bill concerned individual rights and liberties. Hoadley and the UFA government responded by questioning whether it was more humane to imprison all 'mental defectives' throughout their reproductive years.[67] Mr. Hoadley stated that "[i]f it is quantity of production of the human race that is required, then we don't need this Bill, but if we want quality, then it is a different matter."[68] The argument during this session became so heated that Premier Brownlee himself spoke in defence of the sterilization act. For Brownlee, Hoadley and most of the United Farmers of Alberta, sterilization was the lesser (and cheaper) of two necessary evils.

The passing of the sterilization bill to the third reading did not go unnoticed in Edmonton. Not only was there opposition from other political parties, some members of the public voiced their concerns. In a letter to the editor of the *Edmonton Journal* on February 28, 1928, Mrs. Tillie Phelan recounted her disgust and horror towards the bill. In a particularly gruesome passage, Mrs. Phelan wondered what would be the next step for Minister Hoadley. "Possibly Mr. Hoadley, in his desire for physical perfection, will bring in a bill next year that all children such as those suffering from infantile paralysis or any deformity, be taken to the high level bridge and thrown into the Saskatchewan."[69] Mrs. Phelan was appalled by the bill due to her Christian beliefs, but other letters to the

[66] *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 25, 1928, 1.
[67] *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 25, 1928, 1.
[68] Timothy Caulfield and Gerald Robertson, "Eugenic Policies in Alberta: From the Systematic to the Systemic?," *Alberta Law Review,* vol. 35, no. 1 (1996): 62.
[69] Tillie Phelan, "Sterilization: Letters to the Editor," *Edmonton Journal,* February 28, 1928, 22.

editor of the *Edmonton Bulletin* and the *Edmonton Journal* believed the government was pushing the bill forward to distract residents from the province's financial woes.[70]

On March 6, 1928, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta gave the Sexual Sterilization Act its third reading. The Liberals, the official opposition party, attempted to discredit the science behind sterilization and delay the passage of the bill. Premier Brownlee emphasized the need for Alberta to deal with those who were a menace to society.[71] The debate ran so long into the night that Liberal Leader Shaw questioned the haste of the UFA government.[72] Despite debating until well after midnight, the assembly voted and the third reading motion carried 31 ayes to 11 nays.[73]

The law took effect on March 21, 1928, as the Sexual Sterilization Act of Alberta. The Eugenic Board of Alberta was created at the same time. During 1929, the first year that the Eugenic Board was operational, board members examined and ultimately decided to sterilize four patients. The following year, thirty-six patients were sterilized and by 1931, the number had almost doubled to sixty-four.[74]

In the 1936 monograph *Eugenical Sterilization* by Antoine D'Eschambault, the sterilization laws of Alberta and California are thrown into comparison. The author D'Eschambault quoted George Hoadley, the former Minister of Agriculture and Health, as claiming that nearly three-hundred of the patients sterilized in Alberta had left the institutions, at a great relief to taxpayers.[75] Hoadley did not mention, however, that the Sexual Sterilization Act had cost Alberta over $25,000 since its inception with over

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[70] "Sterilization: Letter to the Editor," *Edmonton Bulletin,* February 27, 1928.
[71] Caulfield, "Eugenic Policies," 62.
[72] "Sexual Sterilization Bill Receives Third Reading In House," *Edmonton Journal,* March 7, 1928, 1.
[73] "Sterilization Bill Passes Third Reading," *Edmonton Bulletin,* March 7, 1928, 1.
[74] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 24.
[75] Antoine D'Eschambault, *Eugenical Sterilization* (Canadian Publishers Ltd: Winnipeg, Canada, 1937): 68.

$12,000 going to the surgeons, and $8,000 to the Eugenic Board for travel costs.[76] In his book, D'Eschambault noted that even though California had sterilized several thousand residents, at least one thousand still remained in the care of the institutions, some more than ten years after their surgery. D'Eschambault concluded that "the State of California is not as advanced as the Province of Alberta, where...they have found a way to send all the sterilized defectives back to their homes."[77] Hoadley boasted that sterilization surgery allowed mental patients to return to their homes "without the risk of violent or sexual behaviour" and also eased the financial burden that institutional segregation cost the Alberta government.

Neither Hoadley nor D'Eschambualt provided any evidence for their claims that every patient sterilized from 1929 to 1936 had been sent back to their original homes. Considering that some of the Albertans sterilized were under permanent guardianship of the province, they had no outside homes in which to return. Similar to Alberta, California also sterilized many wards of the state. When the sterilization bill was proposed to the California government, eugenic advocates also emphasized that sterilization would lead to the parole of many inmates and patients around California. As we have seen above, this was not always the outcome.

Although California passed the sterilization act more quickly and without as many difficulties as in Alberta, both acts were passed on economic as well as scientific grounds, and both acts were redone relatively soon after their enactment. California broadened the range of justifications for people who fell under the jurisdiction of the act and eliminated the requirement of consent of the patient. In 1937, Dr. W. W. Cross, the Social Credit Minister of Health of Alberta, proposed that the Sexual Sterilization Act of

[76] D'Eschambault, *Eugenical Sterilization*, 69.
[77] D'Eschambault, *Eugenical Sterilization*, 70.

Alberta also reduce its requirements for consent.[78] During the nine years that the act had been in place, 400 Albertans were sterilized, but Cross believed that the number should have been 2,000. The amendment of 1937 gave the Eugenics Board of Alberta the right to sterilize any 'mental defectives' if the entire Board unanimously agreed.[79] The government of Alberta reacted positively to an amendment that would cut costs for the province during the Great Depression because sterilized people could be released from institutions and less people in institutions cost the government less money.[80]

The requirements of consent changed throughout both California's and Alberta's programs. California doctors needed the consent of the patient or a legal guardian to sterilize a patient at one of the state hospitals when the law was first implemented in 1909, although consent was not needed to sterilize prison inmates. The doctors were also required to have the General Superintendent of the California State Hospitals sign off on the surgery. After 1913, California removed the need for the patient or legal guardian's consent in the case of patients in the state hospitals, although it was still necessary to receive permission from the General Superintendent. In Alberta, patient or legal guardian consent was a requirement for any sterilization, as well as the approval of the Eugenics Board, until an amendment in 1943 removed that requirement.

As California and Alberta broadened the pool of potential patients and inmates who could be sterilized without restrictions, both places continued to sing the praises of sterilizations for eugenic and financial reasons. Superintendent Hatch believed that there was a drastic improvement in the mental and general health of all Californians who underwent sterilization surgery. He declared that the sterilized men were sound

[78] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 25.
[79] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 26.
[80] "Sterilization Amendment," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 1, 1937, 1.

enough to leave the hospitals, and the women were protected against the nervous strain of unwanted pregnancy.[81] However, many of the men and women involved in the institutional sterilization of their residents stood to gain from the sterilization law. For example, Dr. Hatch had risen from the secretary of the Commission on Lunacy to the General Superintendent of the California State Hospitals in a few short years.

Certain individual men were heavily involved in the beginning of the sexual sterilization acts. In California, many of the men who called for eugenic action were family doctors, mental health care workers and psychiatrists. Additionally, university academics, such as Dr. David Starr Jordan, ichthyologist and president of Stanford University, were a driving force for eugenics. In his work "Prenatal Influences," published in the *Journal of Heredity*, Jordan propagated the theory that like begets like. He wrote that bad fruit is born of bad trees and eugenics must be used the stop the spread of 'mental defectives'.[82]

Although the Human Betterment Foundation in California was not involved in the inception of the California sterilization bill, it became important to the eugenics movement during the 1930s, as did its founders, E. S. Gosney and Paul Popenoe. Gosney, a lawyer, and Popenoe, a biologist, published Popenoe's research on California eugenics called *Sterilization for Human Betterment: A Summary of Results of 6,000 Operations in California, 1909-1929* in 1929.[83] Gosney remained active in eugenics until his death in 1942, while Popenoe turned his interest in eugenics into a lucrative career of marriage counselling and opened the American Institute of Family Relations.

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[81]Allison C. Carey, "Gender and Compulsory Sterilization Programs in America: 1907-1950," *Journal of Historical Sociology,* vol. 11, no. 1 (March 1998): 79.
[82] David Starr Jordan, "Prenatal Influence," *Journal of Heredity* v. 5, no. 1 (1914): 39.
[83]E. S. Gosney, *Sterilization for Human Betterment: A summary of Results of 6000 operations in California, 1909-1929* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 1.

The true driving force behind the sterilization act in California was Dr. F. W. Hatch. In the 1934 edition of the *Journal of Heredity*, Paul Popenoe wrote a glowing eulogy in Hatch's memory, ten years after his death. Popenoe described the sterilization bill as a "permanent monument" to Hatch, who had been in charge of California's mental hospitals for almost 25 years.[84] Dr. Hatch, along with the other medical superintendents of the state, judged and doled out the sterilization edicts until his death on February 24, 1924. Popenoe felt that Hatch deserved the credit for California performing more sterilization surgeries than all the other states combined.[85] Without Dr. F.W. Hatch, California may have taken a different route with its sterilization legislation. Hatch was responsible for the conception of the sterilization bill in 1909, and ran the eugenic program for 15 years, sterilizing thousands of Californians during that time.

Unlike California, Alberta did not have a single standout eugenicist during the development of the Alberta Sterilization Act, but rather a few men who were dedicated to the cause. Dr. C. M. Hincks helped establish Alberta's interest in sterilization as an option for eliminating 'mental defectives'. Hincks was an admirer and enthusiast of American eugenics and believed that the Canadian feebleminded needed to be segregated or sterilized like their American counterparts.[86] Once Hincks informed Alberta that the feebleminded would soon overrun the province, numerous progressive groups, most notably the United Farmers of Alberta and the United Farm Women of Alberta, began their campaigns for eugenic legislation.

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[84]Paul Popenoe, "The Progress of Eugenical Sterilization," *Journal of Heredity,* vol. 25, no. 1, (1934): 3.

[85] Popenoe, "The Progress of Eugenical Sterilization," 3.

[86] C. M. Hincks, "Mental Hygiene and Departments of Health," *American Journal of Public Health,* vol. 9, no. 5, (May 1919): 358.

The Honourable George Hoadley was a former Opposition Party Leader for the Alberta Conservative Party, who defected to the UFA in 1920. Hoadley introduced the bill to the Alberta Legislature twice, and his efforts were finally rewarded on March 21, 1928, when the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act became law. Hoadley's persistence was the motivation behind the sterilization act and the Eugenics Board of Alberta.

Chosen by the government of Alberta to be the first Chairman of the Eugenics Board was University of Alberta professor J.M. MacEachran. MacEachran, arguably, had the biggest influence on sterilizations in Alberta, and will be examined in detail later in this thesis. As the founder of both the psychology and philosophy departments at the University of Alberta, as well as the co-founder of the Canadian Psychological Association, MacEachran was a well-respected academic with a deep interest in eugenics. Due to his interest in eugenics and his support for sterilization, MacEachran began his role as Chairman of the Board in 1928. He kept this position for 37 years, retiring in 1965 at the age of 88, twenty years after he retired from teaching at the University of Alberta. MacEachran held a unique position in Alberta's sterilization history. Most of the men who brought about the Sexual Sterilization Act of Alberta did not remain involved after the law was passed. MacEachran was both an enthusiastic supporter of the original bill and the subsequent Act's enforcer.

California and Alberta sterilized the largest number of residents in their respective countries for both financial and eugenic purposes. Each place had one particular politician that helped push the sterilization bill through the government and powerful men backed it throughout the duration of the legislative process. California, however, was involved in punitive sterilization for incarcerated men and women, in addition to sterilization of the mentally unfit for eugenic purposes. Alberta maintained a

single goal throughout the 44-year duration of the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act: to sterilize as many mentally 'defective' patients in the system, for their benefit and the benefit of society. The next chapter will examine the men who were heavily and primary involved with the California and Alberta Eugenic movement. Through various means, these men contributed to the narrative of eugenics in North America.

Chapter Two – Who Influenced the Sterilization Programs

"Since the state must assume most of the load of responsibility in connection with its defective children, it surely is justified in adopting reasonable measures to protect itself against their multiplication." – J. M. MacEachran

This chapter examines six prominent eugenicists who worked with or for the eugenics programs in Alberta or California. It identifies two influential businessmen who settled in California and one marriage counsellor who held sway over much of middle-class America during the 1950s. It also analyzes two physicians, a Californian and an Albertan, who had different levels of control over sterilization surgery and an academic whose life's work was dedicated to eugenics in Alberta. Ezra Gosney, Charles M. Goethe and Paul Popenoe were colleagues at the Human Betterment Foundation in Pasadena, California, and throughout the 1930s and 1940s their generous donations kept the foundation afloat. Dr. Fred Butler, superintendent at the Sonoma State Home and Dr. Leonard le Vann at the Provincial Training School in Red Deer, Alberta, held similar positions within their institutions, yet they had very different levels of power over compulsory sterilization. Finally, J. M. MacEachran, a professor of philosophy and psychology at the University of Alberta, influenced compulsory sterilization in Alberta through his work on the Eugenics Board.

Although all six became influential in the eugenics movement, there was no single path that they followed. There was also no specific career choice for a person interested in becoming involved in eugenics. Some of these men studied agriculture and heredity, others the mind and body. This chapter will uncover the various careers and callings that gave these six men an unprecedented influence over institutionalized sterilization in Alberta and California. Not only did the men vary in their careers paths and ultimate role in the eugenics movement, they also held different aspirations and

ambitions for eugenics in North America. This demonstrates the absolutely pervasive nature of eugenics support in North America in the first half of the twentieth century.

As other historians, such as Wendy Kline and Alexandra Minna Stern, have found, no two people took the same trajectory to becoming influential in American eugenics. Many were respected scientists, such as Charles Davenport and David Jordan Starr, who became well known for their eugenic beliefs. Others, like Harry H. Laughlin and Madison Grant, were businessmen that were drawn to eugenics through various interests. Many historians have done extensive research into how prominent American eugenicists became involved in the movement in the United States.

Very few historians, however, have examined how Canadian and more specifically, Alberta eugenicists came into their positions of power. Angus McLaren, author of *Our Own Master Race*, investigated some unique Canadian eugenicists: Helen MacMurchy, the Ontario physician who promoted eugenics as an integral part of public health; William Hutton, the progressive medical reformer from Toronto; and Emily Murphy, the first female magistrate in Canada and also a vocal advocate for the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act.[87] *Our Own Master Race* was released in 1990, and over twenty years later, few monographs have been published that touch upon Alberta eugenics.

This chapter gathered evidence from primary sources and the secondary research done by earlier historians. Much of the primary information concerning the California eugenicists can only be found in small archives in California, such as the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California, Berkeley, and the archival library at Sacramento State. Therefore, I found it necessary to rely on secondary materials done by historians or other academics for some of the information on

[87] Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1990): 30, 85, 84.

California. Fortunately, working in Edmonton, Alberta, has allowed me to access many archives and primary sources concerning Alberta eugenics at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the University of Alberta Archives.

Using both primary and secondary resources, I demonstrate that neither Alberta nor California eugenicists came into their positions from the same route. Additionally, by examining their roles within the sterilization programs, I demonstrate that a 'eugenicist' did not have only *one* meaning. A eugenicist was not only a physician who performed the sterilization surgery, or a psychologist who deemed a person 'mentally unfit'. Even when the roles of the men were similar, such as the leaders of institutions like Dr. Butler and Dr. le Vann, there was a great deal of variety when it came to power, theory, technique and motivation.

This chapter examines Alberta and Dr. J. M. MacEachran and his academic influences first. MacEachran's connection to the University of Alberta in Edmonton was remarkably parallel to C.M. Goethe's connection to Sacramento State University in California. After considering the impact of the two men on their respective universities, I investigate Goethe's partner in the Human Betterment Foundation (HBF), Ezra Gosney. Gosney and Goethe hired Paul Popenoe, the future California marriage counsellor, to conduct research for the HBF in the 1920s. Popenoe ultimately became a central figure in California eugenics and eugenically approved marriages across North America. Finally, I examine the two physicians who actually performed some of the sterilizations: Dr. Fred Butler at the Sonoma State Home in California and Dr. Leonard le Vann at the Provincial Training School in Alberta. Through the investigation into the lives of the six eugenicists, I demonstrate that there was not one definitive career that allowed control over the

fertility of people in a province or state, but many different occupations worked together.

In Alberta, one important job was the Chairman of the Eugenics Board. This position was held by Dr. J. M. MacEachran for thirty-seven years. The Alberta eugenics movement was on a different trajectory than California. Although the sterilizations per capita were similar during the 1930s and 1940s, Alberta began its program two decades later than California and continued to sterilize residents in large numbers long after California had scaled back its efforts.

MacEachran had a diverse education before he became Chairman of the Eugenics Board. MacEachran served as Chairman from its inception in 1929 until his retirement in 1965. For 37 years, MacEachran governed the Eugenics Board, signing sterilization orders and changing the lives of thousands of Albertans. Prior to becoming the Chairman of the Board, MacEachran had the good fortune to study under some of North America's and Europe's leading professors at the turn of the twentieth century.

I believe that MacEachran's mentors helped inspire and shape his later work on the Alberta Eugenics Board. After finishing high school, MacEachran attended Queen's University in the 1890s. He received his Master's of Arts degree in Mental and Moral Philosophy in 1902, and stayed on for several years as an assistant to Dr. John Watson, the famed Canadian philosopher.[88] He spent the rest of the decade travelling and studying across Europe. Two years were spent studying under Wilhelm Max Wundt at the University of Leipzig, earning his PhD in psychology in 1909.[89] Paris was next, where he studied sociology at the Sorbonne under Émile Durkheim and took classes with Alfred Binet. MacEachran then travelled to Edmonton at the end of 1909 to accept the

[88] N/A, "J. M. MacEachran Obituary", *New Trails*, (Winter 1972): 1.
[89] N/A, "J. M. MacEachran Obituary", 1.

position as head of the department of Philosophy and Psychology at the newly founded University of Alberta.[90]

I believe MacEachran's time in universities across Ontario, Germany and France greatly influenced his ideas on philosophy, psychology, ethics and eugenics. The first large influence on his academic life was his professor at Queen's University, John Watson. Watson was appointed the Chair of Logic, Metaphysics and Ethics at Queen's University in the 1872. Watson's philosophy, called Speculative Idealism, became well known in academic circles in Canada.[91] His theories of moral philosophy can be seen reflected in his pupil, J. M. MacEachran. Watson believed, on a basic level, that morality meant acting rationally.[92] According to Watson, "...the sole authority [man] can rationally obey is the law of his own reason."[93] I believe MacEachran displayed such behaviour during his time as Chair of the Eugenics Board.

In Watson's theory, there is no conflict between an individual's needs and societal interests as rationality dictates that they would be one and the same.[94] During MacEachran's time a Chairman of the Eugenics Board, he often made what he believed were rational choices: sterilizing a 'defective' person would benefit the whole of society, as well as the individual.

After MacEachran left Queen's University, he then spent several years studying and completing his Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Leipzig. There he became a student of Wilhelm Max Wundt, a German physician, psychologist, philosopher and the father of experimental psychology. Some of Wundt's works, such as *Principles of*

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[90] N/A, "J. M. MacEachran Obituary", 1.
[91] Sibley, "*Northern Spirits,*" 40.
[92] Sibley, "*Northern Spirits,*" 65.
[93] John Watson, *Outline of Philosophy* (Glasgow:Maclehose, 1908): 229.
[94] Watson, *Outline of Philosophy,* 229.

Physiological Psychology, are considered fundamental to the study of psychology in 2012. At the University of Leipzig in 1879, Wundt created the first recognized laboratory devoted to experimental psychology. When MacEachran arrived in 1907, Wundt was at the peak of his popularity, regularly teaching classes of 500 or more students.[95]

In his experimental psychology laboratory, Wundt identified mental disorders, abnormal behaviour and brains that had been damaged due to disease or physical harm.[96] MacEachran would encounter all three of these mental and brain injury problems while serving on the Eugenics Board. His time studying under Wundt gave MacEachran invaluable insight into mental disorders. Whether Wundt would have approved of how MacEachran used this information is not known.

MacEachran's next professor, Émile Durkheim, was also influenced by Wundt. Jan Jacob de Wolf, author of "Wundt and Durkheim: A Reconsideration of a Relationship" believed that Wundt's 1886 piece "Ethik" had a deep influence on Durkheim's ideas on morality.[97] Durkheim wrote often on the effects of education and laws on individuals and social integration.[98] Durkheim's beliefs about society and how humans integrate themselves may have influenced how MacEachran viewed the patients presented for sterilization consideration to the Alberta Eugenics Board.

Finally, MacEachran also studied under Alfred Binet at the Sorbonne. Binet was the creator of the Binet-Simon scale, commonly referred to as the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test. After spending time as a researcher in a neurological clinic, Binet became the director of the Laboratory of Physiological Psychology at the Sorbonne in 1894. In 1904,

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[95] Jan Jacob De Wolf, "Wundt and Durkheim: A Reconsideration of a Relationship," *Anthropos,* (11987): 1.
[96] Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Wilhelm Max Wundt", http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wilhelm-wundt, accessed December 4, 2011.
[97] De Wolf, "Wundt and Durkheim," 2.
[98] Peyre, "The Man, His Time," 12.

Binet put his knowledge of intelligence and brain function to work for La Société Libre pour l'Etude Psychologique de l'Enfant.[99] Along with his research partner, Theodore Simon, he created a mental scale that would identify young children who would benefit from alternate or additional education.[100]

MacEachran studied under Binet in 1909, shortly before Binet published his third revision of the scale in 1911. The Binet-Simon scale was used by the Eugenics Board of Alberta to determine the intelligence of the children who were being considered for sterilization. By the 1960s, the Binet-Simon scale's usefulness was being questioned, even while it was still being used by the Board. In K. G. McWhirter and J. Weijer's 1969 article, "The Alberta Sterilization Act: A Genetic Critique," they outlined some basic flaws of the scale. At that time, mental deficiency was defined by the Alberta Eugenics Board as any person with an IQ lower than 70.[101] However, the results of the test were widely variable in interpretations.

MacEachran came back to Canada in 1909 and began his post at the University of Alberta. During his time at the University, MacEachran introduced new courses that were influenced by his time abroad: experimental psychology, comparative psychology, and abnormal psychology. In 1911, the University of Alberta began issuing a Bachelor of Arts degree and Master of Arts degree in Psychology.[102]

Once MacEachran was appointed Chairman of the Eugenics Board in 1928, he began traveling across Alberta, delivering speeches to various groups, such as chapters of the United Farm Women's Association, to promote his sterilization cause. At a UFWA

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[99] Wolf, *Alfred Binet,* 160.
[100] Wolf, *Alfred Binet,* 162.
[101] K.G McWhirter and J. Weijer, "The Alberta Sterilization Act: A Genetic Critique," *The University of Toronto Law Journal*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Summer 1969): 426.
[102] University of Alberta, Department of Psychology, "Department History," http://www.psych.ualberta.ca/aboutus/history.php, accessed December 4, 2011.

meeting in May of 1932, MacEachran clearly voiced his opinion on those he viewed as mentally unfit:

> We should endeavour to get away from a very costly form of sentiment and give more attention to raising and safeguarding the purity of the race. We allow men and women of defective intelligence or of these criminal tendencies to have children. There is one remedy for such eventualities and we fortunately have begun to make use of it in Alberta – although not yet nearly extensively enough. This is the Alberta Sterilization Act. Since the state must assume most of the load of responsibility in connection with its defective children, it surely is justified in adopting reasonable measures to protect itself against their multiplication.[103]

In this speech excerpt, MacEachran voiced his true feelings about the Alberta sterilization program. It was to safeguard the 'normal' Canadians from the 'abnormal': the immigrants, the mentally disabled, and the criminal. Nowhere does he mention any benefit to the children themselves.

Even after MacEachran retired from the University of Alberta in 1945, he continued on as Chairman of the Board for another two decades, until he was well into his eighties. MacEachran took his meticulous work and study ethic to his duties as Chairman. Although in the early days of the Board, one case could take up to a half day to complete, by the 1950s and 1960s, the Board could make a judgement in only a few minutes.[104] It is unknown why this dramatic change in time occurred, although I speculate that after years of reviewing patient files, MacEachran began to believe he

[103] J. M MacEachran, "Crime and Punishment," *The Press Bulletin* (May 6, 1932): 3.
[104] Heather Pringle, "Alberta Barren," *Saturday Night,* vol. 112, no. 5 (June 1997): 35.

could accurately diagnose and judge a child in a short span of time. However, it could simply be that he no longer cared.

MacEachran died in 1971, while the Alberta Sterilization Act was still in place. As a founding father of the Philosophy and Psychology departments, two scholarships, a lecture series and a department library were all named for him posthumously. During the 1990s, however, some professors at the University of Alberta, such as Dr. Douglas Wahlsten, began to agitate for the removal of MacEachran's name from the University. After several years and committees, the Department of Psychology decided to continue issuing awards and scholarships in MacEachran's name, since it was his estate which funds two of the scholarships.[105] The Department of Philosophy, however, decided to cease awarding honours in MacEachran's name in 1998. Both departments received criticism from other departments and the public for their decisions. The Department of Philosophy was accused of attempting to air-brush or re-write history, while the Psychology Department faced disapproval for continuing to accept money from the family, given current critique of MacEachran.[106]

The University of Alberta let the individual departments decide how to move forward with the dilemma over how to respond to changing views of MacEachran. Other universities, public schools and public institutions in North America have also faced re-christenings after their namesakes slowly morphed into controversial historical figures. The California State University, Sacramento ("Sacramento State"), was put in this position after the death of its founding father and lead benefactor, Charles M. Goethe.

[105] Kelly Torrance, "The Sterilization of History," *Alberta Report,* vol. 24, no. 47, (November 3, 1997): 1.
[106] Torrance, "The Sterilization," 3.

A contemporary of MacEachran, Goethe came from a successful Sacramento family that owned a bank and real estate business.[107] Although he went to law school and passed the bar in 1900, Goethe never practiced law, and instead joined his father's businesses. He became even more influential in Sacramento in 1903 when he married Mary Glide, and joined one of the wealthiest farming families in town.[108]

As a lifelong advocate of positive eugenics through 'better breeding' principles, Goethe also supported negative eugenics and immigration restrictions. He founded the Immigration Study Commission in the early 1920s, to prevent an increase of immigrants from Mexico and Asia.[109] He convinced the Commonwealth Club of California, a large public affairs forum, to create a eugenics section. Along with E. S. Gosney in 1929, he founded and financially supported the Human Betterment Foundation, the West Coast's answer to the Eugenics Record Office on the East Coast. Additionally, in 1933, he founded the Eugenics Society of Northern California along with Eugene H. Pitts. Goethe's office at the Capital National Bank served as the society's head office, and the Eugenics Society of Northern California published eugenic pamphlets to encourage white Californians to increase the number of children they had.[110] While he was not involved in the day-to-day operations of all the different societies that he supported, he was able to influence the direction of their research through financial support and communication.

Unlike MacEachran, Goethe vocally supported the sterilization and eugenic programs of Nazi Germany during the 1930s. While many other eugenicists were

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[107] Stern, *Eugenic Nation,* 136.
[108] Tony Platt, "Engaging the Past: Charles M. Goethe, American Eugenics, and Sacramento State University," *Social Justice,* vol. 32, no. 2 (2005): 19.
[109] Platt, "Engaging the Past," 19.
[110] California State University, "Charles M. Goethe: His Life and Eugenic Vision," http://digital.lib.csus.edu/exhibits/goethe/eugenics.htm, accessed December 4, 2011.

withdrawing their support by 1934, Goethe visited Germany and maintained his initial impressions that the program was "administered wisely, and without racial cruelty."[111] Goethe's interest in the Nazi program stemmed from his belief in the superiority of the Nordic race and his fear that Nordic heritage would soon disappear with the influx of heterogeneity. Even after the horrors of the Second World War and the Holocaust were revealed to the world, Goethe continued to support white supremacist organizations throughout the world because they were promoting the 'Nordic race'. [112]

In addition to bankrolling many eugenic societies in California during the first half of the twentieth century, Goethe founded California State University, Sacramento, in 1947. Goethe was a generous benefactor to the school during his lifetime, and left a substantial donation upon his death. As the founding father of the university, he was personally involved in the university by giving lectures, setting up various student scholarships, serving as the school's first chairman and distributing his eugenic society's pamphlets in the bookstore.[113] Upon his death in 1966, he left most of his substantial estate to the University, as well as his residence and his personal library of eugenic literature.[114] In that decade, the Goethe name was a regular sight around Sacramento. In addition to his residence and an arboretum at the school, many public spaces, such as a middle school and a county park, bore his name. After Goethe's death in 1966, the Governor of California, Edmund G. Brown, mourned his passing in the city newspaper, claiming that Goethe's life was dedicated to the betterment of mankind. [115]

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[111] Platt, "Engaging the Past," 19.
[112] Platt, "Engaging the Past," 20.
[113] Platt, "Engaging the Past," 21.
[114] Chloe S. Burke and Christopher J. Castaneda, "The Public and Private History of Eugenics: An Introduction," *The Public Historian,* vol. 29, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 15.
[115] Burke, "The Public and Private History," 16.

In the early 2000s, Tony Platt, a professor of Social Work at Sacramento State, began to investigate his university's relationship with its founding father. In a report written in 2004, Platt maintained that during Goethe's lifetime, Sacramento State ignored his racist and eugenic theories as it continued to receive his money. After Goethe's death, the university had slowly and quietly attempted to dismantle his legacy. In 1970, Goethe's substantial eugenic library was sold without any bill of sales or records. When Platt inquired about the sale, an anonymous administrator told him that the university no longer wanted the books around given their racist nature. Additionally, thousands of letters and other pieces of correspondence disappeared after being loaned to Goethe's personal friend, Rodger Bishton, for the purpose of producing a biography. Furthermore, no biography was ever written. [116]

Sacramento State continued its mission to purge Goethe's memory from the university campus into the next century. Goethe's personal residence, long known as the Goethe House, was renamed the Julia Morgan House in 2000 after the prominent California architect who designed the home.[117] Any scholarships bearing his name had long been removed. In 2005, Sacramento State removed the last overtly visible trace of Goethe by renaming the C. M. Goethe Arboretum the "University Arboretum." In October 2005, the university hosted a symposium designed to assess the legacy of eugenics at Sacramento State and throughout California.[118] Included in that symposium was the exhibit "Charles M. Goethe: His Life and Eugenic Vision," which is now online in a digital version.[119]

[116] Platt, "Engaging the Past," 24.
[117] Burke, "The Public and Private History," 16
[118] Burke, "The Public and Private History," 1.
[119] California State University, "Charles M. Goethe".

Like MacEachran, Goethe was posthumously punished by the university he helped build. Although the events that transpired after their deaths were comparable, MacEachran and Goethe became involved with their respective universities in different manners. MacEachran, a lifelong academic, was promoted to his position at the University of Alberta due to his scholarly research. He certainly endorsed eugenic ideas to his students during his tenure at the school, yet it was his position on the Alberta Eugenics Board which gave him his influence over the sterilization program in Alberta. As the founding father and original chairman of Sacramento State, Goethe influenced students through his eugenic lectures and pamphlets that were distributed throughout campus. However, it was through his work at the Human Betterment Foundation and the Eugenics Society of Northern California that Goethe had his greatest influence over the eugenic movement. Through these societies, Goethe and his colleges released countless pamphlets, research papers, and opinion articles to persuade the California public that sterilization was a kinder alternative to segregation and should continue to be enforced.

Goethe's primary partner in the Human Betterment Foundation was Ezra Seymour Gosney. An attorney by trade, he moved to Pasadena, California, in 1905 and began running a 320-acre citrus ranch.[120] He also became an active businessman in the Southern California area. He was the director of the Security First National Bank of Los Angeles, and worked extensively with the Boy Scouts of America. Like so many men and women in the early twentieth century, Gosney was intrigued by eugenics. To satisfy a lifelong curiosity, he became a member of the American Eugenics Society, the American

[120] Fred Hogue, "Social Eugenics," *Los Angeles Times,* (August 8, 1937): I, p. 30.

Social Hygiene Society, the American Genetics Society and the Foreign Society for Human Betterment during the 1920s. [121]

Through his business and societal dealings in California throughout the 1920s, Gosney met and befriended Goethe. Then, in 1929, Gosney and Goethe helped found the Human Betterment Foundation and began a close working relationship. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* in April of 1929 introduced the Human Betterment Foundation as an organization with broad powers under California law, and whose aim was to perform preventative work instead of remedial.[122] Although the article did not mention sterilization outright, 'preventative' work most likely refers to the surgeries performed at California prisons and state mental hospitals.

Gosney and Goethe were forthcoming about their initial support for the Nazi regime and its sterilization program. Goethe travelled throughout Germany during the 1930s and agreed with the tactics that the Germans were using on their populations. Upon his return, Goethe was concerned that California was falling behind as a eugenic leader, as the Germans had swiftly overtaken the number of sterilizations done in California. "Germany in a few months outdistanced California's sterilization world record of a quarter-century. … We must study Germany's methods."[123] Even after the Nazi government began to openly use violence against the Jewish population, Goethe remained impressed by their policies. He wrote to a friend in the Nazi government in 1938: "I regret that my fellow countrymen are so blinded by propaganda just at present

[121]Hogue, "Social Eugenics," I 30.
[122] N/A "Super-Race Fixed as Goal," *Los Angeles Times, (*April 17, 1929): 14.
[123] Chrisanne Beckner, "Darkness on the Edge of Campus," *Sacramento News and Review,* (February 19, 2004): 1.

that they are not reasoning out regarding the very fine work which the splendid eugenicists of Germany are doing."[124]

While in Germany, Goethe corresponded with Gosney, describing how Gosney's work with the Human Betterment Foundation had played a large role in shaping German eugenics. Goethe wrote to his partner Gosney in 1938 that he wished Gosney to "carry this thought for the rest of your life, that you have really jolted into action a great government of 60 000 000 people."[125] Gosney died a few years after, in 1942, perhaps thankfully before he came to know about the horrors that followed the German eugenic program that Gosney had inspired.

Gosney represents another way in which North American eugenicists were directly involved in negative eugenics. In addition to being a wealthy businessman, Gosney was the head of the Human Betterment Foundation, which produced 'scientific' research to prove the positive benefits of sterilization. Together with Paul Popenoe, the Foundation's main researcher during the 1930s, they published *Sterilization for Human Betterment: A Summary of Results of 6,000 Operations in California,* in 1929. A decade later, the two released *Twenty-Eight Years of Sterilization in California.* It was these books, along with the innumerable pamphlets produced by the Human Betterment Foundation that inspired eugenicists across North America, and specifically the Nazi government in Germany.[126]

The Human Betterment Foundation's researcher, Popenoe (1888-1979), became a looming eugenics figure in California. He did not begin his career in eugenics research, however. Born in Kansas in 1888, Popenoe moved to California in his teens. His father,

[124] Beckner, "Darkness on the Edge," 1.
[125] Kühl, *The Nazi Connection*, 58.
[126] Kühl, *The Nazi Connection*, 43.

Frederick Oliver Popenoe, was a wealthy businessman and owned a company that introduced avocados to California.[127] Popenoe was employed by his father as an agricultural explorer and he travelled the globe collecting date palms to bring home to his father's nursery, West India Gardens, in Pasadena. His first book was about agriculture, entitled *Date Growing in the New and Old Worlds,* and it was published in 1913. [128]

Studying and working in the agricultural field piqued his interest in heredity. Although Popenoe did not have an extensive academic background he edited the well known *Journal of Heredity* from 1913 to 1917. His interest in heredity also lead to his interest in marriage counselling, a passion that would inspire most of his life's work. Popenoe was a unique historical figure, as he promoted positive eugenics, as well as forced sterilization as a part of negative eugenics. "'I began to realize that if we were going to promote a sound population', he explained, 'we would not only have to get the right kind of people married, but we would have to keep them married.'" [129]

However, before Popenoe threw himself whole-heartedly into marriage and family counselling, he worked extensively to expand sterilization in California. With his background as editor of the *Journal of Heredity*, he co-authored the book *Applied Eugenics* in 1918. When the HBF was founded in 1929, Gosney asked Popenoe to lead the foundation's research, due to their previous work together. The foundation was devised to promote surgical sterilization through scientific research on its effects on American society. The first publication, *Sterilization for Human Betterment*, showered

[127] Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization and Modern Marriage in the USA: The Strange Career of Paul Popenoe," *Gender and History,* vol. 13, no. 2 (August 2001): 303.
[128] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 303.
[129] Paul Popenoe, quoted in Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 303.

glowing reviews on the sterilization movement thus far.[130] Gosney and Popenoe listed three reasons for sterilizations: personal, social and eugenic. They also called for the superintendents of the state hospitals and prisons to increase the number of men and women being sterilized.

Although Popenoe maintained a hard line on the subject of sterilization, he believed that the surgery was for individual protection and not a personal penalty. He argued that long-term eugenic policies would save money by reducing welfare costs and prevent the hardships that befall a child that "could not be a self-sustaining, respectable citizen."[131] Whether or not Popenoe truly believe that sterilization was in the best interests of the inmates of California's prisons or the mentally challenged residents of the state hospitals, he knew it would benefit the state government of California. His ideas and studies also gained him many followers in the eugenics movement overseas, specifically within the Nazi government. The respect was mutual. Popenoe saw the German government's policies as "the first example in modern times of an administration based frankly and determinedly on the principles of eugenics. I must say that my impression is … rather favourable." He praised the Nazis for their swift implementation of eugenic policies. [132]

Popenoe certainly did not support all Nazi eugenic policies. When Germany legalized abortion for eugenic purposes in 1935, Popenoe vehemently opposed such measures as murderous and detrimental to core family values. [133] Although he recognized that abortion could be a useful technique when implementing negative

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[130] E. S. Gosney and Paul Popenoe, *Sterilization for Human Betterment: A summary of Results of 6000 operations in California, 1909-1929*, (New York: Macmillan, 1929).
[131] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 306.
[132] Kühl, *The Nazi Connection,* 42-45.
[133] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 305.

eugenic programs, Popenoe was worried that the white, middle-class women he thought should be propagating would seek abortions. In Gosney and Popenoe's next study of California eugenics published 1938, they attempted to distance themselves from the Nazi policies by emphasizing that each of the approximately 10 000 residents that had been sterilized since 1909 had been individually reviewed and mass sterilization of a particular race or religion was not a tactic that would be used in California.[134]

Popenoe promoted sterilization throughout the 1930s and 1940s, while maintaining his interest in positive eugenics, mainly marriage and family counselling. Just five years after his wedding to Betty Lee Stankovich in 1920, Popenoe wrote *Modern Marriage: A Handbook.* The book was aimed towards men who were looking for 'scientific' information about marriage. Popenoe strongly recommended that men settle down with young and healthy women of similar backgrounds, and not be swayed by physical beauty.[135] In 1930, five years after the release of *Modern Marriage*, Popenoe founded the American Institute of Family Relations (AIFR). In the early days of the AIFR, Popenoe was devoted to increasing marriages and birthrates of the 'right' Americans: Caucasian men and women from the middle and upper classes.[136]

After the Second World War, however, his marital and family advice contained virtually no references to race or evolution. This change more accurately reflects the political climate of California, rather than an about face on Popenoe's part. He confided to his friend, Norman Livermore, in February of 1949 that "[m]y interest in eugenics, like yours, is as keen as ever although most of the work I am doing is in a slightly different

[134] Paul Popenoe and E. S. Gosney, *Twenty-Eight Years of Sterilisation in California (*Human Betterment Foundation: Pasadena, 1938): 6-7.
[135] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 309.
[136] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 308.

field. I feel, however, that it is the most fundamental and practical kind of eugenics at the present time."[137] Popenoe clearly still believed in compulsory and voluntary sterilization of minorities and lower-class Americans, yet had decided to downplay his interest in negative eugenics to further his career in marital counselling.

Popenoe thought that he was shaping the trends of the 1950s. Middle-class couples, his preferred clients, bore many of the nation's children during the 'baby boom' after the Second World War.[138] Popenoe strived to help this trend along. He thought the process of positive eugenics should be smooth and unconscious, brought on by education, counselling and pro-family social policies. By promoting the rewards of marriage and a strong family life, he was encouraging larger families in what he believed to be the 'better' part of America, while subtly suggesting that those with lower education and financial means should have fewer children.

Popenoe was popular and influential during the 1940s and 1950s with white, middle-class Americans. His foundation, the AIFR, published its own journal, *Family Life*, beginning in 1940. In 1953, Popenoe co-founded the column "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" with Dorothy D. MacKaye (pen name Dorothy Cameron Disney) for *Ladies' Home Journal*, which still remains a popular feature item in 2012. In 1960, Popenoe and MacKaye published a book of the same name. In both the articles and the book, Popenoe and MacKaye counselled men and women with marital problems ranging from alcohol abuse and in-law troubles to extramarital affairs.[139] Typically, it was the wife that was advised to change either her personality or her expectations, which was in line with the social climate of the United States during the 1950s regarding gender relations.

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[137] Paul Popenoe, quoted in Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 314.
[138] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 303.
[139] Paul Popenoe and Dorothy Cameron Disney, *Can This Marriage Be Saved*? (New York: Macmillian Company, 1960).

Although *Ladies' Home Journal* continues to print "Can This Marriage Be Saved?", the journal and California has undergone a great deal of change since 1960. Feminism and the sexual revolution of the late 1960s made Popenoe's brand of male-dominated marital advice outdated to much of the American population. During the 1960s, Popenoe fought against the legalization of the oral contraceptive pill. As with his belief regarding abortions, he worried that only intelligent white women would use it, and 'inferior' women would not. He also alleged that it would promote promiscuity among women, which was an affront to his traditional family values.[140]

During the 1970s, Popenoe lobbied the California government against homosexuality, birth control and other liberal bills. In several articles in *Family Life* during the 1970s, he sermonized that legal homosexuality was a sign of the decline of civilization.[141] He denounced the 'new' morality of the decade. Popenoe passed away in 1979 and soon after the American Institute of Family Relations closed its doors. Popenoe's son, David Popenoe has continued his father's life work. A Rutgers University sociologist, David co-chairs the Council on Families in America and continues to promote traditional families and marriage.[142] Popenoe's lasting influence can still be seen in *Ladies' Home Journal* and his son David's career. However, by the 1980s, the AIFR and Popenoe were no longer influential.

Popenoe's career trajectory was strikingly different from his colleagues Gosney and Goethe. He channelled his lifelong interest in eugenics into an occupation that gave him authority over tens of thousands of American marriages. Originally, he influenced sterilization by conducting the prominent research for the HBF during the 1930s.

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[140] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 305.
[141] American Institution for Family Relations, *Family Life,* vol. 32 (1972).
[142] Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization," 322.

However, once sterilization fell out of the favour after the Second World War, Popenoe transformed his career to focus on positive eugenics. Considering his work in marriage counselling, Popenoe had greater authority over eugenics in California than his HBF colleagues. Many Americans may not have realized that Popenoe's brand of family counselling was a form of positive eugenics. His work never outwardly encouraged solely white, middle-class Americans to reproduce more than other demographic groups. However, the average reader of his articles and books would have typically been a white, middle-class woman, rather than an African-American or immigrant woman.

A striking similarity between Goethe, Gosney and Popenoe was their involvement in agriculture and the environment. Popenoe grew up in an agricultural household. His original interest in school was farming and agriculture. After Gosney moved his family to Pasadena in 1905, he purchased and ran what became one of the largest lemon groves in California. Although Goethe did not own a farm or grove, he was actively involved in preserving California's natural beauty. He was a founding member of the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society and held memberships in dozens of other environmental organizations.[143] He also financially supported environmental and biological research at Sacramento State. Over his lifetime he donated more than two million dollars to the Save-the-Redwoods League.[144] Goethe often used the disappearing forests of California as an analogy for eugenics. He believed that the sequoias were a superior tree, just as the Nordics and pioneering Americans were, to him, superior to

[143] California State University, "Charles M. Goethe".
[144] California State University, "Charles M. Goethe".

other races. “We should not expect morons to beget men of genius any more than we expect a 5-needled pine to sprout a 3-needled seedling.”[145]

Alexandra Minna Stern devoted a chapter of *Eugenic Nation* to the connection between eugenics, heredity, and the environmental movement in California. Environmentalists, like Goethe, revered certain plants above others. Some trees, like sequoias, were central to newly-founded conservation societies, and yet other native trees were not considered important. The use of selective breeding in plants changed the California landscape in the early twentieth century. Additionally, eugenicists flocked to conservation societies, such as the Save-the-Redwoods League and the Sierra Club.[146] Although not all eugenicists were environmentalists, and not everyone who was interested in California flora encouraged sterilization, there was a large enough overlap that it deserved mentioning.

A California eugenicist who did not show an environmental side was Dr. Fred Butler. Butler took over as the superintendent at the Sonoma State Home (formally known as the California Home for the Care and Training of Feeble-minded Children) in 1918. Prior to Butler’s appointment, the Sonoma State Home had sterilized twelve patients in the nine years that sterilization was legal. Butler’s predecessor, J. G. Dawson, believed that sterilization led to an increase in prostitution.[147] Butler did not subscribe to that way of thinking and advocated for the widespread use of sterilization.

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[145] William Schoenl and Danielle Peck, “Advertising Eugenics: Charles M. Goethe’s Campaign to Improve the Race,” *Endeavour*, vol. 34, no. 2 (June 2010): 75.
[146] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 119-120.
[147] California Commission in Lunacy*, Biennial Report of the State Commission in Lunacy* California State Print, 1914.

A physician, Butler performed over a thousand operations himself throughout his tenure, and supervised another 4,500.[148] Butler was responsible for over one-quarter of all the sterilization surgeries in California. He presented himself as a physician concerned with preventative measures in an effort to control the issue of institutional overcrowding.[149] His belief was that any physician who did not use preventative medicine was behind on the times. In his submissions to the *Biennial Reports to the Commission of Lunacy*, he stressed the efficiency of sterilization on both eugenic and economic grounds.[150]

Butler was also careful to craft an image of understanding and compassion for his patients. In 1947, he wrote that sterilization was to protect the mentally challenged from unwanted children for whom they could not care.[151] Butler attempted to forge strong relationships with the families of his patients by seeking consent for sterilizations, although it was not legally necessary.[152] After serving as superintendent for 31 years, Butler left his position in 1949 to become the medical director of Birthright, a national sterilization organization.[153] Previously known as the Sterilization League of New Jersey, the organization would later become the Human Betterment Association for Voluntary Sterilization. It is now known as EngenderHealth and distributes reproductive health

[148] Kline, *Building a Better Race*, 52.
[149] Fred O Butler, "The Importance of Out-Patient Clinics in State Institutions," *American Journal of Mental Deficiency,* vol. 45 (1940): 78.
[150] California Commission in Lunacy, *Biennial Report of the State Commission in Lunacy,* California State Print, 1921.
[151] Fred O. Butler and Clarence J. Gamble, "Sterilization in a California School for the Mentally Deficient," *American Journal of Mental Deficiency,* vol. 6 (April 1947): 745.
[152] Kline, *Building a Better Race*, 52.
[153] Kline, *Building a Better Race*, 184.

information and promotes voluntary sterilization in developing countries around the world.[154]

The same year that Butler left the Sonoma State Hospital, Dr. Leonard le Vann was hired at the Provincial Training School in Red Deer, Alberta. Le Vann's position in Alberta was comparable to Butler's position in California. Le Vann was the superintendent and staff physician at the Provincial Training School where an overwhelming number of sterilizations took place.[155] The Provincial Training School was a government funded home and school for mentally disabled children and adults.

Le Vann was an American who trained as a physician in Scotland in the early part of the twentieth century. He was hired at the Provincial Training School as a surgeon and a psychiatrist in 1949. He was able to assess his patients and also perform the surgeries himself. However, evidence presented at the wrongful sterilization trial of Leilani Muir during the 1990s suggested that le Vann was never accredited as a psychiatrist and he had lied about his credentials.[156]

Le Vann joined the Provincial Training School more than 20 years after the inception of the Alberta Sterilization Act. He quickly adapted to the regime at the school and began presenting patients for sterilization consideration to the Eugenics Board. John Curr, who worked at the school from 1953 until 1990, described le Vann as an extremely rigid and authoritative man, but also complex.[157] Nurses who worked with le Vann remembered him as very detail oriented, with a tendency to micromanage. They were expected to make notes on the most minute activities of the patient's day. A Calgary

[154] http://www.engenderhealth.org/about/mission.php, accessed January 20, 2012.
[155] Pringle, "Alberta Barren," 36.
[156] Pringle, "Alberta Barren," 36.
[157] Don Thomas, "Boys Feared Sterilization, Trial Told," *The Edmonton Journal*, June 22, 1995, B.3.

teacher, Gordon Bullivant, worked as a psychologist at the Training School in the 1960s and stated that le Vann ran the school "like a Gestapo."[158]

Le Vann did not respect the children for whom he worked. One technique that he would use to discipline the higher-functioning children would be to place them in the wards for severely mentally challenged children.[159] Early in the 1950s, he began to pressure the Eugenics Board to allow him to present children under the age of twelve to have them sterilized. [160] In his paper written in 1950 for *the American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, le Vann summarized how he felt about his wards:

> Indeed, the picture of comparison between the normal child and the idiot might almost be a comparison between two separate species. On the one hand the graceful, intelligently curious, active young homo sapiens, and on the other the gross, retarded, animalistic early primate type individual... It is not entirely impossible that what we now refer to as low grade idiots may, in fact, be a remote prototype of modern homo sapiens.[161]

The Eugenics Board very seldom rejected a sterilization request from le Vann. When a later researcher examined over 900 case files, he found that only a handful were denied, even when the child or teenager had an IQ that exceeded the upper cut-off of 70.[162]

After several years of being on staff, le Vann built a facility on campus to use for his own personal research. His interest was in the development of sperm in boys with

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[158] Pringle, "Alberta Barren," 37.
[159] Thomas, "Boys Feared," B.3.
[160]Jana Grekul, "A Well-Oiled Machine: Alberta's Eugenics Program, 1928-1972," *Alberta History,* vol. 59, no. 3 (June 2011): 21.
[161] L. J. Le Vann, "A Concept of Schizophrenia in the Lower Grade Mental Defective," *American Journal of Mental Deficiency,* vol. 54 (1950): 471.
[162] Pringle, "Alberta Barren," 37.

Down's syndrome. Although medical experts had already recognized that Down's syndrome males were infertile, le Vann presented over 15 Down's syndrome boys to the Board between 1953 and 1971. He was requesting not only a vasectomy, which would have already been superfluous surgery, but the complete removal of their testes for his own research.[163] The Eugenics Board approved all 15 surgeries. In Dr. Douglas Wahlsten's article, "Airbrushing Heredity," he also indicated that le Vann experimented on children with harsh antipsychotic drugs, without any consent from parents or guardians.[164]

After the repeal of the Sexual Sterilization Act in 1972, le Vann complained that it was "ill-advised and regressive."[165] The residents of the Provincial Training School were moved away from le Vann and into group homes within the community in Red Deer. Le Vann resigned from his position in 1974 and died in 1987.[166]

Le Vann and Butler held similar positions at their respective institutions. Both physicians, they sometimes operated on their patients, or would assign another surgeon to complete the surgery. They were in command of their institutions and were responsible for the staff, including doctors, nurses and orderlies.

A vital difference between their positions, and more generally, between sterilizations in Alberta and California, was the authority that each man had over sterilization surgeries. As superintendent of the Sonoma State Home, Butler was able to assess a patient, approve them for sterilization, and perform the surgery himself. As the psychiatrist and surgeon of the Provincial Training School in Alberta, le Vann could

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[163] Pringle, "Alberta Barren," 38.
[164]Douglas Wahlsten, "Airbrushing Heritability," *Genes, Brain and Behavior,* vol. 2, no. 6 (2003): 327.
[165] Pringle, "Alberta Barren," 39.
[166]"Former Michener Centre Director Dies," *Red Deer Advocate*, Oct 1, 1987, N/A.

assess a patient but could only present the person to the Alberta Eugenics Board with the recommendation that the patient be sterilized. In Alberta, each man, woman, and child, was examined and tested by the Eugenics Board. This may have reduced the number of people sterilized, as there was more bureaucracy involved in Alberta process. However, as mentioned above, MacEachran and the Eugenics Board approved almost 100% of the patients brought forward by le Vann. Le Vann must have developed a trust-worthy rapport with the Board over the years. Even though he did not have the final say in sterilization, like his counterpart Butler, le Vann appeared to have been able to sterilize all of those for whom he felt the surgery was necessary.

Additionally, unlike le Vann, Butler never showed an inclination to use his patients for research purposes. Le Vann, however, castrated fifteen young boys to support his Downs' syndrome research. Butler firmly believed that only vasectomies or salpingectomies should be performed, as they prevented conception, but the surgery did not remove any organs or disrupt any hormonal distribution.[167] That is not to say that Butler's motives were any nobler than le Vann's. In 1930, Butler disapproved of an exterior board, similar to the Alberta Eugenics Board, coming into Sonoma State Home to provide outside opinions. In his own words: "We are not sterilizing, in my opinion, fast enough...too complicated machinery slows up progress."[168] Perhaps Butler viewed outside research, like outside assessment, as a distraction from increasing the number of sterilization surgeries.

All six men held prominent positions of power in the eugenics movement in North America. Although some held similar roles like Butler and Le Vann, or had similar

[167] Harvey M Watkins, "Selective Sterilization," *Journal of Psycho-Asthenics,* vol. 35 (1929/1930): 62.
[168] Watkins, "Selective Sterilization," 64.

interests, like Goethe, Gosney and Popenoe, each man came into his position through a different route. There was no single way to lead and have influence on the eugenics movement in Alberta or California. During the early to mid twentieth century, eugenics was so pervasive throughout American and Canadian society that men and women could easily join the movement through political, medical, social or academic groups.

Chapter Three – Why the Sterilization Programs Ended

"Some thought that we didn't have enough information as a basis for sterilization. Of course they didn't go for my premise that they should be sterilized regardless of their heredity or not." – Dr. Fred Butler

While researching eugenics in North America, I found multiple connections between the California and Alberta eugenic programs and Nazi Germany's programs. One part of this chapter explores why Nazi Germany continues to be important to the overall history of eugenics, and the lasting effect the program had globally. After examining the German program, I will delve into the questions of periodization in North American eugenics. Many historians have identified the end of widespread acceptance of eugenics at the end of the 1940s, as the atrocities of the Second World War were revealed. Why then, did Alberta and California continue to forcibly sexually sterilize their residents after 1945? What eventually caused the Alberta and California governments to renounce their support of eugenic sterilization?

By the 1930s, California and Alberta had well established sterilization programs. Soon, a world altering addition to global eugenics would begin. In June 1933, the German Minister of the Interior announced that Germany would soon unveil its eugenics policy. All 'hereditary sick' would need to be sterilized, either voluntarily or forcefully. The hereditary illnesses that concerned the Germans ranged from schizophrenia, epilepsy, and Huntington's chorea to inborn feeblemindedness. The *Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring* (*Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses*) was enacted on July 14, 1933, and went into effect on January 1, 1934.[169] The government announced that over 400 000 German residents fell into the categories

[169] W. W. Peter, "Germany's Sterilization Program," *American Journal of Public Health,* vol. 24, no. 3 (March 1934): 187.

of 'hereditary sick' and would be sterilized shortly.[170] An immediate connection to California eugenics appeared in the official proclamation of the German sterilization law. Directly after the text of the law, the German government mentioned California's sterilization program and the information collected by the Human Betterment Foundation of Pasadena, as an influence and a justification for Germany's controversial program.[171]

Prior to the Second World War, the German sterilization program received a fair amount of positive press in North America. In the March 1934 edition of the *American Journal of Public Health*, Dr. W. W. Peter of the United States noted in "Germany's Sterilization Program" that Germany had taken large strides towards reaching a goal that many other nations were contemplating, or slowly approaching. The doctor was hopeful that Germany could be the first country to eliminate unfit parenthood in a "thorough but legally and scientifically fair way."[172] The *Journal of Heredity*, *Eugenical News*, and the *American Journal of Public Health* frequently published articles on Germany. The *AJPH*'s readership spanned North America, as evidenced by the Canadian physicians, such as Dr. Clarence Hincks, who published articles in the journal. The articles were written by both Americans, such as the California's Charles Goethe, Paul Popenoe and E. S. Gosney, and Germans like Alfred Ploetz, praising American and German eugenics.[173] Goethe was quoted as saying: "However much one abhors dictatorship, one is also impressed that Germany, by sterilization and by stimulating

[170] Peter, "Germany's Sterilization Program," 187.
[171] Harry Bruinius, *Better For All the World: The Secret History of Forced Sterilization and America's Quest for Racial Purity* (Alfred Knopf: New York, 2006), 272.
[172] Peter, "Germany's Sterilization Program," 187.
[173] Sheila Faith Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis: Human Genetics and Politics in the Third Reich* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2010), 278.

birthrates among the eugenically high-powered, is gaining an advantage over us as to future leadership."[174]

Although academics could question whether the North American public was aware of the extent of the German sterilization program, it is clear that at the very least, North American eugenicists were aware and supportive of Germany's efforts from information gained from American eugenic publications. In Dr. Peter's essay on "Germany's Sterilization Program," he described his travels throughout Germany, where he met with various leaders of the Nazi Party and eugenicists.[175] He noted that while the sterilization program was the most interesting to him, it was only a small part of the government's racial hygiene program. He did not elaborate any further.[176] Other authors, such as Hilda von Hellmer Wullen, in the *Journal of Heredity*, praised Germany's effort to apply Galtonian techniques on their population "without attempting to pass judgement on the multitude of controversial questions involved in the race purification program of Hitler's government."[177] Although some eugenicists alluded to Hitler's regime, many North American eugenicists did not acknowledge or support Hitler's larger racial purification programs, which would come to include genocide. However, it is clear that eugenicists in North America had an understanding of how large and encompassing the sterilization program was becoming.

Although the public in North America potentially remained unaware of Germany's sterilization programs during the 1930s, Harry Laughlin, the director of the Eugenics Records Office, attempted to rectify this by publishing numerous articles on

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[174] Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 276.
[175] Peter, "Germany's Sterilization Program," 189.
[176] Peter, "Germany's Sterilization Program," 189.
[177] Hilda Von Hellmer Wullen, "Eugenics in Other Lands: A Survey of Recent Developments," *Journal of Heredity,* vol. 28, no. 8 (1937): 269.

the programs in respected outlets, such as the *New York Times*.[178] Had the American public wished to keep abreast of the eugenic programs overseas, there were numerous outlets to learn the information.

After World War Two, Americans and Canadians struggled to distinguish their eugenic policies from that of the German racial purity policies. During the war crime trials after the Second World War, Germany singled out the United States as hypocrites. America was the first country to have sterilization laws, and had maintained these Acts, but was now condemning the Germans for similar legislation.[179]

Even with the promotion of eugenic advocates, such as Goethe and Laughlin, there was a widespread revulsion towards eugenics as the result of the atrocities of World War Two.[180] Countries in Europe and states in America saw their sterilization rates drop to zero. While some contemporary eugenicists began to distance themselves from their prior beliefs, others, such as Mogens Hauge, believed that countries such as Canada and the United States had succeeded in keeping their eugenic programs' reputations untarnished, and should therefore continue with their sterilization programs.[181]

After witnessing Germany's eugenic sterilization program expanding into one of the largest genocides of the 20th century, why did Alberta and California continue to sterilize their residents? The reasons for the continuation and eventual ending of eugenic sterilization were different in Alberta than California. California's rejection of sterilization came from within the medical community, while Alberta's provincial

[178] Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 282.
[179] Weiss, *The Nazi Symbiosis*, 245.
[180] Mogens Hauge, "What Has Happened To Eugenics," *Eugenics Review* vol. 56 no. 4 (January 1965): 204.
[181] Hauge, "What Has Happened," 204.

government led the way in dismantling the sterilization program. Alberta's sterilization legislation was passed while the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) was in power. Sociologist Jana Grekul theorized that although the UFA was originally an untested political group in the 1920s, it became ever more conservative during its period in office.[182]

Albertans soon voted another new and experimental political party, the Social Credit Party of Alberta, into power in 1935. Grekul believed that the Social Credit Party was both directly and indirectly responsible for the continuation of the sterilization program in Alberta. The new party did not overturn the eugenic sterilization, and was in power during the two amendments in 1937 and 1942 that broadened the scope of potential sterilization victims. After World War Two, Alberta's economy soared. That, coupled with the tumultuous past decade, discouraged residents from rebelling or advocating for change.[183] If there was no popular dissent, the government saw no reason to repeal the Act, even after the horrors of the German racial program were revealed to the world.[184] Additionally, the Social Credit government was notoriously resistant to criticism and held a strong hold over the media that, according to Grekul, bordered on censorship.[185] Even if the residents of Alberta wished to speak out against eugenic sterilization, there were few avenues to go about it.

There were other reasons why sterilizations were maintained in Alberta after the Second World War, and much of the blame falls on those who were ordering and performing the surgeries. Those who were involved in the sterilizations wished to keep

[182] Grekul, "Social Construction," 252.
[183] Grekul, "Social Construction," 252.
[184] Grekul, "Social Construction," 252.
[185] Grekul, "Social Construction," 253.

their positions, and had to convince others that their job was necessary.[186] Not only were the surgeons invested in the continuation of the program, but the members of the Alberta Eugenics Board as well. The Eugenics Board streamlined their process during the late 1940s. More residents were being approved for sterilization, as well as increasingly younger patients. Although previously the Eugenics Board minutes were lengthy and full of discussion, the notes during the 1950s merely listed the names of the patients and the final decision of sterilization.[187]

After 1945, the Board meetings also became gradually more concerned over the issue of consent. Although more sterilizations took place during the 1930s than the 1940s or 1950s, if a patient or family member voiced opposition to the surgery, the operation was cancelled and the Eugenic Board would immediately drop the case.[188] However, during the 1950s, many parents were convinced that having their child sterilized would be beneficial. Eventually, in 1955, the Eugenics Board began implementing a new form for parents to sign when their child was taken into care at the Provincial Training Centre in Red Deer, Alberta.[189] The form read as follows: "I understand that in accordance with the Alberta Statutes my child will be presented to the Provincial Eugenics Board, and that if they deem it advisable he will subsequently be sterilized."[190] Grekul categorized the Eugenics Board's actions during the 1950s as a lack of concern for the patient's wellbeing and not enough emphasis on the legality of consent.

[186] Grekul, "Social Construction," 254.
[187] Grekul, "Social Construction," 161.
[188] Grekul, "Social Construction," 167.
[189] Grekul, "Social Construction," 170.
[190] Grekul, "Social Construction," 170.

The Eugenics Board also allowed for the surgeons who performed many of the sterilizations to dictate what kind of operation should be performed. The surgeon could decide to perform a salpingectomy (tying the fallopian tubes) or an oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries).[191] While both operations effectively sterilized the woman in question, the surgeries varied immensely in operation and recovery time, with the salpingectomy being a less invasive surgery. The removal of both ovaries for sterilization purposes affected hormone production and sent women into premature menopause, which had long term complications.[192]

The population increase was another factor for the longevity of Alberta's sterilization program. The economic oil boom that began in 1947 drew newcomers from across North America and overseas to Alberta. Between 1941 and 1951 over 140 000 people immigrated into Alberta, and by 1961, the number of newcomers had jumped again by 180 000.[193] Many of these new residents would not be aware of the sterilization program, as it was not typically discussed in the media any longer. As Timothy Christian noted in his 1973 Ph.D. thesis, the local newspapers were more often concerned with the Second World War during the 1940s, and therefore any changes to the sterilization program, such as the 1942 amendment, went largely unnoticed.[194]

Once sterilizations were commonplace in Alberta, it became increasingly harder to change the bureaucratic process. Grekul explained this phenomenon as a type of tunnel-vision among those intimately involved. Eugenic goals, such as improving the

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[191] Grekul, "A Well-Oiled Machine," 21.
[192] "Oophorectomy (ovary removal surgery)," http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/oophorectomy/MY00554/DSECTION=risks, accessed October 26, 2011.
[193] "Population, urban and rural, by province and territory (Alberta)," http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo62j-eng.htm, accessed October 26, 2011.
[194] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 29.

stock of Alberta residents, became secondary to the goal of sterilizing the most people with the most efficiency.[195] Some states were in a similar position to Alberta after the Second World War. The economic upswing influenced the whole of the United States, and yet some states, such as Vermont and Montana chose to stop sterilizing residents during the early 1950s. I can only speculate as to why these states discontinued sterilizations during the 1950s, but I believe they ended sooner than Alberta because they lacked the strict regulations that made the Alberta Eugenics Board run so smoothly for so long.

Unlike Alberta, much of the reasoning behind the continuation of involuntary sterilization in California stemmed from the superintendents of the state hospitals. Alex Wellerstein, author of "States of Eugenics: Institutions and Practices of Compulsory Sterilization in California," believed that by the 1940s sterilizations were viewed as simply another medical procedure that was legally recognized and medically sanctioned.[196] Superintendents ordered sterilizations because they could.

The freedom that the superintendents were given regarding sterilization also explained the high rates of sterilizations in California. Other states had limited laws that were easily appealed, but California's hospital superintendents were unrestricted for the reasons that could be given for a sterilization surgery. Although the punitive use of sterilizations, such as part of sentences for sex criminals, had been overturned by the California Court of Appeal in 1936, California hospitals could still threaten their patients

[195] Grekul, "A Well-Oiled Machine," 21.
[196] Alex Wellerstein, "States of Eugenics: Institutions and Practices of Compulsory Sterilization in California," in *Reframing Rights: Bioconstitutions in the Genetic Age*, ed. by Sheila Jasanoff (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2011): 47.

with segregation to coerce them into agreeing to sterilizations.[197] For the victims that were given the choice between sterilization and hospitalization, the length of hospitalization was never set, and therefore people rarely refused sterilization and consent was rendered meaningless.[198]

California had vague laws that often left the decision of sterilization in the hands of a hospital superintendent or public health administrator.[199]As contemporary writer Julius Paul described in his 1967 article, "'Population Quality' and `Fitness for Parenthood' in the Light of State Eugenic Sterilization Experience, 1907-1966," 'fitness for parenthood' or ability to 'adjust' to life outside of an institution could be interpreted hundreds of different ways by individuals.[200] California's 1913 statute read:

> Before any person who has been lawfully committed to any state hospital for the insane . . . and who is afflicted with hereditary insanity or incurable chronic mania or dementia shall be released or discharged there from, the state commission in lunacy may in its discretion . . . cause such a person to be asexualized, and such asexualization, whether with or without the consent of the patient, shall be lawful and shall not render said commission, its members or any person participating in the operation liable either civilly or criminally.[201]

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[197] Robert William Biller, "Defending the Last Frontier: Eugenic Thought and Action in the State of California, 1890-1941," (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, 1991): 104.
[198] Judeith Simonsen, "Knowledge and Power: The Relevance of Scientific Doctrine and Psychiatric Evaluation to the American Eugenics Movement," (PhD Thesis, New School University, New York City, 2010): 414.
[199] Paul, "Population 'Quality,'" 298.
[200] Paul, "Population 'Quality,'" 298.
[201] Laughlin, *Bulletin No. 10b*, 16.

The state of California allowed its residents to be legally sterilized without ever defining what constituted 'hereditary insanity', 'incurable chronic mania', or 'dementia'.

In Robert William Biller's Master's thesis, "Defending the Last Frontier," he discussed how some California residents did question the use and efficiency of involuntary sterilizations during the 1940s and 1950s. Hereditarian J. H. Landman highlighted that over 67% of men and 79% of women who had been sterilized had not been released from the institution, and those who had been released had succeeded in society due to behavioural treatments and not sterilization.[202] Even as scientific textbooks began distancing themselves from eugenic theory during the 1930s and 1940s, California continued to perform sterilization surgeries.[203] Biller maintained that the rejection of eugenics by academics, and indeed most of the world, did not dissuade California's superintendents, and sterilizations continued until these men either retired or were relieved of their position.[204]

In Alexandra Minna Stern's essay "From Legislation to Lived Experience," in *A Century of Eugenics in America,* she investigated the lack of ability for patients to appeal the state's decision to sterilize. From 1909 to 1951, California allowed no legal recourse for a patient or family member to challenge a sterilization order. No written notification was required, save for the case of minors, although no opportunity was allowed for a hearing in either case.[205] Due to the lack of legal avenues, the state of California never faced any grave legal charges.[206] Once the law was changed in 1951 to give patients

[202] Biller, "Defending the Last Frontier," 99.
[203] Biller, "Defending the Last Frontier," 100.
[204] Biller, "Defending the Last Frontier," 101
[205] Alexandra Minna Stern, "From Legislation to Lived Experience", in *A Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era*, ed. by Paul A. Lombardo (Indiana University Press, 2011): 101.
[206] Stern, "From Legislation to Lived Experience," 101.

more options, the number of sterilizations began to rapidly decrease. This decrease in sterilizations, however, had no connection to the backlash that eugenics had endured after the Second World War, and California would continue to sterilize its residents for many years on a smaller scale.

What made Alberta and California unique within the eugenics community in North America was not only the high numbers of sterilizations per capita but also the length of time that the province and the state continued to enforce involuntary sterilization. Other states, mostly Southern, continued to practice sterilization after World War Two; however, the number of people sterilized never came close to the amount in California.

British Columbia was the only other province in Canada to pass a Sterilization Act. Almost all the records from the Eugenics Board of British Columbia were either lost or destroyed. However, some historians, such as Angus McLaren, believe that several hundred men and women were sterilized over the course of the program.[207] Beginning in 1933, the Eugenics Board of British Columbia held the authority to sterilize any person in an institution who was believed to have the ability to propagate "undesirable" tendencies. Relative to Alberta, British Columbia victimized few of its residents, and silently repealed the Sexual Sterilization Act in 1973.[208] In 1957, an article in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* reported that doctors in other provinces were careful to not even perform voluntary sterilizations on patients who requested it, because the patients could change their minds at a later date and attempt to sue the

[207] McLaren, *Our Own Master Race,* 160.
[208] McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 169.

doctor.[209] Although there is no hard evidence, such as the medical files from the Alberta Eugenic Board, there is a possibility that some doctors performed sterilizations on patients across Canada, with or without their permission, and without the sanction of the law.

Eugenics and sterilization laws were much more abundant in the United States, as thirty-two states held sterilization laws at some point during the 20th century. However, with the end of World War Two and the awareness of the German racial purity program, eugenics took a steep decline after the 1940s. Beginning with the Eugenics Record Office shutting down in 1939, there were significantly less sterilizations performed in the United States throughout the 1940s.[210] Since many hospitals and clinics throughout the United States were short on doctors and surgeons during the Second World War, only half as many sterilizations occurred annually compared to the 1930s.[211] According to Philip R. Reilly in his article, "Involuntary Sterilization in the United States: A Surgical Solution" published in 1987, after initially seeing an increase directly following the war in the late 1940s, by 1950, there were strong signals that sterilization was going out of favour in most states. Many doctors across the country were no longer convinced that heredity was a large factor in mental illness or disability, and therefore eugenic sterilizations were unnecessary.[212]

Another contribution to limiting eugenic policies was the civil rights movement in America. Advocates realized that compulsory sterilizations were a serious threat to

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[209] T. L. Fisher, "Sexual Sterilization," *Canadian Medical Association Journal,* vol. 76, no. 9 (May 1957), 786.
[210]Philip R. Reilly, "Involuntary Sterilizations in the United States: A Surgical Solution," *Quarterly Review of Biology,* vol. 62, no. 2 (June 1987), 165.
[211] Reilly, "Involuntary Sterilizations," 165.
[212] Reilly, "Involuntary Sterilizations," 166.

personal civil liberties.[213] The court system in the 1940s and 1950s that had decided, and would continue to decide, whether these surgeries were necessary and practical or immoral did not have the scientific or medical knowledge to debate the consequences of sterilizations. The issue of consent was also hotly discussed. Some states did not require consent to sterilize a person in an institution or prison, while other states maintained the illusion of consent. However, often sterilization was the cost of freedom.[214] Like California, some states offered a choice between sterilization and indefinite hospitalization. Very few inmates chose to keep their fertility over their liberty.

By the 1960s, most states were no longer using the sterilization acts. The laws remained on the books; however, they were little used. Twenty-eight states had sterilization laws in 1961, and that number dropped to 19 states by 1987.[215] Reilly discussed in 1987 that several states had invoked laws that forbid the sterilization of any person in a state institution, but he unfortunately did not mention the states by name.[216]

The states that continued to routinely perform sterilization surgeries after the end of the Second World War were predominantly from the southern region of the United States. Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia all expanded their programs during the 1950s.[217] Historians have put forward various theories to explain the Southern states' actions after World War Two. The Southern states were not as progressive as

[213] Paul, "Population `Quality,'" 298.
[214] Paul, "Population 'Quality,'" 298.
[215] Reilly, "Involuntary Sterilizations," 166.
[216] Reilly, "Involuntary Sterilizations," 166.
[217] Bruinius, *Better For All the World,* 318.

the Northern or Western regions, and held onto their distinctly Southern sensibilities.[218] While California had readily embraced eugenics in 1909, Virginia did not pass its eugenics legislation until 1924, North Carolina and West Virginia waited until 1929, and Georgia modeled their program after California's in 1937.[219] As well as being slow to adopt eugenics, the Southern states also differed from the Northern and Western regions in demographics. For example, South Carolina (law enacted in 1935) sterilized almost exclusively African American women after 1945.[220] Additionally, during the 1960s, several Southern states, such as Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina and Virginia considered introducing legislation that would sterilize unwed mothers who gave birth to illegitimate children.[221] Although all of these measures failed to pass the legislative process, Louisiana and Mississippi both enacted laws that punished women either monetarily or with prison sentences for producing multiple children out of wedlock.[222]

As mentioned above, although California continued to hold onto sterilizations laws into the 1970s, the rates of sterilizations decreased after 1951. As Alex Wellerstein stated in his 2011 article, "[t]his abrupt change came with no fanfare and no hand-wringing, no comparisons to Nazi Germany, and no discussion of rights to reproduction."[223] In 1951, 255 California residents underwent sterilization surgery. In 1952, only 51 residents received the same procedures.[224] What caused this dramatic drop?

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[218] Simonsen, "Knowledge and Power," 414.
[219] Simonsen, "Knowledge and Power," 69.
[220] Bruinius, *Better For All the World,* 318.
[221] Paul, "Population 'Quality,'" 297.
[222] Paul, "Population 'Quality,'" 297.
[223] Wellerstein, "States of Eugenics," 49.
[224] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1132.

While there were several interrelated causes for the substantial decline, the most influential was the retirement of the hospital superintendents that were enthusiastic eugenic supporters in California. Wallerstein theorized that as the influential superintendents, such as Dr. Fred Butler, retired throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the new superintendents did not seek sterilizations at the same rate.[225] Butler himself noticed the transformation after his 1949 retirement:

> Oh, [the mindset] changed materially. Well it was shortly after I left up there. I know I went back about the following year or two, the superintendent [Dr. Porter] asked me to come back and talk on it, on sterilization, and I found the dissenters on it were mostly psychologists. They didn't agree, and social workers were second, and physicians, I think, were third, I would say. That is, [they] question[ed] the advisability and so forth of sterilization. Some thought that we didn't have enough information as a basis for sterilization. Of course they didn't go for my premise that they should be sterilized regardless of their heredity or not.[226]

As seen previously, Butler had a large influence over sterilization surgeries that took place at the Sonoma State Hospital. I agree with Wellerstein's theory that Butler and his contemporaries' retirements were the catalyst of change for California sterilizations. Butler's young replacement did not have the same objectives as the older generation of superintendents.

After Butler's retirement, the name of the State Commission in Lunacy was changed to the Department of Mental Hygiene, and Dr. Frank Tallman was brought in

[225] Wellerstein, "States of Eugenics,"49.
[226] Wellerstein, "States of Eugenics," 49.

from Ohio to direct the California department. In 1951, Tallman revised the Sexual Sterilization Act. Tallman's decision to amend the act was not to reduce the numbers of sterilizations, however, but simply to efficiently centralize the new organization, which he viewed as his chief objective.[227] In memos passed between himself and the Governor Earl Warren, Tallman emphasized that discretion was now important towards sterilization and while the practice was medically out of date, it was not morally bankrupt.[228]

This amendment removed references to syphilis (long known to be a bacterial disease, not hereditary), sexual perversion, and most importantly, erased references to 'feebleminded', 'idiots' and 'fools'.[229] These terms had fallen out of favour among medical professionals and no longer accurately reflected the medical beliefs of the time. The amendment also instituted a demanding process, which included the reinstatement of next-of-kin notification, as well as introducing various channels for legal appeals.[230] Alexandra Minna Stern believed that the addition of the next-of-kin notification and the chance for hearings and appeals transformed the sterilization process from a quick signature to a long, draw out process and therefore discouraged physicians from ordering sterilizations.[231] By the mid-1950s, only 20 residents were typically sterilized per year.

In California during the 1950s, there were no large protests or a backlash to either do away with sterilizations, or to continue with the program. Simply put, the majority of the California public did not know about the changes to the Department of

[227] Wellerstein, "States of Eugenics," 50.
[228] Wellerstein, "States of Eugenics," 52.
[229] Stern, "From Legislation to Lived Experience," 102.
[230] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1132
[231] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1132.

Mental Hygiene, nor were they concerned. The rates of sterilization decreased not because the California public was horrified to discover that the program that inspired the Nazi's quest for racial purity still existed. The rates decreased because the new constraints of the sterilization law were too restrictive and time consuming for physicians to consider sterilizations 'worth it'.

However, even after California's rate of sterilizations decreased during the 1950s, the state remained interested in eugenic theory. In 1961, the District Attorney of San Joaquin Country, Lawrence Drivon, suggested that California begin sterilizing parents who were deemed 'unfit' and were receiving government aid.[232] Although this proposal was rejected by the Director of Social Welfare, sterilization was used as punishment in other court cases throughout the 1960s.

An example of this punitive use of sterilization can be seen in the court case of Miguel Vega Andrade. In 1963, Andrade was convicted of non-support after failing to provide child support to his ex-wife and four children.[233] Instead of prison time, Andrade chose to be sterilized, as well as marry his new partner with whom he was living.[234] After several years, Andrade regretted his surgery and approached the California Supreme Court to aid him in having the surgery reversed. His appeal was rejected, and if he wished to have the vasectomy reversal surgery performed, it would have to be a privately funded operation.[235] In another case, Victoria Tapia and Marcos Palafox were given reduced sentences by the Superior Court of Santa Barbara County after they

[232] Julius Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization Proposals: Current Attacks on Illegitimacy and the AFDC Program," *Law & Society Review,* vol. 3, no. 1 (August 1968), 78.
[233] Wallace F. Cadwell, "Six Decades of Compulsory Sexual Sterilization," *Research Studies, Washington State University,* vol. 35, no. 1 (March 1967), 309.
[234] Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization," 78.
[235] Cadwell, "Six Decades," 309.

consented to sterilizations in 1964.[236] Interestingly, their crime was not sexual in nature or concerned the welfare of future children. The two persons had defrauded a county welfare department.[237]

One unique case that did not end in sterilization was the trial of Nancy Hernandez. In 1966, she was convicted of the misdemeanour of being in a place where marijuana was in use, and agreed to undergo sterilization surgery in return for a reduced sentence.[238] However, Hernandez decided against sterilization before the surgery could take place, and she was thrown in jail. The sentencing judge, Frank P. Kearney, boasted that Mrs. Hernandez

> . . . should not have more children because of her propensity to live an immoral life. It is my sincere belief that the interests of society and of this defendant would have been best served by the proposed probationary terms. I believe this woman is in danger of continuing to live a dissolute life and to be endangering the health, safety and lives of her minor children.[239]

Although Mrs. Hernandez had two children outside of wedlock and received welfare aid, she had no prior criminal record and had maintained a clean probationary record before her decision to refuse sterilization. Hernandez appealed the Judge Kearney's decision and Superior Court Judge Douglas Smith found no correlations between the presence of narcotics and sterilization surgery for rehabilitation and Hernandez was allowed to continue her probation outside of jail.[240]

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[236] Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization," 78.
[237] Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization," 78.
[238] Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization," 79.
[239] Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization," 79.
[240] Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization," 79.

Unlike in California, the bureaucratic process did not change in Alberta during the 1950s. After the 1942 Amendment to the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act, the law remained untouched. In 1965, however, the Eugenic Board of Alberta underwent a major transformation. Chairman J. M. MacEachran finally retired on June 30, 1965, after 37 years of heading the board.[241] Although he was immediately replaced by the new chairman Dr. R. K. Thomson, the Board never recovered from his exit and floundered through its remaining years. The Eugenics Board did not last long without MacEachran. By 1968, the soon-to-be elected Conservative party ordered a special non-government commission study of the sterilizations that were taking place within the province.[242]

The Conservative party was proposing a provincial Bill of Rights and the Sexual Sterilization Act was in direct opposition to the goals of the Bill.[243] Dr. W. R. N. Blair, the professor of psychology who was in charge of the commission, found that the Board had sterilized individuals with non-hereditary conditions.[244] Additionally, he felt that there was little evidence to conclude that sterilizations were aiding the problems of people with delinquent behaviour and he brought up human rights issues.[245]

Once the Conservative Party was elected in 1972, the MLA for Edmonton Highlands, David King, presented the Commission's findings to the government. Mental illness was known to be a much more complex disease by the 1970s than when the law was passed in 1928. King noted that most people with mental disabilities had a lessened sex drive and many did not reach the age of sexual reproduction. Finally, the commission had observed that I.Q. tests, which played a large role in the Board's

[241] Grekul, "Social Construction," 190.
[242] Walter Nagel, "Alberta Writes New Act to Cover Sterilization of Mentally Deficient," *Canadian Medical Association Journal,* vol. 106, no. 8 (April 1972), 930.
[243] Grekul, "A Well-Oiled Machine," 22.
[244] Nagel, "Alberta Writes," 931.
[245] Nagel, "Alberta Writes," 931.

decision to sterilize individuals, were notoriously unreliable.[246] Forty-four years after the Sexual Sterilization Act of Alberta became a law, King introduced a Bill to repeal it, which passed through the Conservative government almost immediately.[247]

In California, sterilization rates also remained low throughout the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, even the most fervent eugenic supporter recognized that sterilizations could not be used to eliminate undesirable human 'defects'.[248] The 1960s saw the rise of patient rights and health professionals who wished to protect the disabled, who sometimes also organized to defend themselves. While sterilization surgery was no longer a popular option, it was not until 1979 that California repealed the Sexual Sterilization Act.

Assemblyman and Chairman of the Health Committee, Art Torres, learned that the Act was still in use after several women in his Los Angeles district sued the University of Southern California for involuntary sterilizations in 1978.[249] These women, who were all blue collar Mexican-Americans, had been pressured into receiving salpingectomies minutes after their caesarean deliveries.[250] The court case, known as *Madrigal v Quilligan,* consisted of ten women against the physicians at the University of Southern California Hospital. The ten women were all involuntarily sterilized between 1971 and 1974. Although seven signed consent forms before the sterilization, after enduring traumatizing childbirth experiences, their state of mind could not be considered 'informed'.[251]

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[246] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 31.
[247] Christian, "The Mentally Ill," 30.
[248] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1132.
[249] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1128.
[250] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1128.
[251] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1132.

Torres introduced the bill to repeal the state sterilization law in 1979. He believed the procedure and the medical terminology, such as "marked departure from normal mentality," was outdated.[252] The bill was unanimously approved by the State Assembly and the Senate, and the California Sexual Sterilization Act was repealed.

While other states, provinces and countries around the globe reacted to the backlash against eugenics in the 1940s and 1950s, Alberta and California maintained their sterilization programs even after World War Two. Although California kept the eugenic law on the books for longer than Alberta, the state had reduced the number of sterilizations by 1951 due to a change in administration and an additional amendment that made the process of requesting sterilizations burdensome for the superintendents. Alberta did not reduce the number of sterilizations until the retirement of J. M. MacEachran in 1965, and the Act was repealed soon after in 1972. Both California and Alberta had specific reasons for continuing the sterilization programs. In both places, the residents were powerless to voice their discontent with the sterilization programs. Alberta's government did not allow vocal criticism, and California's sterilization process did not provide any methods to appeal the decisions.

[252] Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health," 1128.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have focused on Alberta and California and how the two government-funded eugenic programs compared. Traditionally, historians of eugenics have examined either an entire country, or a single state or province. I chose to compare and contrast Alberta and California in an attempt to shed light on how eugenics, and more specifically sterilization, could take place so openly, for such a lengthy period of time.

The first historians to consider eugenics a worthwhile topic, such as Haller and Pickens, began writing during the 1960s, while both Alberta and California continued to force sterilizations on their residents. Their broad studies considered eugenics a finished movement that ended after the Second World War. Over the next 50 years, historians continued to revisit the topic of eugenics in its many variations: positive, negative, immigration and miscegenation laws.

Through my research, I found that eugenics permeated much more of North American society than I previously thought. It is unknown how many Albertans and Californians were in favour of the sterilization programs when they began during the first half of the twentieth century, but the number would have been considerable. California passed its sterilization law without any lengthy discussions and although Alberta had a more tumultuous time, there were very few protests against the program after it began. The medical and public health journals from that era were stacked with articles that discussed and defended eugenics and sterilization surgeries. More telling, however, was that the newspapers in California and Alberta also contained a lot of information. This illustrates that the general public was aware of the programs.

This study provides important information regarding the reasons why sterilizations were so prevalent in Alberta and California, and not as established in other areas of North America. A combination of perfect timing, dedicated men and women, and progressive attitudes left Alberta and California ripe for eugenic thought and practice to take hold. Due to several unique circumstances throughout their sterilization programs, such as ambitious individual men, and the receptive social/political climate, Alberta and California maintained their dedication to eugenics even when most of North America turned away from the ideology.

Sterilization and eugenics have remained controversial topics since the dismantling of the sterilization programs. During the 1990s, the government of Alberta paid millions of dollars to the men and women who were forcefully sterilized during the program in an attempt to amend what had been done. Although California has not done the same, other states, such North Carolina, have contemplated compensating those who were sterilized, as recently as January 2012.[253] Additionally, forced sterilization still appears in different forms in North America. Project Prevention is a controversial charity that gives cash incentives to drug addicts who agree to permanent birth control.[254] Sterilization is a small part of the larger issue of reproductive rights which continues to be an important issue in North American into the 21st-century.

While researching the subject, there were certain details about the sterilization programs that struck me as unexpected. I was surprised at how a large amount of the population of Alberta and California knew about the sterilization programs and either agreed with it, or did not disagree with it enough to lodge complaints. Based on the

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[253] "N.C. to Compensate Victims of Sterilization in 20th Century Eugenics Program," http://abcnews.go.com/Health/WomensHealth/north-carolina-compensate-victims-eugenics-program-sterilized/story?id=15328707#.TyocUVyXS8A, accessed February 1, 2012.
[254] http://www.projectprevention.org, accessed January 20, 2012.

extremely negative reactions that forced sterilization receives in the 21st-century, my expectation was that the sterilization programs would have been more polarizing throughout their existence. However, public awareness of the programs dropped significantly after the 1950s, which I had anticipated. Prior to researching my thesis, I was also unaware of the variety of citizens involved in the sterilization process. As the second chapter demonstrated, even physicians who held similar positions, such as le Vann and Butler, could vary dramatically in philosophy and execution of the programs.

I strongly believe that the study of eugenics should be important to North Americans as eugenics remains prevalent in the 21st century. I have demonstrated that eugenics was not a monolithic, static practice, but a movement that morphed and altered itself to adhere to the mentality of the day. Women are still sterilized by "well-intentioned" doctors, without consent, in 21st century North America. In 2006, a Massachusetts mother consented to have an IUD inserted after a Caesarean section, but the doctors instead elected to perform a tubal ligation without her consent. Although unusual, this story is not unheard of, especially in poor communities around North America.[255] Even more prevalent is positive eugenics. Selective gender abortion, and the push for "North American" couples (*white* North American couples) to have more children to keep up with China and India are both forms of eugenics that are still extremely widespread.

There is still much research to be done on the history of eugenics in Canada and the United States. Smaller studies can provide more in-depth revelations about the people involved and the society that produced the ideology. Some of the authors of

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[255] Sarah Netter, **"***Mother of Nine Sues Massachusetts Hospital After Unauthorized Sterilization*" http://abcnews.go.com/Health/mother-sterilized-lawsuit-claims/story?id=9474471#.TytYllyXS8A, accessed on February 2, 2012.

eugenics history, such as Kühl and Ordover, have written that they are concerned with the path that genetic testing is taking. Continuing to study and scrutinize eugenics can help identify how a program that desired to do good for society, could eventually become one of the most controversial issues in the twentieth century. Changing social mores and new information can quickly turn yesterday's sensation into today's disgrace.

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