

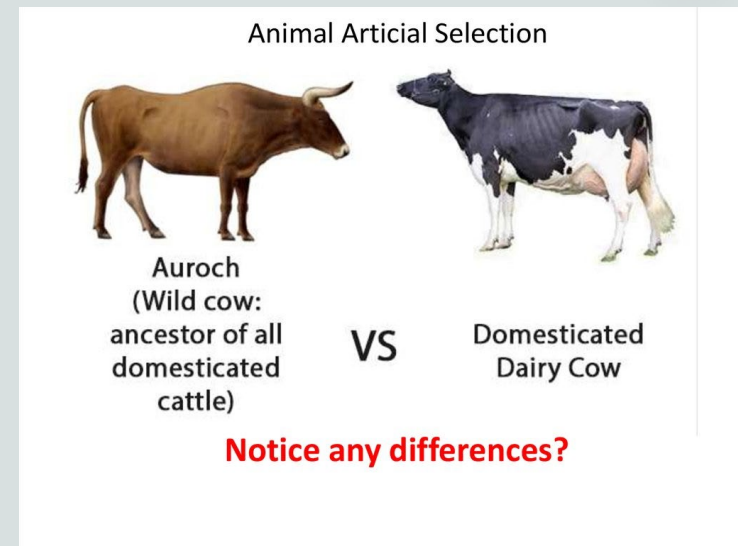
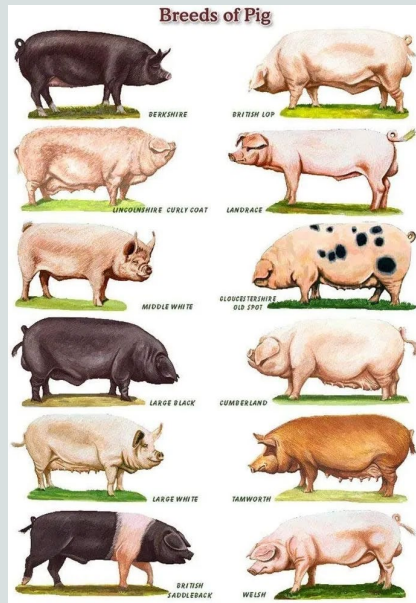
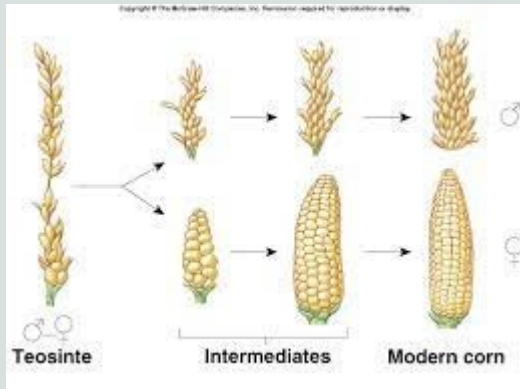


Social Darwinism and Eugenics in America

Class V Power Point Slides

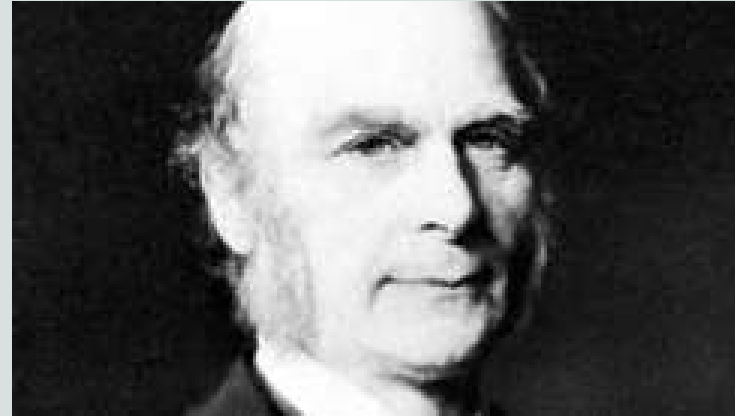
Eugenics and Social Darwinism

- Darwin used examples of artificial selection to make his argument for natural selection.
- In Agriculture we see the power of such selection and selective breeding



Eugenics

- Is the idea that like other animals and plants we can through artificial selection change humans
 - is a set of beliefs and practices that aim to improve the genetic quality of a human population
- Sir Francis Galton a cousin of Charles Darwin first proposed improving humans in 1883.
- Two types of eugenic selection
 - Positive is enabling the best to reproduce more
 - Negative is prohibiting the worse to reproduce and leave bad genes.



Francis Galton

Positive vs Negative Eugenics

- Positive eugenics (Francis Galton): Encourage people with “good genes” to have more children
- Negative selection: Don’t allow “bad genes” to be reproduced
 - Forced sterilization or abortion
 - Marriage restrictions
 - “Euthanasia”

Social Darwinism in America Was a Social Progressive Religious Movement

- In 1888 at the National Conference of Charities and Correction
 - Reverend S. J. Barrows stated : *"It is our duty," he said, "to prevent them from bequeathing this burden of imbecility to a future generation."* and Reverend M. Dana said *"idleness, thriftlessness, and vice propagate themselves," especially through the "excessive fecundity of the reckless classes in the population."* Suggesting a negative eugenics to remove the immoral degenerate genes from humans
 - Christine Rosen. *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (Kindle Locations 374-375). Kindle Edition.
- In 1912, Dean Sumner wrote an edict for the Episcopal Church (Chicago) should not marry any one without a health certificate (not marry the unfit).
- In 1913, Newell Dwight Hillis stated: *"The time has gone by when we can any longer say that race degeneracy is simply a bugaboo created by pessimists mists and alarmists,"* Hillis said. *"A tide of degeneracy is rolling in upon us," and "for the individual and the nation, it is true that he who soweth the wind shall reap the whirlwind."*
 - Christine Rosen. *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (Kindle Locations 1285-1287). Kindle Edition.

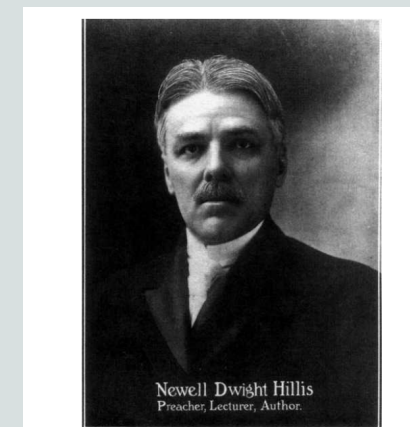
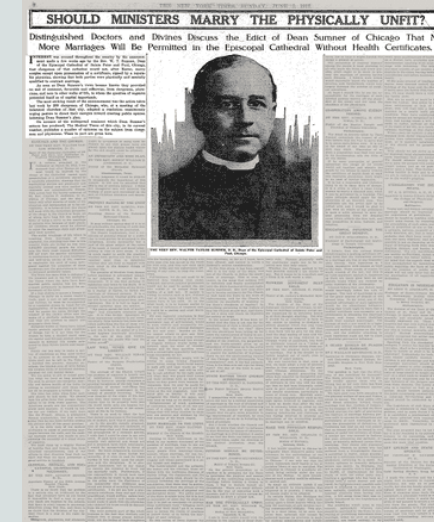


FIGURE 3.1 Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, Plymouth Church, New York. Records of the Redpath Chautauqua, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

Movement to a Social Political Movement

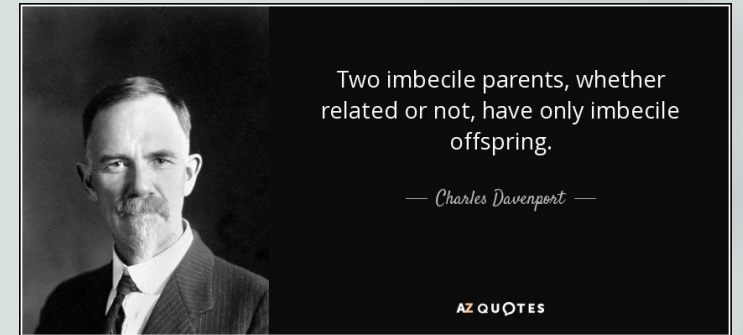
- In 1904, the Station for Experimental Evolution of the Carnegie Institute opened at Cold Springs Harbor, NY
 - directorship of Harry Laughlin
 - Charles Davenport
 - "There is no so certain and economical way to improve man's environment as to improve his nature."
 - Hofstadter, Richard. *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (p. 165). Beacon Press. Kindle Edition.
 - Eugenics Record Office opened in 1914
 - Collected data on family inherited defects
- In 1906, the American Breeder's Association (later to become the American Genetics Association) created a eugenics committee.
 - David Starr Jordan (president of Stanford) was chair. Considered the first Eugenics Organization in America.
- In 1911, John Harvey Kellogg founded the Race Betterment Foundation.
 - Developed a pedigree registry
 - Held annual conferences



FIGURE 3.2 Banquet for delegates to the First National Conference on Race Betterment, Battle Creek Sanitarium, 1914. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

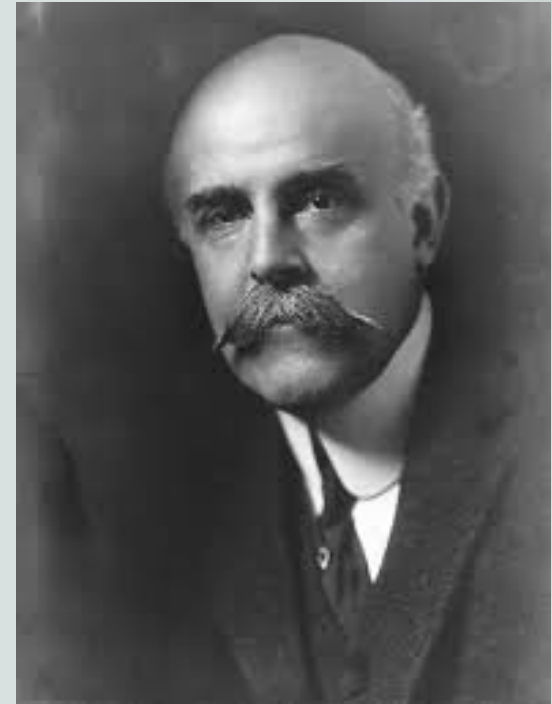
Seminal Works of the Movement

- Published *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* in 1911.
- In the book he stated: "The general program of the eugenicist is clear - it is to improve the race by inducing young people to make a more reasonable selection of marriage mates; to fall in love intelligently. It also includes the control by the state of the propagation of the mentally incompetent."



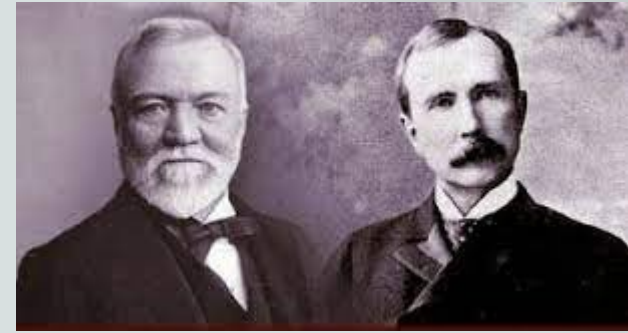
Seminal Works of the Movement

- In 1916, Madison Grant published *The Passing of the Great Race: or, The Racial Basis of European History*.
 - Hitler praised the book.
 - A rigid system of selection through the elimination of those who are weak or unfit—in other words social failures—would solve the whole question in one hundred years, as well as enable us to get rid of the undesirables who crowd our jails, hospitals, and insane asylums. The individual himself can be nourished, educated and protected by the community during his lifetime, but the state through sterilization must see to it that his line stops with him, or else future generations will be cursed with an ever increasing load of misguided sentimentalism. This is a practical, merciful, and inevitable solution of the whole problem, and can be applied to an ever widening circle of social discards, beginning always with the criminal, the diseased, and the insane, and extending gradually to types which may be called weaklings rather than defectives, and perhaps ultimately to worthless race types.



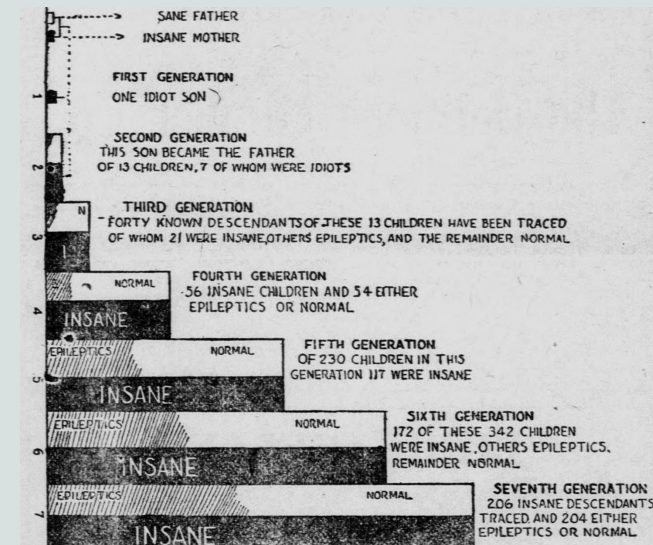
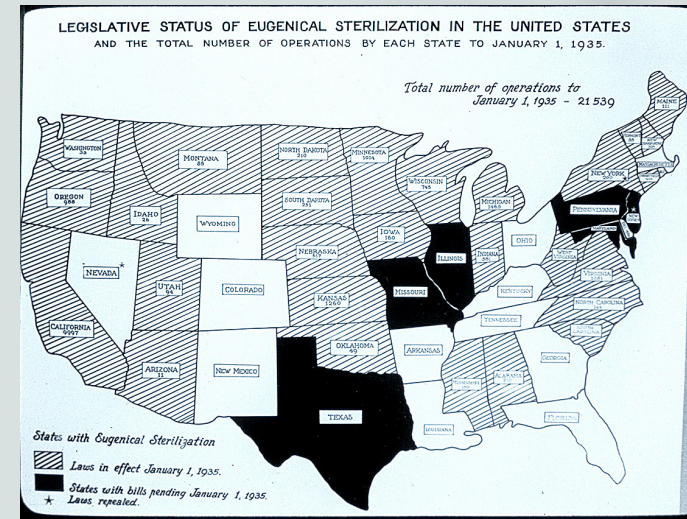
Laissez-Faire Capitalism

- John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie
 - Both preached "survival of the fittest" in business.
- Carnegie stated: "While the law of competition may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department."
 - Felt that his workers did not deserve more and should be poor
- Rockefeller stated: "the growth of a large business is merely a survival of the fittest."



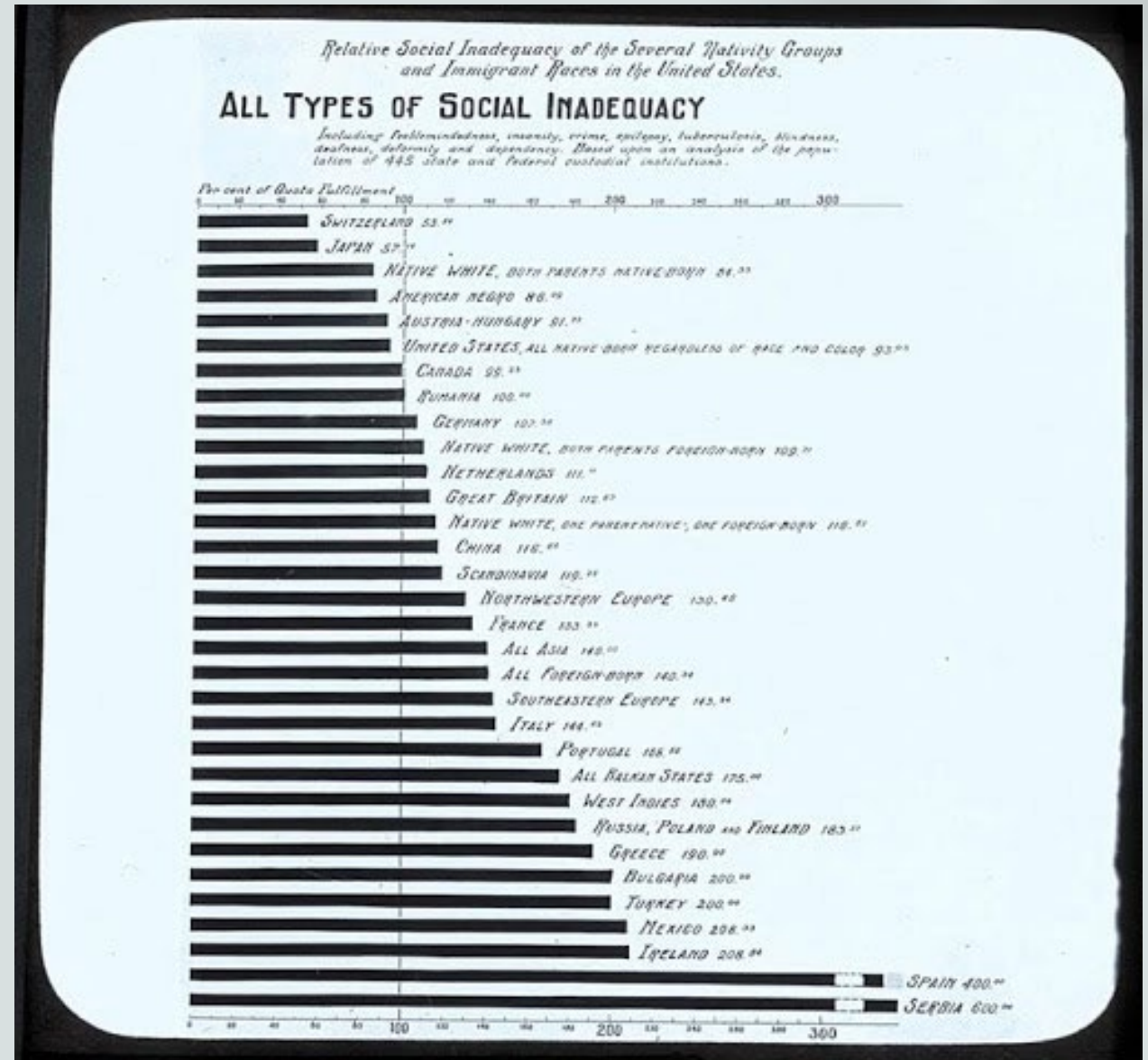
Forced Sterilization Laws in America

- First law passed in 1907 in Indiana.
- compulsory sterilization laws adopted by over 30 states
- Hard to quantify 70,000 to 120,000 in US
- 1927 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 8-1 in *Buck v. Bell* that laws mandating the sterilization of the mentally handicapped did not violate the Constitution. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes made an explicitly eugenic argument in writing for the majority:
 - "It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind."



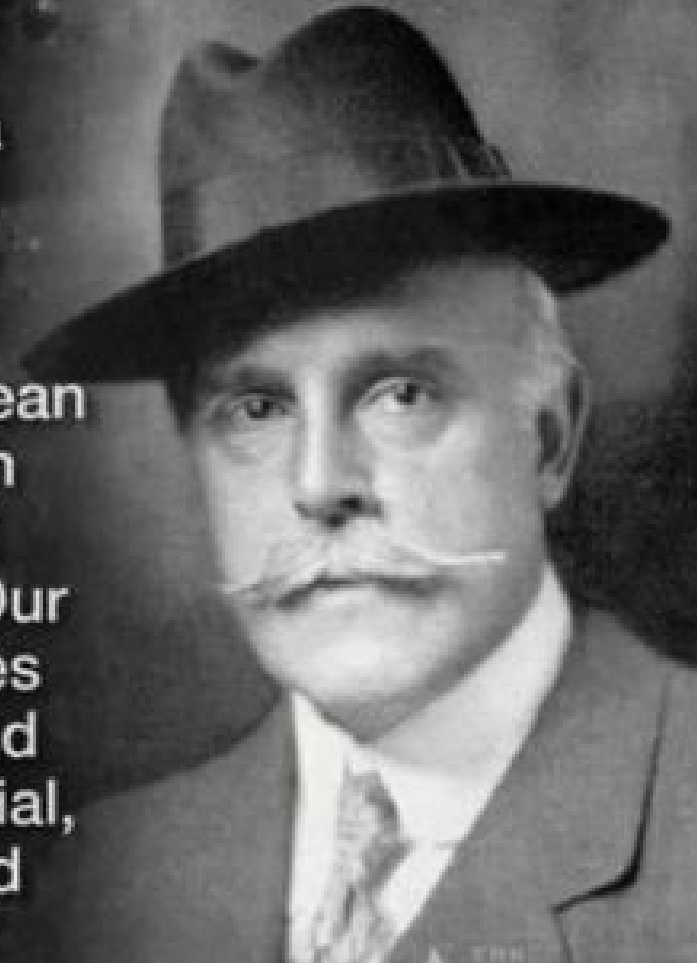
Immigration

- In 1911, Immigration Restriction League President Prescott Hall asked his former Harvard classmate Charles Davenport of the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) for assistance to influence Congressional debate on immigration.
- In 1920, Laughlin appeared before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Immigration and Naturalization.
 - "American" gene pool was being polluted by a rising tide of intellectually and morally defective immigrants - primarily from eastern and southern Europe. Sympathetic to Laughlin's message, Committee Chairman Albert Johnson of Washington State appointed Laughlin as "expert eugenics agent."
- The resulting law, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, was designed consciously to halt the immigration of supposedly "dysgenic" Italians and eastern European Jews, whose numbers had mushroomed during the period from 1900 to 1920.
 - The method was simply to scale the number of immigrants from each country in proportion to their percentage of the U.S. population in the 1890 census
 - Under the new law, the quota of southern and eastern Europeans was reduced from 45% to 15%.



Madison Grant

The new immigration ... contained a large and increasing number of the weak, the broken, and the mentally crippled of all races drawn from the lower stratum of the Mediterranean basin and the Balkans, together with hordes of the wretched, submerged populations of the Polish Ghettos. Our jails, insane asylums and almshouses are filled with this human flotsam and the whole tone of American life, social, moral and political has been lowered and vulgarized by them.



US and German Ties in Eugenics

- American and German eugenicists were in close contact with each other, especially after World War I.
- The Germans did borrow much of their 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Defective Offspring (the so-called 'sterilization law') from the model sterilization law drawn up for the various states by Harry H. Laughlin
- Hitler proudly told his comrades just how closely he followed the progress of the American eugenics' movement. "I have studied with great interest," he told a fellow Nazi, "the laws of several American states concerning prevention of reproduction by people whose progeny would, probably, be of no value or be injurious to the racial stock."
- Rockefeller funded German eugenics research and work

Discussion

- Has the idea been [vanquished](#)? Watch video
- Why was Social Darwinism and Eugenics so widely accepted.
- Is eugenics playing God?
- Is eugenics immoral?
- Do we have a moral obligation to improve humans?
- What are good traits?
- Are races genetically different to an extent that matters for survival?
- Is survival of a species a moral good?
- Can we improve the human species?