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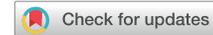
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“Well-Bred and Well-Fed,” the Science Service Covers Eugenics: 1924 to 1966

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Founded in 1921 by then-retired newspaper publisher, E.W. Scripps, Science Service was established as an agency for the popularization of science. The original intent of Science Service was to publish its content in newspapers and popular science periodicals. Eventually, however, the organization produced its own popular publications, including the *Science News-Letter* (*News-Letter*). Stories written by Science Service writers and occasional contributors appeared in the *News-Letter* and were often re-published in the mainstream press. In spite of its high aspirations, Science Service became a promoter of eugenics, likely because E.W. Scripps himself believed in the protoscience. From the early-to-mid 1920s until 1966, the *News-Letter* published articles endorsing the principles, values, and doctrines of eugenics. The goal of this case study is to explore the previously unexamined role Science Service played in propagandizing (or at least promoting) eugenics’ unscientific, nativist ideas about heredity in Science Service publications and in the popular press.

Therefore, it should be society’s rule that no adult persons who, for any reason, are suspected of being unable to be parents of sound and healthy offspring should be allowed to be parents.

—E.W. Scripps¹

The first quarter of the twentieth century was a period of considerable change within American journalism as the occupation’s “loose-jointed” ways became more professional, a canon of ethics was promulgated, and the notion of objectivity was taking shape.² Science journalism, or science popularization as it was known, was also evolving.³ Then, as now, scientists and science popularizers disagreed regarding how best to disseminate science to the public. Journalists often found scientists aloof and their journal articles impenetrable.⁴ Scientists frequently complained that

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This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

journalists did not always explain scientific matters in the serious, precise style scientists thought those matters deserved.⁵

Although the need for good writers who could engage the public with accurate, accessible science was acknowledged by scientists and journalists alike, there was much debate about how journalism should cover scientific developments. In 1894, H.G. Wells, a science journalist and author of science fiction classics, suggested that popularizers should model their narratives after Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" or Conan Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes" series because "... the public delights in the ingenious unravelling of evidence."⁶ On the other hand, one American scientist noted that the "malodorous condition" of popular science had been due, in part to the "fabricators, exaggerators, emotionalists, ignoramuses, and exploiters" who occupied the field of science popularization.⁷ American science journalism was on the cusp of change, however, with the potential to mend the rift between scientists and journalists while providing the public with accessible, accurate information about science. The establishment of a "new agency for the popularization of science" helped launch that change.⁸

In 1919 retired newspaper publisher, E.W. Scripps developed a prospectus for "The American Society for the Dissemination of Science."⁹ With the help of zoologist, W.E. Ritter, and input from magazine editor and chemist, Edwin E. Slosson, Scripps established what would eventually be called, Science Service.¹⁰ Scripps and his colleagues hoped that, through its publications and activities, the agency would increase interest in and improve the public understanding of science.¹¹ At Scripps' request, Ritter recruited both scientists and journalists to join representatives of the Scripps estate on the board of trustees. Ritter (a scientist) and Scripps (a journalist/publisher) were themselves on the original board of trustees.¹²

In a 1921 article published in *Science*, Slosson (the first director of Science Service) wrote, "[i]n a democracy like ours it is particularly important that the people as a whole should so far as possible understand the aims and achievements of modern science."¹³ Slosson also observed that the success of democracy and the prosperity of the individual depended upon "the ability of the people to distinguish between real science and fake, between the genuine expert and the pretender" and that the agency would not indulge in propaganda "unless it be propaganda to urge the value of research and the usefulness of science."¹⁴

Slosson's words were in keeping with Scripps' vision for Science Service. In the ensuing years, however, Science Service did not always uphold the values proclaimed by Scripps and Slosson, but all too frequently indulged in advocacy for a cause or even propaganda.¹⁵ This case study, which draws heavily on Science Service materials—particularly the

Science News-Letter (*News-Letter*)—examines the previously unstudied role the organization played in promoting eugenics’ unscientific, nativist ideas about human heredity in Science Service publications and in the popular press. In addition to examining the role Science Service played in publicizing eugenics, this essay will also probe whether Science Service and its journalists violated its own aspirational goals by engaging in advocacy journalism or its more sinister counterpart, propaganda, on behalf of the American eugenics movement.¹⁶

Although establishing the impact of Science Service’s eugenics reporting is difficult from this temporal distance, there is considerable evidence suggesting that the science news organization Scripps founded and its publications were major influencers in the science journalism landscape, particularly in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s when eugenics was a popular movement in the US.¹⁷ This evidence will be presented as will brief textual analyses of representative Science Service articles that mark the rise and fall of the organization’s eugenics reporting between 1921 and 1966.

Why Studying Eugenics’ Hidden History Matters

In an age when accurate scientific information is more important than ever, it is essential that we examine eugenics’ veiled past closely to avoid repeating mistakes made by those who promulgated inhumane public policies based on the principles of eugenics. In order to learn from the difficult history of the American eugenics movement, however, one must uncover and examine the movement’s chronicles.

Although many details pertaining to the American Eugenics movement have been revealed in the past half-century, other aspects of the once-popular belief system have remained obscure. Public historians, Ralph Brave and Kathryn Sylva, suggested in 2007 that the lack of a collective memory regarding the eugenics movement was the result of that history having been hidden from view. “For most intents and purposes, and despite sustained scholarship over the past two decades, the history of American eugenics has been disappeared.”¹⁸

Brave and Sylva are not the only scholars who have made note of the hidden history of the US Eugenics movement.¹⁹ In 2003, historian and renowned eugenics scholar, Paul A. Lombardo, presented a lecture titled “Eugenics: Lessons From a History Hiding in Plain Sight,” to the Senate Select Committee on Genetics, Genetic Technologies and Public Policy of the California Legislature.²⁰ And in “The Public and Private History of Eugenics: An Introduction,” Burke and Castaneda use the phrase “profound amnesia” to characterize the public understanding of the history of eugenics.²¹

Because much of the history of the US eugenics movement has remained shrouded, it is not surprising that the extent to which eugenics permeated a science news organization founded by E.W. Scripps has not yet been explored.²² Scrutinizing the historical dissemination of eugenic ideas and values published under the guise of science news provides insights that are valuable today when “[t]he specter of eugenics hovers over virtually all contemporary developments in human genetics.”²³

The possibility that purportedly deleterious genes could be removed from the human gene pool has been increased by advances in human biology and medicine, prompting some of the same bioethical questions that were sparked by the twentieth century eugenics movement. In his 2019 Jeremiah Metzger Lecture, “A Brief History of eugenics in America: Implications for medicine in the 21st century,” physician Allen M. Spiegel noted: “With the advent of major advances in molecular and cellular biology that are already being applied to clinical medicine in the 21st century, we have entered a new eugenics era. It is critical that we learn the lessons of our earlier eugenics movement if we are to avoid making the same flawed decisions now.”²⁴

Spiegel’s concerns about a new eugenics era in the twenty-first century are not hypothetical. Debates related to eugenics erupt regularly in the media.²⁵ For example, in 2019 conservative *New York Times* columnist, Bret Stephens, himself the descendant of secular Jewish parents, wrote a column titled “The Secrets of Jewish Genius.”²⁶ In the unexpurgated version of his commentary, Stephens cited an article on inheritance co-authored by Henry Harpending, a known white nationalist and eugenicist.²⁷ Stephen’s commentary aroused considerable controversy which contributed to the resignation of the editor who had hired him.²⁸

In addition to offering “scientific racism” as an explanation for Jewish intelligence, Harpending and his co-authors argued that the same selection pressures they say increased the frequency of high intelligence might also have amplified the frequency of two clusters of Ashkenazi disease genes.²⁹ It should be noted that the journal in which the Harpending article was published, the *Journal of Biosocial Science*, was once titled the *Eugenics Review*. The *Eugenics Review* was reformulated in 1968 and retitled. At least one critic, however, has suggested that the *Journal of Biosocial Science* is still a bastion of eugenic thought.³⁰

Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics

Understanding the rise and fall of eugenics and trends in journalistic coverage of the topic requires a brief explanation of Francis Galton’s proposal that human heredity could be manipulated for the betterment of humanity. Galton’s vision of eugenics was presented at a meeting before the Sociological Society held at the School of Economics of London

University on May 16, 1904. At this meeting biostatistician and Galton associate, Karl Pearson, introduced Galton who read his manuscript “Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims.” The manuscript was published later that year in the *American Journal of Sociology*.³¹

Galton wrote that the aim of eugenics was “to bring as many influences as can be reasonably employed, to cause the useful classes in the community to contribute *more* than their proportion [of ‘good’ qualities] to the next generation.”³² This would be accomplished, according to Galton, by disseminating and promoting the laws of heredity “so far as they are surely known,” by studying the rates at which classes of society contribute to the rise or decline of that society and the circumstances under which large and thriving families reproduce, by placing restrictions on marriage to prevent “unsuitable” marriages, and by persistently promoting the national importance of eugenics such that society “shall be represented by the fittest races.”³³

It is important to understand that Galton was, primarily, a statistician, not an experimental scientist. Much of his “research” was based on collecting facts and numbers from questionable sources, sorting and analyzing those facts and numbers, then drawing unsupported scientific conclusions from this “data.”³⁴ Galton focused on positive eugenics, which encouraged the increase of so-called “desirable traits.” Eugenists who followed Galton, including many American advocates of eugenics, proposed the elimination of deleterious traits using negative eugenics—repressive methods such as forced birth control, sterilization, or other unethical approaches to eliminate individuals with “undesirable traits.” Many of the “traits” eugenists wanted to eliminate were subjective characteristics of unknown genetic (or environmental) etiology—such as criminality, “feble-mindedness,” and “shiftlessness.”³⁵

It has been said that eugenics never evolved into a mature science but was merely a protoscience in search of vindicating data.³⁶ One of the most profound scientific deficiencies central to eugenics—that multifaceted and often subjective human behavioral traits were governed by simple Mendelian genetic principles—was eradicated from the study of heredity as it matured into the science of genetics, but not before an American eugenicist, Charles B. Davenport, his assistant, Henry Laughlin, and a corps of technicians attempted to map complex “traits” like “feble-mindedness” onto family trees constructed from answers to questionnaires, fieldworker studies, and records garnered from public institutions, as well as from hearsay and rumor about long-dead individuals whose traits were under investigation.³⁷

The Rise of Eugenics in Twentieth-Century America

Between 1890 and 1920, economic growth in the US had drawn millions of immigrants looking for a better life.³⁸ This influx of humanity

prompted concerns that “dilution” of the preferred “biological stock” by the new immigrants would cause a moral and intellectual decline within the previously established US populace. Eugenics soon gained a foothold in the US, finding fertile ground at a time when many Americans who had achieved economic success, status, and power were questioning the wisdom of allowing immigrants and those deemed biologically “unfit” to “weaken” the country’s white, primarily Western European “race.”³⁹

Eugenics’ flawed principles of human heredity and unscientific concepts of “race” would be used in the US to justify sterilization of those deemed unfit and passage of laws restricting immigration by certain groups of people. The result was, what Thomas C. Leonard called, “a crude eugenic sorting of groups into deserving and undeserving classes” that informed many economic and social policies during the Progressive Era.⁴⁰ “For a time,” noted Leonard, eugenics was “popular, respectable, and widespread.”⁴¹

That eugenics was able to develop a following so quickly in the United States was in part due to Davenport’s successful efforts to obtain financing for a eugenics research organization from several of the most highly-regarded American philanthropists and philanthropic institutions of the early twentieth century—including Mary Harriman (the widow of railroad executive, Edward Henry Harriman), the Carnegie Institution, and John D. Rockefeller Jr.⁴²

In 1910, with funds he obtained from Mary Harriman, Davenport established the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) at Cold Spring Harbor in Long Island, New York. Davenport, who had graduated from Harvard in 1892 with a Ph.D., hired Harry H. Laughlin to be the ERO superintendent.⁴³ In the 1920s, Laughlin (who would be awarded an honorary Ph.D. in 1936 by Heidelberg University, a German institution sympathetic to eugenics) politicized eugenics by providing the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization with “evidence” purporting to prove that immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe were more likely to be afflicted with insanity, mental deficiency, and criminality than immigrants from other regions in Europe.⁴⁴

The ERO—in conjunction with the American Breeders’ Association, The American Eugenics Society, the Eugenics Research Association, The Galton Society, the Institute of Family Relations, and the Race Betterment Foundation—became a hub of eugenic “research” in the US from the early 1900s until 1939.⁴⁵ The ERO was closed in 1939, when the Carnegie Institution concluded, after an extensive assessment of the office’s work, that ERO studies were insufficiently rigorous.⁴⁶ When the ERO closed, the office’s data and materials were distributed among the American Philosophical Society, Jackson Laboratories, and the Genealogical Society of Utah.⁴⁷

The US eugenics movement had a far-reaching influence on immigration and public health policy. For example, members of the eugenics movement drafted and advocated for the passage of sterilization laws in many US states during the twentieth century.⁴⁸ In 1927, the US Supreme Court approved a Virginia statute “providing for the sexual sterilization of inmates of institutions supported by the State who shall be found to be afflicted with an [sic] hereditary form of insanity or imbecility.”⁴⁹ This decision has yet to be overruled, in spite of the fact that the complex genetic and environmental underpinnings of disorders described imprecisely by terms such as “insanity” or “imbecility” were then and still are largely undetermined. Coerced sterilization of prison inmates continued well into the twenty-first century.⁵⁰ The reach of the American eugenics movement extended beyond America’s national boundaries. Author Edwin Black has alleged that the Nazis incorporated American eugenics principles into German eugenics programs.⁵¹

In addition to Davenport’s skill at obtaining financing and his determined follow-through in establishing and operating the Eugenics Record Office, the influence of the eugenics movement was facilitated by the American news media which published many serious stories about eugenics and the work of eugenicists as well as poems, human interest stories and cartoons with a “eugenical” twist.⁵²

The Birth of Science Service and Its Newsletter

After retiring from a long career as a newspaper publisher, E.W. Scripps began to work out the details of his new enterprise—an organization that would disseminate science news in an entertaining yet accessible way. A detailed “disquisition” archived at the Ohio University Libraries memorialized E.W. Scripps’ discussions with Ritter, a partner in the new enterprise, regarding the aims and organization of the undertaking.⁵³

In this disquisition, Scripps wrote that:

The first aim [of the organization] should be just the reverse of what is called propaganda. Its objects should never be to furnish argument or facts for the purpose of producing partisans for any particular cause. Its sole object should be to present facts in readable and interesting form—facts on which the reader could and probably would base his opinion on a subject of politics, sociology or concerning his duty with regard to himself and with regard to his fellows.⁵⁴

In the same disquisition, Scripps acknowledged that the daily press engaged in “opinion-making activities” and that newspapers were the source from which the vast majority of people continued educating themselves past their formal schooling.⁵⁵ Scripps envisioned his new

organization as a way to disseminate scientific information and as a vehicle with which he could influence the public on matters of importance.⁵⁶

With an endowment from Scripps and additional support from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the National Research Council (NRC), and the National Academies of Science (NAS), Science Service moved into offices in Washington, D.C. and began its work, which included publishing a science-oriented bulletin and, several years later, a science newsletter.⁵⁷ The board of trustees for the organization was composed of “men of science,” journalists, and representatives of the Scripps estate.⁵⁸ A significant cadre of the editors, managers, directors, and members of the board of trustees Scripps and Ritter engaged to run Science Service (including Slosson and Watson Davis, as well as many successor managers, employees, and trustees) had deep connections to eugenics.⁵⁹

The *Science News-Letter*, one of the best known of the new organization’s publications, evolved from an earlier Science Service publication, the *Science News Bulletin* which consisted of “mimeographed sheets of news stories ... mailed to newspaper clients who could choose to reprint any or all of the material.”⁶⁰ In 1922, the *News-Letter* began as a weekly mimeographed “magazine” intended, not for client newspapers, but for “personal, school or club use.”⁶¹ The ephemeral nature of the *Science News Bulletin*—and early copies of the *News-Letter*—makes it difficult to trace the percentage of Science Service articles printed in both the *Bulletin* and the *News-Letter*, although the two publications are said to have contained much of the same material, including articles that were also published in mainstream newspapers.⁶²

In an annual report published in the May 13, 1927 issue of *Science*, Slosson and Davis noted that Science Service’s syndicated services, magazine articles, books, radio talks and lectures had “an aggregate circulation of some 14,500,000.”⁶³ The men also noted that the daily *Science News Bulletin* went to seventy-six newspapers and other publications with more than three and a half million newspaper subscribers. In the same report, Slosson and Davis claimed that the *News-Letter* alone had a circulation of more than five thousand, five hundred.⁶⁴ And in a report presented at the 1928 annual meeting of Science Service, Slosson and Davis noted that the organization’s syndicated services were used by two hundred publications and had also been extended to all of the twenty-six (then existing) Scripps-Howard newspapers.⁶⁵ In 1948, Watson Davis would report that the *News-Letter* alone had a circulation of more than fifty thousand subscribers.⁶⁶

Science News, the modern incarnation of the *News-Letter*, observed in 1997 that by the 1940s, Science Service materials were published in more

than 100 newspapers with a total circulation of more than thirty million readers and that much of the material published in the *News-Letter* contained stories that had been provided to newspapers and magazines.⁶⁷ The *News-Letter* ran regularly (usually weekly) between 1924 and 1967 when Science Service was reorganized after years of financial difficulties and renamed the Society for Science and the Public.⁶⁸ As part of this reorganization, the *News-Letter* was renamed *Science News*.⁶⁹ Today, *Science News* is a highly respected magazine dedicated to informing the public about science.⁷⁰

E.W. Scripps' "Eugenical" Legacy

From its earliest origins, Science Service was steeped in the lore and the language of eugenics. In many of his unpublished private papers, especially those written between 1908 and 1925, Scripps expressed his interest in and support for eugenics—including advocacy of some of the most extreme measures suggested by practitioners of negative eugenics.⁷¹ Scripps was known as an advocate of the common man who “published papers for the working class.”⁷² Scripps’ writings on eugenics, however, frequently expressed views that were inconsistent with his reputation as a friend of the working class. The seeming inconsistency arising when otherwise progressive reformers supported eugenics, especially the principles of negative eugenics, has been addressed by scholars including Thomas C. Leonard.⁷³ Like many others of his day, Scripps accepted eugenics as a way to solve social problems through biology—in part by breeding a better “race.”

In an unpublished disquisition titled, “Eugenics: Thoughts Suggested by Raymond Pearl’s Article in *World’s Work*, January 1908,” Scripps explained the basis of his belief in eugenics.

It is the idea of Galton and his disciples—among others Pearl—that there are good types and that there are bad types of men, and that the race as a whole or nations should undertake the task of superintendence of public breeding, that the so called bad classes, the criminal, the insane and the pathological should be sterilized, or at least cross bred with higher types of men to raise the level. It is also the idea of these men that the race or the nation should make it its business to see that the so called [sic] good classes propagate in greater numbers.⁷⁴

Scripps also elaborated upon a plan for “scientific race breeding” where a “eugenically inclined despot ... would set about renewing the human race....”⁷⁵ Men and women would be classified according to fitness, men would be assigned one hundred females and the despot “would protect all these females against their possible fertilization by unfit males.”⁷⁶ In the world imagined by Scripps, those who were not deemed fit to breed would be sterilized.⁷⁷ Scripps’ Raymond Pearl disquisition

was not merely a reiteration of the content of Pearl's article. Scripps outlined his plan—with specifics—for the breeding of better humans and speculated that within two or three generations of constantly breeding ten million women, the population of North America would have increased, which would enable this new population of people to dominate the nations of the world “in a position of absolute rulership.” Ironically, Raymond Pearl later renounced and reformed some of his eugenic beliefs (although some say his supposed repudiation of eugenics was not complete.)⁷⁸

Throughout the 1920s, 30s, and into the 40s, until the realities of the Nazi extermination camps were fully revealed, eugenics possessed an aura of respectability. E.W. Scripps' science news organization likely contributed to this impression by actively engaging with and promoting eugenic principles and causes. Watson Davis, editor of the *News-Letter* who later became director of the Science Service, was actively involved in the eugenics movement during his entire association with the Service—from 1921 until 1967 when he died.⁷⁹ Davis authored many articles about eugenics that were published in both the *News-Letter* and in mainstream newspapers, including a series of articles about a Race Betterment conference held in Battle Creek, Michigan.⁸⁰

Davis was a member of the American Eugenics Association's (AES) board of directors for several decades coinciding with his Science Service tenure and corresponded extensively with AES in his official capacity as director of Science Service. Correspondence, stored in Science Service archives maintained by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., establish that the relationship between Davis and AES was strong and long-lasting.⁸¹ Science Service published pro-eugenics articles in its *News-Letter* as early as 1924—the same year Harry H. Laughlin testified before congress in favor of limiting immigration to the US on the basis of his eugenical “statistics.”⁸² The *News-Letter* continued to publish articles about eugenics long after Scripps' death in 1926, printing articles by and about eugenics supporters, their doctrines, their organizations, and their activities.⁸³ The *News-Letter* also advised its readers when new books about eugenics were published.⁸⁴

According to Edward Caudill, in “Science in the Publicity Laboratory: The Case of Eugenics,” American eugenicists harnessed the press to generate publicity for their movement.⁸⁵ Caudill maintains that the American Eugenics Society “aggressively pursued media attention” and “whip[ped] up publicity for their cause of improving the human race by selective breeding.”⁸⁶ Based upon Science Service files, it appears that this was the case with AES and the Service. The AES pursued Science Service quite aggressively, as evidenced by the frequent letters, notices, and announcements sent by the AES to Science Service—many addressed directly to the

wire service director, Watson Davis.⁸⁷ Science Service responded enthusiastically to this contact. For example, in a May 19, 1931 letter Science Service writer, Marjorie Van de Water, wrote the following to Mr. C.P. Ives 2d [sic]—managing editor of *Eugenics: A Journal of Race Betterment* and a member of AES: “We are greatly interested in the work of the American Eugenics Society, and feel that any news from this organization, particularly news of the regular meeting, should be reported for the newspapers we serve.”⁸⁸

AES actively recruited Davis to become an officer on its board and requested that the science news service director provide pro-eugenics material to be used in a pamphlet intended to lure new members to the AES. Davis provided a quotation that read: “Well bred, well fed, well housed, well clothed, well healthed, well informed—a civilization giving these minimal privileges to its citizens will be well worth living in.”⁸⁹

Science News-Letter’s Coverage of Eugenics

Between the years 1924 and 1966, the term “eugenics” appeared in at least 185 *Science News-Letter* articles and briefs, although the rate of publication decreased precipitously between approximately 1935 and 1945—the period during which the US eugenics movement began to recede in prominence.⁹⁰ The American Eugenics Society was mentioned at least nine times in the *News-Letter* between 1928 and 1964, always favorably. Many of the *News-Letter* articles in which the term “eugenics” appeared covered substantive eugenics-related topics. Examination of a selection of *News-Letter* articles illustrates the degree to which Science Service promoted eugenics. With very few exceptions, Science Service articles in the organization’s *News-Letter* were supportive of the eugenics movement.

The earliest *Science News-Letter* story referencing eugenics was published under the following headline: “Immigration Selection Advocated by Eugenists [sic].”⁹¹ The article reviewed a report authored by the Committee on Selective Immigration of the Eugenics Committee of the United States (Committee) and made public by Yale professor of political economy, Irving Fisher. The Committee’s report cited “findings” by Harry Laughlin of the Eugenics Record Office wherein Laughlin asserted that 44% of the “socially inadequate” groups in 445 institutions were either foreign born or had parents who were foreign born.

Laughlin also represented that northwestern Europe contributed proportionally fewer individuals to the “inadequate” group than southeastern Europe. Laughlin’s congressional testimony contributed to the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 which limited immigration according to a national origins quota and completely excluded immigrants from Asia.⁹²

This *News-Letter* “article” consisted almost entirely of material taken directly from Laughlin’s report, without supplemental interviews or additional sources and without any opposing evidence.

Two years later, a *News-Letter* article reported that America’s story of migration and settlement suggested that “good blood” successfully sought out the most desirable environments while the descendants of “poorer stock” settled in less desirable places.⁹³ This article was derived primarily from an address by Dr. Arthur R. Estabrook to the Eugenics Research Association, and—as with the previous article—was written without reporting from opposing sources, without interviews, and with no context.

The intersection of eugenics and public health was a tricky one for the *News-Letter*, as public health advocacy was an important progressive value. In “‘Unfitness’ Not Encouraged,” Science Service defended against complaints by public health critics that public health work increased “survival of the unfit.” Although this article reported a more humane approach to public health than eugenicists often advocated, the article cited as its only source, a talk presented by Professor H.S. Jennings at the meeting of the National Tuberculosis Association.⁹⁴

Another article suggested that the settling of European “stock” among “primitive” races could produce “[m]ental and temperamental incompatibilities ... which combine something of a white man’s intelligence and ambition with an insufficient intelligence to realize that ambition.”⁹⁵ This article’s single source was Charles B. Davenport—perhaps the most extreme eugenicist in the US, except perhaps for his associate, Harry Laughlin. Meanwhile, a review of Walter B. Pitkin’s book, *The Twilight of the American Mind*, published in the *News-Letter* under the headline “A Goal for Eugenics,” consisted entirely of quotations from Pitkin’s book.⁹⁶

The *News-Letter*’s eugenics-related articles frequently documented the incorporation of eugenic thought and principles into major US organizations. For example, a 1932 *News-Letter* article titled “Encouraging Fit Parents to Bear Children Advised,” quoted comments Dr. Percy W. Toombs made at a meeting of the American Medical Association. At the meeting, Toombs had complained that more thought was put into cattle breeding and poultry raising than selective breeding of humans.⁹⁷ An August 1932 *News-Letter* article urged eugenicists to drop the cattle breeding analogy, which the author noted might alienate some members of the public.⁹⁸

In November of 1933, the *News-Letter* published an article titled, “Eugenicists Approve New German Law.” Here the *News-Letter* reported, without criticism or context, that a new German law providing for the sterilization of “degenerates” had been favorably reviewed in an editorial published in *Eugenical News*, the journal of the American Eugenics

Society. The editorial said, in part: “It is difficult to see how the new German Sterilization Law could, as some have suggested, be deflected from its purely eugenical purpose, and be made an instrument of tyranny for the sterilization of non-Nordic races.”⁹⁹

Between 1939 and 1943, the number of *News-Letter* articles mentioning eugenics dropped from forty-two (the number of eugenics articles published between 1934 and 1938) to eighteen and between 1944 and 1948 the number of articles plummeted to two.¹⁰⁰ Several factors might have contributed to this decline. The first was the definitive anti-eugenics stance taken by the Catholic church, reported at least as early as 1930.

In a 1930 Catholic encyclical, titled *Casti Conubii*, Pope Pius XI declared that eugenics proponents “put eugenics before aims of a higher order,” that “the family is more sacred than the State,” and that “it is wrong to brand men with the stigma of crime because they contract marriage, on the ground that, despite the fact that they are in every respect capable of matrimony, they will give birth only to defective children, even though they use all care and diligence.”¹⁰¹

In May of 1935, Pope Pius XI delivered an anti-eugenics address to physicians attending the International Hospital Congress. Pope Pius commended the physicians’ group for dropping the topics of eugenics and sterilization from the conference agenda. In no uncertain terms, the pope condemned eugenics and sterilization policies as “a return to paganism” that would spread “incalculable evils ... to all mankind.”¹⁰² Pope Pius’ address anticipated the evils exposed at the liberation of Nazi extermination camps which revealed the extremes to which the German government had taken its eugenics policies—factor number two in the decline in popularity of eugenics.

A third factor, which occurred most closely in time to the dramatic decrease in Science Service articles about eugenics, was the closure of the Eugenics Record Office in 1939.¹⁰³ By 1941, two years after the closure of the Eugenics Record Office, Science Service published only two articles referencing eugenics, a 75% reduction in eugenics articles from 1939.¹⁰⁴

A Conduit for Eugenics Stories in the Mainstream Press

The *News-Letter* was not the only vehicle Science Service used to disseminate its articles about eugenics. Science Service also sponsored a syndicated wire service that—for a subscription fee—sent stories (including stories about eugenics) to mainstream newspapers. Not surprisingly, Scripps newspapers were among those that published Science Service stories.¹⁰⁵

One of the first Science Service articles about eugenics published in a mainstream newspaper displayed the following headline: “Big Families For Well Born, Urged To Rescue Race—Inborn Qualities of Civilized Communities Deteriorating, Says Darwin.”¹⁰⁶ The “Darwin” referenced in the headline was Major Leonard Darwin, “son of the famous Charles Darwin, and president of the Eugenics Education society [sic].”¹⁰⁷ The article, which had a Science Service byline, recounted the recommendation of Leonard Darwin that “[t]o assure racial progress the well born of this generation should forget personal discomfort and raise large families that will arrest the racial deterioration that is taking place because of the multiplication of the inferior and ill endowed.”¹⁰⁸

Many Science Service eugenics articles published in the mainstream press were articles touting the findings of the Eugenics Record Office and other eugenics researchers, meetings of various eugenics societies, the passage of laws authorizing sterilization of vulnerable individuals, and briefs about “fitter families” or “better babies” competitions held at state fairs and other public gatherings.¹⁰⁹ Science Service’ efforts to promote eugenics included a series on sterilization that appeared in 1934 in both the *News-Letter* and the *El Paso Herald-Post* (A Scripps newspaper).¹¹⁰ The first article appeared under the headline “Sterilization Legal Now In Many States,” along with an editor’s note (likely added by the *Herald-Post*’s editor) acknowledging the use of sterilization by the Nazis. The editor noted: “Sterilization as used by the Nazis in Germany has raised a storm of public interest. This is the first of a series of articles in which sterilization is discussed unemotionally and scientifically.”¹¹¹ The story began by stating that, while compulsory sterilization of the “unfit” in Hitler’s Germany had astounded many people, twenty-seven states in the US and several other nations had passed sterilization laws. The article noted that “[s]ponsors of the movement in this country are working to increase the number until it includes the full roster of states.”¹¹²

The second article in the series, titled “Operation For Sterilization Usually Simple” appeared under the following editor’s note: “Sterilization in Germany has aroused widespread interest, it is being advocated anew in this country. This is the second of a series of articles discussing this situation.”¹¹³ The third article in the series, titled “Eugenics Sterilization Seen as Aid to Nature, Would Eliminate Unfit Who Are Now Nursed to Maturity Under Protection of Modern Civilization,” cited supporters of eugenic sterilization including E.S. Gosney, president of the Human Betterment Foundation, and Professor G. H. Parker, then head of Harvard University’s zoology department.¹¹⁴

The last article in the series, titled “Some Oppose Sterilization As Unscientific,” was significant in that it advanced arguments made by sterilization opponents. Where most Science Service eugenics articles were

not critical and usually advocated for eugenic policies, this article provided a critique asserting that: eugenics was too young a science to provide sufficient support for sterilization, heritability of genetic weaknesses was too speculative, sterilization might “prevent the birth of a genius,” compulsory sterilization could be abused by those in authority, and “positive eugenics” was not necessarily the solution to better breeding because of uncertainty as to which traits to select.¹¹⁵

In 1934, Science Service published a book titled *The Advance of Science*. One of many Science Service books edited by Davis, *The Advance of Science* contained a chapter titled “Race Betterment” which was an edited version of the four sterilization articles that had appeared in the *El Paso Herald-Post*.¹¹⁶ In his preface to the book, Davis acknowledged Science Service writer, Jane Stafford, as the author of the chapter.¹¹⁷

In late 1934, a Science Service article titled, “Sterilization Failure, Is View of Physician” was printed in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The article, which was published several months later in the *News-Letter*, recounted the opinion of Dr. Lionel S. Penrose, a research medical officer of the Royal Eastern Counties Institution at Colchester, England, that compulsory sterilization was a failure on economic, eugenic or humanitarian grounds and that only a small percentage of the next generation would benefit from sterilization.¹¹⁸

The Dodo as a Symbol of Eugenic Beliefs

Most articles about eugenics that were published in the *News-Letter* maintained a serious tone, but scattered among the more solemn articles, the *News-Letter* twice published poetry with a eugenic theme—poetry in which the extinct dodo made a cameo appearance. The first eugenics poem, “The Dodo’s Dolorous Gloom,” written by Richard Ashman, was praised and awarded a prize in the March 12, 1927 issue of the *Science News-Letter*.¹¹⁹ A second eugenics poem, titled “Dodo and Ginkgo Tree,” was published in the *News-Letter* on December 2, 1927 under the subject heading “Eugenics.”¹²⁰

While these poems might seem antiquated in tone and diction, they articulated many of the beliefs that undergirded eugenic thought. The Ashman poem expressed metaphorically the concern of many early twentieth century eugenicists that the ill-prepared of the human species would be unable to adapt to the environment because of the inadequacy of their physical and behavioral traits—traits the poem compared to the vulnerable dodo’s flightlessness. The dodo, through no fault of its own, had failed to survive the challenges of Darwinian selection.¹²¹ The poem closed with an apocryphal warning—the dodo (and by metaphorical

extension, the human race) did not/would not survive because of the species' inadequate devotion to the survival of its line.¹²²

The poem "Dodo and Ginkgo Tree" is reminiscent of an earlier *News-Letter* article claiming that the medical profession—had been "coddling" the public. The message of the piece was that "socialized activities" (such as the provision of maternity care) constituted a Malthusian threat to the future of all humans.¹²³ The article, titled "Medical Association President Criticizes Modern Coddling of Weak," described the speech of incoming American Medical Association president, Dr. William A. Pusey (Chicago) who attacked the Sheppard-Towner Maternity act on the grounds that it was similar to the "medical socialism" of Europe and that, compared to providing medical care to needy individuals, limiting population size was the greater social good.¹²⁴

"Dodo and Ginkgo Tree" also used the nativist narrative of "race suicide"—a belief prevalent among many eugenicists that mixing strong, "honorable" people (the "dexter" kin of the poem) with the weak and "less honorable" (the "sinister" kin of the poem) would bring about the decline of the stronger kin.¹²⁵ This sentiment calls to mind Madison Grant's book, *The Passing of the Great Race: Or the Racial Basis of European History* a treatise in which Grant lamented the decline of, what he considered, the superior "Nordic Race" and promoted eugenics as desirable social policy.¹²⁶

The Science News-Letter and Eugenics after World War II

Science Service coverage of eugenics declined precipitously during the war years and never quite recovered. That is not to say, however, that Science Service never published another article that took a eugenic slant. After World War II, many eugenicists re-invented themselves or re-framed their work. For example, as public opposition to sterilization increased, eugenicist Paul Popenoe resigned from the Human Betterment Foundation, and joined the American Institute of Family Relations where he focused his work on encouraging positive eugenics in the context of providing marriage and family counseling.¹²⁷

The *News-Letter's* penultimate reference to the term eugenics, published before the *News-Letter* was replaced by its successor publication, *Science News*, was a reference to and apparent endorsement of the published proceedings of a 1964 symposium held by the Eugenics Society.¹²⁸ The last reference to the term "eugenics" found in the *News-Letter* before it was succeeded by *Science News*, is contained in an article titled "How to Transmit Culture."¹²⁹ The unidentified author of the article quoted Nobelist, George W. Beadle, as saying that cultural inheritance is "transmitted from generation to generation in a cumulative way through

various channels of communication.”¹³⁰ Beadle also noted, “... we must admit that the question remains open as to whether there are significant differences in inborn abilities of races or other large population groups to acquire the components of a given pattern of culture.”¹³¹

Discussion

During the heyday of America’s twentieth century eugenics movement, Science Service—via its syndicated news service, its *News-Letter*, and other materials the organization published—promoted eugenics by explaining the eugenics movement’s “principles,” quoting eugenic “experts,” and citing eugenic “studies,” all with little or no commentary, critique, or context. The organization’s interest in eugenics appears to have originated with its founder, E.W. Scripps, as well as Science Service co-founders and associates, especially Edwin Slosson and Watson Davis.

The evidence that Scripps was a eugenics supporter is extensive. In multiple private writings Scripps expressed a favorable opinion of eugenics. He was actively involved in engaging Ritter, Slosson, and Davis (all “eugenics partisans” to one degree or another) as leaders of Science Service. After Scripps’ death, the pro-eugenics culture he, Ritter, Slosson, and Davis had established continued as a significant number of individuals (including scientists) who were eugenics supporters served on the Science Service board of trustees over the years.

Science Service’ relatively transparent pro-eugenics stance, an easy viewpoint to maintain at a time when eugenics was popular and acceptable, might lead one to argue that the organization’s coverage of eugenics did not constitute propaganda. On the other hand, Science Service’ frequent failure to report alternative viewpoints, its gushing coverage of sterilization statutes, and approving report about Germany’s new eugenics law, all suggest that the science news agency had wandered into the realm of propaganda. At least one Science Service eugenics article (about discarding the cattle-breeding analogy) reads like a public relations lesson for eugenicists.

There is, therefore, sufficient evidence from which to conclude that Science Service coverage of eugenics *was* propaganda. Whether Science Service’ eugenics reporting was or was not, in fact, propaganda, it most certainly constituted advocacy and was, frequently, just not very enterprising journalism. In spite of idealistic assertions about fostering democracy, avoiding propaganda, and teaching the public how to distinguish real science from fake, Science Service failed to reach its aspirational goals—at least with regard to eugenics.

The degree of influence Science Service likely had on the public is reflected by circulation numbers for its publications, the reach of its

articles—in Science Service publications and in the popular press—and by the posthumous recognition Davis received from President Lyndon B. Johnson and Glenn T. Seaborg, then chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. According to Davis' *New York Times* obituary, Johnson noted that Davis had awakened the minds of millions of young Americans to the possibilities of science. Seaborg said of the noted science journalist and editor, "Watson Davis has done more for the popularization of science and the understanding of science by the general public than any other individual."¹³² Interestingly, there was not one mention made in the *Times* obituary of Davis' involvement with eugenics, while his obituary in the *News-Letter* mentioned Davis' membership in the AES.¹³³

Eugenics was eventually exposed as having dubious scientific value, but not before countless vulnerable individuals were deemed unfit to reproduce and sterilized or worse.

Science Service's engagement with eugenics was not the only time the organization deviated from its professed principles. In its coverage of the Scopes trial, military neuropsychiatry, and a variety of other topics, Science Service frequently veered into the realm of advocacy, if not propaganda.

Scholar Garland Allen has noted that, to the extent any criticism of eugenics was published, it was largely relegated to academic journals that many members of the public would not have seen.¹³⁴ With so many scientists working for and with Science Service, however, Allen's explanation cannot exonerate Science Service from its complicity in promoting eugenics. And in the 1934 article, "Some Oppose Sterilization As Unscientific," a Science Service writer noted several of the most serious criticisms of eugenics—including the allegations that eugenics was too "young" a science to be the basis for sterilization and that heritability of genetic weaknesses was too speculative. In spite of the revelations in this article, Science Service continued to write favorably about eugenics for some time.

The promoters of eugenics, including those involved with Science Service, took an immature "science" and used it to support draconian public policies. The alternative would have been to wait for scientists to apply the scientific method (the gold standard for Western science) by hypothesizing, experimenting, re-examining hypotheses, and experimenting further until a higher degree of scientific certainty was achieved. Unfortunately, the promoters seized upon "data" that justified their social policies before the underlying science was fully baked.

If there are object lessons to be learned from Science Service' promotion of eugenics, they include the following: First, that in our hyper-partisan society where eugenics has re-emerged as an issue (as with the

Stephen's commentary) and where science is distorted for political purposes, we must be vigilant and guard against scientific pretenders who threaten to spin faulty science into bad public policy, Second, that it is not easy—for scientists, let alone journalists—to distinguish real science from fake. Third, that in spite of decades of popularizers trying to explain science, the public still does not understand how the scientific method works. And finally, that neither science nor science journalism can save society from its follies if the citizenry ignores science.

Limitations of this case study include the fact that the influence of eugenics was so pervasive and its tendrils extended so far and so wide, that it was impossible to incorporate into this manuscript all relevant aspects of the eugenics movement's divisive history. The good news, however, is that this topic presents fertile ground for further exploration of the role the media played in propelling the American eugenics movement forward.

Endnotes

1. E. W. Scripps, "An Unutopian Utopia," (1919): 3–4, E.W. Scripps Papers, Mahn Center for Archives & Special Collections (henceforth MCASC), Ohio University Libraries (henceforth OUL). <https://media.library.ohio.edu/digital/collection/scripps/id/5743/rec/3>.
2. Andre Porwancher, "Objectivity's Prophet: Adolph S. Ochs and the New York Times," *Journalism History* 36, no. 4 (2011): 187; Stephen A. Banning, "The Professionalization of Journalism: A Nineteenth-Century Beginning," *Journalism History* 24, no. 4 (1998): 157–63; American Society of Newspaper Editors, "Code of Ethics or Canons of Journalism," 1922; Ronald R. Rodgers, "'Journalism is a Loose-jointed Thing': A Content Analysis of Editor & Publisher's Discussion of Journalistic Conduct Prior to the Canons of Journalism, 1901–1922," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 22, no. 1 (2007): 66–82.
3. In *How Superstition Won and Science Lost: Popularizing Science and Health in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 31–40, John C. Burnham describes the history of science popularization and science popularizers in America.
4. H. G. Wells, "Popularizing Science," *Science* 50, no. 1291 (1894): 300; William A. Hamor and Lawrence W. Bass, "The Popularization of Science," *Science* 70, no. 1826 (1929): 632–4; Watson Davis, "The Rise of Science Understanding," *Science* 108, no. 2801 (1948): 240.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Wells, "Popularizing Science," 300.
7. W. E. Allen, "Popular Science," *Science* 55, no. 1426 (1922): 454.
8. Edwin E. Slosson, "A New Agency for the Popularization of Science," *Science* 53, no. 1371 (1921): 321–3. In addition to the establishment of Science Service, there were other contemporaneous examples of journalists being hired by news organizations to write about science. For example, after graduating in 1897 from City College in New York where he majored in science, Waldemar Kaempffert wrote first for *The Scientific American*,

then for *Popular Science Monthly*. In 1927, Kaempffert became science editor for the *New York Times* where he stayed for 26 years, with a 3-year interlude during which he worked for the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, “Waldemar B. Kaempffert Dies: Science Editor of the Times, 79,” *New York Times*, November 28, 1956, 35.

9. Edward W. Scripps, “Disquisition by Scripps, E.W., American Society for the Dissemination of Science, March 5, 1919,” E.W. Scripps Papers, MCASC, OUL. <https://cdm15808.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/search/searchterm/Disquisition%20E.W.%20Scripps%20Dissemination/order/nosort>.
10. E. W. Scripps, “Suggestions As To The Work of the Science News Service Submitted by Edwin E. Slosson,” in *History of the Scripps Concern*, 308–19, E.W. Scripps Papers, MCASC, OUL. <https://cdm15808.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/scripps/id/8668/rec/2>; Slosson, “A New Agency,” 321–3; Davis, “The Rise of Science Understanding,” 241.
11. Science Service activities would eventually include leasing a wire service to deliver about eight hundred words per day to subscribing newspapers across the US, creating mail copy to be sent to subscribing newspapers, producing radio shows such as the “Adventures in Science” program which was aired by the Columbia Broadcasting System, publishing the *Science News-Letter* with its circulation of more than fifty thousand, creating science kits for the public, sponsoring fifteen thousand science clubs in secondary schools, organizing a Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarship programs, and publishing scientific books. Davis, “The Rise of Science Understanding,” 239–46.
12. Davis, “The Rise in Science Understanding,” 241; James C. Foust, “E.W. Scripps and the Science Service,” *Journalism History* 21, no. 2 (1995): 61.
13. Slosson, “A New Agency,” 321–3.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Susan E. Swanberg, “Psychological Armor: The *Science News-Letter* Warns Against Propaganda,” *Journalism Studies* 20, no. 13 (2019): 1–20; Susan E. Swanberg, “Wounded in Mind: Science Service Writer, Marjorie Van de Water, Explains World War II Military Neuropsychiatry to the American Public,” *Media History* 26, no. 4 (2020): 472–88.

During the Scopes trial, for example, Watson Davis (then the managing editor of Science Service) collaborated with the Scopes defense team while also writing and publishing articles about the trial for the *News-Letter* and the mainstream press. Watson Davis, “The Rocks and Hills of Dayton Restify (sic) for Evolution,” *The Science News-Letter* 6, no. 220 (1925): 2–3; “Barnyards, Fields, and Forests to Furnish Exhibits for Defense, Hills and Dales to Support Claim,” *Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), July 15, 1925, 1; Watson Davis, “Watson Davis Replies,” *Chattanooga Daily Times* (Chattanooga, Tennessee), July 15, 1925, 2; Kimbra Cutlip, “The Scopes Trial Redefined Science Journalism and Shaped It to What It Is Today,” *Smithsonianmag.com*, July 10, 2015, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/scopes-trial-redefined-science-journalism-shaped-it-what-it-is-today-180955881/>.

16. For the purpose of this essay, advocacy journalism is defined as “journalism that advocates a cause or expresses a viewpoint.” *Merriam-Webster.com*; see also Caroline Fisher, “The Advocacy Continuum:

- Towards a Theory of Advocacy in Journalism,” *Journalism* 17, no. 6 (2016): 711–26. The definition of “propaganda” has evolved over the last century, but definitions applied herein were penned by Science Service writer, Emily C. Davis and staff journalist, Marjorie Van de Water, who wrote about propaganda for Science Service. Davis wrote, “Propaganda may be good. It may be bad. That depends on its use. Either way, it is an effort to get across information or ideas to people, in hope of influencing them.” Emily Davis, “To Swing Off to War,” *Science News-Letter* 36, no. 3 (1939): 42–43; Marjorie Van de Water described what she considered were the more sinister aspects of propaganda in her *News-Letter* article “Propaganda: An Insidious Assault Upon Intelligence,” *Science News-Letter* 34, no. 15 (1938): 23–235. Several of the most noteworthy hallmarks of propaganda per Van de Water were that it appeals to emotions rather than intelligence and often conceals its sources.
17. See notes 60–69 for circulation information and other evidence of the importance of Science Service in the science media landscape. Also see “Science and the Newspaper Press in the United States,” *Nature*, February 9, 1935, 240; “News Value of Science,” *Nature*, April 25, 1936, 697; “Popularization of Science,” *Nature*, April 3, 1937, 578–9; Faust, “E.W. Scripps and the Science Service,” 58–64.
 18. Ralph Brave and Kathryn Sylva, “Exhibiting Eugenics: Response and Resistance to a Hidden History” *The Public Historian* 29, no. 3 (2007): 35–51.
 19. Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* (Washington, DC Dialog Press, 2003); Teryn Bouche and Laura Rivard, “America’s Hidden History: The Eugenics Movement,” *Scitable: A Collaborative Learning Space for Science*, <https://www.nature.com/scitable/forums/genetics-generation/america-s-hidden-history-the-eugenics-movement-123919444/>. Paul A. Lombardo, *Eugenics: Lessons From a History Hiding in Plain Sight* (Sacramento, CA: Senate Publications, 2003), 3; Chloe S. Burke and Christopher J. Castaneda, “The Public and Private History of Eugenics: An Introduction,” *The Public Historian* 29, no. 3 (2007): 5–17.
 20. Lombardo, *Eugenics: Lessons From a History Hiding in Plain Sight*.
 21. Burke and Castaneda, “The Public and Private History of Eugenics,” 9.
 22. Even Cynthia Barnett’s excellent history of Science Service, “Science Service and the Origins of Science Journalism, 1919–1950,” Dissertation, Iowa State University (2013) did not mention the term “eugenics.”
 23. Daniel J. Kevles. *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), vii.
 24. Allen M. Spiegel, “A Brief History of Eugenics in America: Implications for Medicine in the 21st Century,” *Transactions of the American Clinical and Climatological Association* 130 (2019): 216–34.
 25. As this manuscript was being revised, new controversies emerged regarding the connections of early twentieth century reproductive rights activist, Margaret Sanger, and conservationist, John Muir, to eugenics. Samantha Schmidt, “Planned Parenthood to Remove Margaret Sanger’s Name from N.Y. Clinic Over Views on Eugenics,” *Washington Post*, July 21, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/07/21/margaret-sanger-planned-parenthood-eugenics/> (accessed on July 22, 2020); Michael

- Brune, “Pulling Down Our Monuments,” *Sierraclub.org*, July 22, 2020. <https://www.sierraclub.org/michael-brune/2020/07/john-muir-early-history-sierra-club>.
26. Bret Stephens, “The Secrets of Jewish Genius,” *New York Times*, December 27, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/opinion/jewish-culture-genius-iq.html>.
 27. Gregory Cochran, Jason Hardy, and Henry Harpending, “Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence,” *Journal of Biosocial Science* 38, no. 5 (2006): 659–93.
 28. Matthew Iglesias, “The Controversy Over Bret Stephens’s Jewish Genius Column, Explained: Inquiries into Jewish Genes Always Seem to Lead Someplace Ugly,” *Vox*, December 30, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/12/30/21042733/bret-stephens-jewish-iq-new-york-times>; Adam Shapiro, “The Dangerous Resurgence in Race Science,” *American Scientist*, January 29, 2020. <https://www.americanscientist.org/blog/macroscope/the-dangerous-resurgence-in-race-science>. See also Marc Tracy, “James Bennet Resigns as New York Times Opinion Editor,” *New York Times*, June 7, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/07/business/media/james-bennet-resigns-nytimes-op-ed.html>.
 29. “... [S]cientific racism is a scientific tradition in which biology is used not only to prove the existence of race, but also, to maintain existing social hierarchies.” Joel Z. Garrod, “A Brave Old World: An Analysis of Scientific Racism and BiDil,” *McGill Journal of Medicine* 9, no. 1 (2006): 54; Cochran et al., “Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence,” 685–8.
 30. Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, “Essays in the History of Eugenics,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74, no. 1 (2000): 180–3.
 31. Francis Galton, “Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims,” *American Journal of Sociology* 10, no. 1 (1904): 1–25, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/211280>. It is significant that Galton’s article was published in a sociology journal, as it had more to do with, what Galton called the “actuarial side of heredity”—counting and applying statistics to the complex human qualities that interested Galton—than to the science of heredity. Gregor Mendel’s work, which itself was an incomplete story of the complexities of heredity, was “rediscovered” in 1900.
 32. Galton, “Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims,” 3.
 33. *Ibid.*, 3–6.
 34. Daniel Okrent, *The Guarded Gate* (New York: Scribner, 2019), 10–24.
 35. Charles B. Davenport, *Eugenics Record Office Bulletin No. 6: The Trait Book* (New York: Cold Spring Harbor, 1912); Charles B. Davenport, “Research in Eugenics,” *Science* 54, no. 1400 (1921). 391–7.
 36. Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* (Washington, DC: Dialog Press, 2003), 16. Eugenics, which was based upon actuarial data rather than experimentation, was once considered science, but is now deemed pseudoscience. According to Finnish scholar and philosopher of science, Raimo Tuomela, science (as opposed to pseudoscience, protoscience, and non-science) is testable and falsifiable. “If science does not fulfill the requirement of testability,” wrote Tuomela, “it does not reproduce and develop but stiffens and turns into pseudoscience.” Raimo Tuomela, “Science, Protoscience and Pseudoscience,” in *Rational Changes in Science: Essays on Scientific*

- Reasoning*, edited by J. C. Pitt and M. Pera (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1987), 84.
37. For critiques of eugenics see Garland E. Allen, “Eugenics and Modern Biology: Critiques of Eugenics, 1910–1945,” *Biology Faculty Publications & Presentations* (2011), 5; Also see the appendices of Galton’s original eugenics article which contain critiques (both positive and negative) by individuals present at the unveiling of Galton’s theories – Galton, “Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims,” 1–25. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/211280>; Garland E. Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, 1910–1940,” *Osiris* 2 (1986): 228–30; Steven A. Farber, “U.S. Scientists Role in the Eugenics Movement (1907–1939): A Contemporary Biologists’ Perspective,” *Zebrafish* 5, no. 4 (2008): 244; Okrent, *The Guarded Gate*, vi–vii, 123, 131–136; Davenport, “Research in Eugenics.”
 38. Ran Abramitzky and Leah Boustan, “Immigration in American Economic History,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 54, no. 4 (2017): 1311–45; Charles Hirschman and Elizabeth Mogford, “Immigration and the American Industrial Revolution From 1880–1920,” *Social Science Research* 38, no. 4 (2009): 897–920.
 39. Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: or The Racial Basis of World History* (New York: Scribner, 1916), 42–51.
 40. Thomas C. Leonard, “Retrospectives: Eugenics and Economics in the Progressive Era,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, no. 4 (2005): 207.
 41. *Ibid.*, 208.
 42. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 54–5; Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office ...,” 242–3; 234–6.
 43. Oscar Riddle, “Biographical Memoir of Charles Benedict Davenport 1866–1944,” *National Academy of the United States of American Biographical Memoirs Volume XXV Fourth Memoir* (1947): 78, <http://www.nasonline.org/publications/biographical-memoirs/memoir-pdfs/davenport-charles.pdf>.
 44. Randall D. Bird and Garland Allen, “The J.H.B. Archive Report: The Papers of Harry Hamilton Laughlin, Eugenicist,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 14, no. 2 (1981): 351; Laughlin, Harry, “Analysis of America’s Modern Melting Pot.” Testimony of Harry H. Laughlin before the US House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Washington, DC, November 21, 1922, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015037355750&view=1up&seq=1>.
 45. The American Eugenics Society (AES), founded in 1922 by Henry E. Crampton, Irving Fisher, Madison Grant, Harry H. Laughlin, and Henry Fairfield Osborn, was one of the three most prominent national eugenics organizations in the United States and included most of the leading eugenicists in the US, *Margaret Sanger Papers Project*, <http://www.nyu.edu/projects/sanger/proposals/neh/DIRECTORY.htm>; Oscar Riddle, “Biographical Memoir of Charles Benedict Davenport 1866–1944,” *National Academy of the United States of American Biographical Memoirs Volume XXV Fourth Memoir* (1947): 78, <http://www.nasonline.org/publications/biographical-memoirs/memoir-pdfs/davenport-charles.pdf>. See also Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 102–4.

46. Allen, "The Eugenics Record Office ...," 226, 250–4; Farber, "U.S. Scientists' Role in the Eugenics Movement ...," *Zebrafish*, citing *Carnegie Institution of Washington, Yearbook No. 38* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1939).
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53. "Disquisition: A Formal Inquiry into or Discussion of a Subject," <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disquisition>; Edward W. Scripps, "Disquisition by Scripps, E.W."
54. Edward W. Scripps, "Disquisition by Scripps, E.W.," 4.
55. *Ibid.*, 5.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Slosson, "A New Agency," 321–3.

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65. "The Annual Meeting of Science Service," *Science* 67, no. 1741 (1928): 482.
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70. Gillis, "Looking Back," S10–1.
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82. "Immigration Selection Advocated by Eugenists," *Science News-Letter* 4, no. 145 (1924): 7.
83. For citations of *News-Letter* articles referencing eugenics, see Swanberg, "'Well-Bred and Well-Fed', The Science Service Covers Eugenics: 1924–1966," *Mendeley Data*, V5.
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111. Science Service, "Sterilization Legal Now In Many States," *El Paso Herald-Post*, January 19, 1934, 2.
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119. "The Dodo's Dolorous Doom," *Science News-Letter* 11, no. 309 (1927): 169.
120. "Dodo and Ginkgo Tree," *Science News-Letter* 12, no. 347 (1927): 363.
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122. "The Dodo's Dolorous Doom," 169.
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- exceed the ability of society to produce enough food, a myth that was not true even in Malthus' day. Allen Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 72–84.
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 133. “Watson Davis, 71,” 45; “Watson Davis 1896–1967,” *Science News-Letter* 92, no. 2 (1957): 28–9.
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