“AND THE NORTH CAROLINA MORONS LIVED | HAPPILY EVER AFTER”: THE HUMAN BETTERMENT LEAGUE OF NORTH CAROLINA, 1947-1988

by

Sarah V. Wilds

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
History

Charlotte

2019

Approved by:

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Dr. Mark R. Wilson

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Dr. Peter Thorsheim

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Dr. Jonathan Marks

ABSTRACT

SARAH V. WILDS. “And the North Carolina MORONS LIVED | HAPPILY EVER AFTER”: The Human Betterment League of North Carolina, 1947-1988. (Under the direction of DR. MARK R. WILSON)

Following World War II, eugenics became associated with Nazis abuses, leading many States to end their eugenics programs. North Carolina was a rare exception to this trend. Between 1929 and 1974, North Carolina sterilized over 7,600 people, the majority after 1945. The continued enthusiasm for eugenics in the state was caused by the Human Betterment League of North Carolina (HBL). The HBL was founded in 1947 by the white, professional class of Winston-Salem, centering on such figures as James G. Hanes, Alice Sheldon Gray, and C. Nash Herndon, as well as birth control advocate Clarence J. Gamble of Massachusetts. HBL members were concerned about what they saw as an epidemic of “feeblemindedness,” a catch-all diagnosis for the cause of all social ills that tended to befall lower socio-economic groups and minorities. Through brochures, lectures, conferences, lobbying, films, and the financial support of its well-to-do membership, the HBL resuscitated the dying eugenics program of North Carolina for another three decades.

This paper draws heavily from the HBL, Gamble, and Herndon’s papers, as well as contemporary newspapers, to demonstrate the organization’s widespread impact. The focus on the HBL offers an alternative argument for why North Carolina continued and even accelerated its eugenic sterilization campaign following World War II. This thesis fits in with the numerous state case studies within eugenics historiography, using North

Carolina as both typical of states that continued operation after World War II and unique in the latitudes granted to the Eugenics Board.

Hundreds of sterilization victims are still alive and after decades of legal battles, finally received reparations from North Carolina in 2013. Since then, only Virginia, out of thirty states, has granted reparations to its sterilization victims. This is an ongoing issue as well as a warning against future abuses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dianne Johnson of Coy C. Carpenter Library at the Wake Forest School of Medicine, Matthew Turi of the Southern Historical Collection at the Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Jack Eckert, Jessica Murphy, and Meghan Kerr of Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University for assisting me in the archives. I would also like to thank Nada Salem, Ash and Roxana Hadden, Amy Prokop, and Jeannie Zheng and Zifan Yang for providing accommodations while I conducted my research. Thank you to Dr. John David Smith for providing me with newspaper articles. Thank you to Dr. Aaron Shapiro, Dr. Robert McEachnie, and Dr. David Johnson for providing me with feedback and guidance throughout the process of writing this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION[1]

As an undergraduate at the University of Vermont (UVM), I wrote my senior seminar paper on the influence McGill University in Montreal, Quebec had on the Canadian eugenics movement nationally, despite the lack of a program in Quebec itself. The more I learned about the eugenics movement in Canada and the United States, the more I learned about the eugenics movement in Vermont, and the special role UVM played under the influence of one person.

Henry Perkins was a Professor of Zoology at UVM from 1902 to 1945. He was also the Director of the Eugenics Survey of Vermont from 1925 to 1936, in which he and numerous field workers gathered family histories.[2] While the Eugenics Survey claimed to be looking for families in need of state assistance and education, Perkins was looking for "mental defectives" to justify a coercive sterilization law, targeting poor, rural Vermonters, French Canadians, and Abenaki Indians.[3] Historian Nancy Gallagher writes that many Abenaki Indians concealed their identities by leaving "their ancestral homeland, or [relinquishing] their language, religion, and customs."[4] To this day, the Abenaki are not a federally recognized tribe, despite continuously living in Northern New England.

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[1] The title of this thesis is taken from Clarence Gamble's poem, "The 'Lucky' Morons," written in 1947; in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 97-101; Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 80-81, 84, 98, 103, 112, 125.

[2] "The Eugenics Survey of Vermont: Participants & Partners: HENRY FARNHAM PERKINS (1877-1956)," Vermont Eugenics: A Documentary History, accessed April 3, 2019, http://www.uvm.edu/~eugenics/perkins.html.

[3] Nancy L. Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1990), 44-46, 71-78.

[4] Ibid., 7, 81-82.

Throughout the history of the American eugenics movement, a few people, usually white, middle-class professionals, decided who was desirable and worthy to reproduce their genetic legacy. The power of the few and the ways they justified their actions to themselves and others fascinated me since learning about Perkins. Vermont was a rather small example, however, of the larger movement that took place throughout the twentieth century across the United States.

North Carolina, in contrast, conducted the third most sterilizations in the country, continued its eugenics program after most state programs ended, and granted social workers the authority to initiate sterilization petitions, including against non-institutionalized citizens. Like Vermont, North Carolina was home to white, middle class professionals concerned about "mental defectives" outbreeding their social betters and living off welfare at taxpayers' expense. These concerned citizens formed the Human Betterment League of North Carolina in 1947 to encourage the use of sterilization to cure the state's social ills, even as researchers and policy makers elsewhere distanced themselves from the increasingly unpopular idea of "eugenics." While the Human Betterment League did not create North Carolina's eugenics program, it kept eugenics alive in the state past World War II, when most other states ended their programs.

0.1 What is Eugenics?

Working from his cousin Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, Sir Francis Galton proclaimed that "what Nature does blindly, slowly, and ruthlessly, man may do providently, quickly, and kindly."[5] In 1883, Galton coined the term "eugenics," meaning well born, to refer to the "science" of breeding humans. Eugenics relied on the theories

[5] Francis Galton, *Essays in Eugenics* (London: The Eugenics Education Society, 1909), 42.

that all desirable and undesirable traits were hereditary and that like bred like.[6] Thus, desirable traits could be perpetuated, and undesirable traits bred out of people, as with animals.

The traits eugenicists focused on included personality and behavioral traits as well as physical characteristics.[7] Eugenicists were convinced that social problems such as promiscuity, criminality, insanity, "pauperism," and "feeblemindedness" were hereditary. Feeblemindedness was a broad diagnosis even in the early twentieth century; it referred to "a wide range of mental deficiencies."[8] One definition put forward by Californian eugenicist Paul Popenoe in 1915 was a person who was "incapable of performing his duties as a member of society in the position of life to which he is born."[9]

While many eugenicists claimed to be able to identify feeblemindedness on sight, American psychologist Henry H. Goddard preferred a quantifiable method. Goddard was not alone in this pursuit. In 1904 in France, Alfred Binet designed a test to identify feebleminded children, which he revised in 1908 with help from Théodore Simon. Goddard brought the Binet-Simon test to the United States the same year it was revised. The test classified test-takers by "mental age," determined by comparing a test-taker's score to the average test scores of someone at that age. For example, if a six-year-old scored the same as the average ten-year-old, that child had a mental age of ten. However, if a ten-year-old received the same score as the average six-year-old, that child had a mental age of six.[10] Goddard added a three-tiered system to grade feeblemindedness;

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[6] Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present*, The Control of Nature (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995), 30.
[7] Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 71.
[8] Ibid., 46.
[9] Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 59.
[10] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 77.

those with a mental age of one to two were "idiots," three to seven were "imbeciles," and eight to twelve were "morons."[11] Morons were seen as particularly dangerous because they appeared "normal" but were not.[12] Later iterations of the Binet-Simon test became the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test. Eugenicists generally agreed that the feebleminded possessed an IQ of 70 or below.[13]

Later eugenicists divided eugenics into two main goals: to perpetuate desirable traits, called "positive" eugenics, and to breed out undesirable traits, "negative" eugenics. Galton himself advocated for positive eugenics, arguing to increase "the productivity of the best stock…[was] far more important than that of repressing the productivity of the worst."[14] While eugenicists in North America and Europe sought to increase "superior" individuals through pronatalist policies, they also tried to prevent "inferior" people from reproducing. These "inferior" people tended to be the mentally and physically handicapped, the lower economic classes, and people of color.

0.2 Early Twentieth Century

In the early twentieth century, eugenics became highly racialized, particularly in the United States. While white elites took for granted that people of color were inferior to whites, there was the bigger problem of "degenerate" whites, typically feebleminded or physically handicapped and from the lower socio-economic class.[15] Historian Daniel

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[11] Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 59.
[12] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 78.
[13] E. S. Gosney and Paul Popenoe, *Sterilization for Human Betterment: A Summary of Results of 6,000 Operations in California, 1909-1929* (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1929), 7.
[14] Galton, "Essays in Eugenics," 24, 35, 100; Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 31; Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 85.
[15] Stephanie E. Clayton, "Propagation of the Fittest: The Endurance and Influence of the Human Betterment Foundation" (master's thesis, Claremont Graduate University, 2003), 14.

Kevles writes that eugenicists themselves "were largely middle to upper middle class, white, Anglo-Saxon, predominately Protestant, and educated."[16]

Harvard zoology professor Charles Davenport was a firm believer in negative eugenics.[17] Davenport envisioned a records office to house all the nations' family pedigrees, or family studies.[18] In 1910, Mary Harriman, widow of a railroad magnate, funded the establishment of the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) at Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, New York. Harriman continued to fund the ERO until 1918, when the Carnegie Institution of Washington took over the ERO's financial backing. Harriman granted over half a million dollars to the ERO cause over those eight years. Davenport also received $22,000 over four years from John D. Rockefeller Jr. Davenport used the money to train field workers, who collected family pedigree data across the country.[19] Davenport's spokesman status for the eugenics movement was not desirable to all eugenicists, however. As one mentioned to Galton, "The success of these things always lies in the individual who dominates the whole…and our friend Davenport is not a clear strong thinker."[20]

The First World War did much to distress eugenicists in the United States, as well as Britain. The war was considered "dysgenic," something that perpetuated undesirable traits, for only the bravest and strongest went to war, leaving the handicapped and

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[16] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 64.
[17] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 51; Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 44.
[18] Pedigrees for human families were pioneered by Galton and made famous by Richard L Dugdale (*The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity*, 1877) and Goddard (*The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness*, 1912). Galton used pedigrees to prove that intelligence ran in families. American eugenicists used pedigrees to prove that whole families were feebleminded. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 43.
[19] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 54-55.
[20] Ibid., 48.

feebleminded alive at home to reproduce.[21] World War I also contributed to the specter of mental deficiency as it was the first conflict in which mass intelligence testing was conducted. Studies of U.S. Army tests claimed that the average white draftee, and presumably the typical white American man, had a mental age of thirteen.[22] The tests were also cited as proof that African Americans were less intelligent than whites; according to the data, the average black American possessed a mental age of ten.[23]

The 1920s and 1930s saw the peak of scientific support for eugenics in the United States. Following the mass usage of intelligence tests on the U.S. Army, eugenicists turned their attention to other "trouble" groups, particularly immigrants. Goddard claimed that two out of five immigrants passing through Ellis Island were feebleminded.[24] Davenport also feared that immigrants would make Americans "darker in pigmentation, smaller in stature, more mercurial…more given to crimes of larceny, kidnapping, assault, murder, rape, and sex-immorality."[25] Immigration had been of increasing concern to Americans since the late nineteenth century. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 temporarily suspended entry of Chinese laborers. Congress made the Act permanent in 1902. In 1907, the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan restricted Japanese immigration due to racial fears on the West Coast. In 1917, the Asiatic Barred Zone drew an arbitrary line through Asia, excluding immigration from western China, Central Asia, India, the Pacific Islands, and the Middle East.[26]

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[21] Ibid., 58.
[22] Ibid., 82.
[23] Ibid., 83.
[24] Ibid., 82.
[25] Ibid., 47.
[26] Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 98.

Like Davenport and Goddard, Harry H. Laughlin, hired by the ERO in 1910, was also concerned about immigration. In 1920, Laughlin appeared before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization to testify on the dysgenic nature of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe.[27] Laughlin's timing was ideal for his mission. Due to fear of Bolshevism, Congress passed an emergency restriction act in 1921, limiting European immigration "annually to three percent of the foreign-born of that nationality listed in the 1910 U.S. census."[28] The Chairman of the House Committee, Albert Johnson, appointed Laughlin "Expert Eugenical Agent." In 1922, Laughlin presented a study he conducted at Ellis Island "claiming immigrants were feebleminded and biologically inferior."[29] The emergency act was renewed in 1922 for another two years.[30]

In 1924, Calvin Coolidge signed the Johnson-Reed Act (or Immigration Restriction Act) into law. The Act limited immigration from Europe to 165,000 annually, which was reduced to 150,000 in 1927. Because most Eastern Europeans arrived in the U.S. between 1880 and 1924, the Act only allowed, as Diane Paul writes, the "percent of the foreign-born of the same national origin recorded in the 1890 census."[31]

0.3 Sterilization and its Advocates

Besides immigration restrictions, eugenicists considered methods to prevent feebleminded Americans from reproducing. Many, including Goddard, emphasized sexual segregation, where the feebleminded were placed in institutions for the duration of

[27] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 103.
[28] Ibid., 96.
[29] Ibid., 103.
[30] Ibid., 97.
[31] Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 97.

their reproductive lives.[32] The major problem with institutionalization, however, was cost. Simply building enough institutions to house all the feebleminded in the United States, which Laughlin estimated at 10 percent of the national population, would cost millions, not including the cost of operation.[33] While women could be released from institutions after menopause, men would be institutionalized for life. To Davenport, "It is a reproach to our intelligence that we as a people…should have to support about half a million insane, feeble-minded, epileptic, blind and deaf, 80,000 prisoners and 100,000 paupers at a cost of over 100 million dollars per year."[34]

Advances in medicine during the late nineteenth century offered eugenicists the option of sterilization. Sterilization is an operation that removes a person's ability to reproduce, such as tubal ligation for women and vasectomies for men. One of the first to use sterilization as a eugenic practice was Dr. Harry Sharp of the Indiana State Reformatory, where he sterilized almost 500 men between 1899 and 1907. He later persuaded the state to pass a sterilization law in 1907.[35]

While other states tried to follow suit, several sterilization laws were struck down by the courts for violating the Due Process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In 1922, Laughlin drafted a model sterilization law for states to use, incorporating previous legal challenges to help the bill pass.[36] In 1924, Virginia eugenicists used Laughlin's model to write their own bill. Virginian officials were still concerned about potential challenges to the law, so they chose a young woman, Carrie Buck from the Virginia Colony for

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[32] Ibid., 67-68.
[33] Philip R. Reilly, *The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 61.
[34] Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 78.
[35] Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 82; Reilly, *The Surgical Solution*, 31-33.
[36] Reilly, *The Surgical Solution*, 61.

Epileptics and Feebleminded, to serve as their test subject. Buck was the perfect candidate because her mother was also a patient at the Colony and her recently-born daughter was determined to be feebleminded. Providing Buck with a lawyer favorable to the cause, the Virginia officials pushed the law, and appeals, all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Laughlin even provided an expert deposition without ever meeting Buck.[37] In 1927, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Buck v. Bell* that eugenic sterilization, like compulsory vaccination, was within the legal power of the state. In the majority decision, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "Three generations of imbeciles are enough."[38]

In 1926, Ezra S. Gosney, a wealthy lawyer and citrus planter, established the Human Betterment Foundation (HBF) in California to promote sterilization, believing that the state possessed a right to "protect itself from racial deterioration."[39] The HBF's purpose was to convince middle class, white Americans to have more children while accepting sterilization of the "unfit" as beneficial to both society and the patient. Gosney did this by putting out literature; the first booklet was *Sterilization for Human Betterment* in 1929, cowritten with Paul Popenoe, to promote eugenic sterilization and dispel myths of sterilization, such as explaining that sterilization is not castration and that sterilized people could still enjoy sex.[40] Because of this mission, the HBF did not conduct its own research or provide services; rather it sought to educate the public and referred patients.[41]

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[37] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 110.
[38] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 111; Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 129.
[39] Clayton, "Propagation of the Fittest," 26; Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*, 2nd ed, (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 104-108.
[40] Clayton, "Propagation of the Fittest," 2-3, 22-29.
[41] Ibid., 50.

Throughout its lifespan, the HBF remained small and completely dependent on Gosney for funding. The organization ended following Gosney's death in 1942.

During the Great Depression, California was inundated with economic migrants, mainly farmers, from the Midwest. Californians looked down on the unemployed "Okies" swarming into the state as "degenerates."[42] In California, and across the country, decreasing public funds caused a surge of interest in sterilization in mental institutions. Hospitals and asylums could sterilize patients and release them, decreasing cost to taxpayers. Between the lack of funds, overcrowding, and the HBF's advocacy work, California sterilizations peaked in 1930s and 1940s.[43] California sterilized 20,108 people from 1909 to 1963.[44]

Gosney and the HBF inspired eugenicists and sterilization advocates across the country. In 1937, Marian S. Olden established the Sterilization League of New Jersey, with the sole purpose to pass a compulsory sterilization law in New Jersey. To this end, Olden drafted a bill in 1938 with assistance from the Human Betterment Foundation and the Eugenic Records Office. Like Gosney, Olden wrote pamphlets and conducted mailing campaigns to private citizens and politicians to gather support for a bill.[45]

0.4 The Nazis and World War II

American eugenicists were not the only ones inspired by the work of Davenport, Laughlin, Olden, or the HBF. Within two months of the Nazis coming to power in 1933, the German legislators passed the Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring, which went into effect on January 1, 1934. Adolf Hitler had already laid out

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[42] Clayton, "Propagation of the Fittest," 2, 44, 45; Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 88.
[43] Clayton, "Propagation of the Fittest," 8, 44; Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 118-119.
[44] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, x, 6, 24, 182, 237.
[45] William Ray Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization, 1935-1964" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1978), 45, 52, 47.

his agreement with eugenics in *Mein Kampf* in 1925, stating that a country "must declare unfit for propagation all who are in any way visibly sick or who have inherited a disease and can therefore pass it on, and put this into actual practice…Those who are physically and mentally unhealthy and unworthy must not perpetuate their suffering in the body of their children."[46] Historian Diane Paul writes that the German law "allowed for compulsory sterilization, extended the range of 'hereditary determined' conditions, and required doctors to register cases of genetic disease."[47] In crafting the Law, German eugenicists, who called themselves "racial hygienists," used Laughlin's model sterilization law as well as literature produced by Gosney and Popenoe for the HBF.[48] In return for such praise, many American eugenicists, including Popenoe and Laughlin, admired early Nazi policies for applying the principles of eugenics to the entire nation of Germany.[49]

By 1939, the Nazis moved to euthanizing German patients of hospitals and asylums. These patients were killed by nurses with poison, shot, or gassed in shower rooms.[50] News of these abuses trickled into the United States during the war and flooded in after the end of the war in Europe. During the Nuremberg trials, witnesses testified that the Nazis had been experimenting with sterilization methods on concentration camp inmates. Former Auschwitz inmate Marie Claude Valliant-Couturier testified that "the Germans said they were looking for the best method of sterilization so they could repopulate all western European countries with Germans within one generation after the

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[46] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, (Munich, Germany: Franz Eher Nachfolger, 1925), 404, quoted in Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 86.
[47] Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 86.
[48] Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 39, 42-43; Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 107, 110.
[49] Kühl, *The Nazi Connection*, 37-39; Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 85.
[50] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 118.

war."[51] Researchers estimate that between 300,000 and 400,000 people were sterilized under the Nazi sterilization law from 1933 to 1939.[52]

0.5 Opposition to Eugenics

While there was always longstanding opposition to eugenics from the Roman Catholic Church and some scientists, the movement was not challenged academically until the 1930s. Kevles shows that many psychologists by the 1930s agreed that "performance on I.Q. tests was considerably affected not only by education but by social and cultural environment," not simply heredity.[53] In 1936, the American Neurological Association was presented with a report by Boston psychiatrist Abraham Myerson, head of the Committee for the Investigation of Sterilization. The report, as Myerson declared, found "at present no sound scientific basis for sterilization on account of immorality or character defect."[54]

Social scientists questioned the ERO's methodology, particularly pedigrees, for proving feeblemindedness.[55] Davenport retired from the ERO in 1934, leaving Laughlin in charge. However, by 1939, growing evidence disproving Laughlin's methodology,

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[51] Ibid., 169.
[52] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The Biological State: Nazi Racial Hygiene, 1933-1939," Holocaust Encyclopedia, accessed on February 3, 2019, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-biological-state-nazi-racial-hygiene-1933-1939.
[53] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 134.
[54] Abraham Myerson et al., *Eugenical Sterilization: A Reorientation of the Problem* (Committee of the American Neurological Association for the Investigation of Eugenical Sterilization; Macmillan, 1936), 177-183 quoted in Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 166; Mark A. Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 116; Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 104; Reilly, *The Surgical Solution*, 111-127; Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 112-147; Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 146-164.
[55] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 148.

Laughlin's overzealous belief in his own version of eugenics, and growing disapproval of Nazi actions swayed the Carnegie Institution to close the ERO.[56]

While scientific opinion was debunking eugenics' hereditary basis, some eugenicists were seeking change within the movement. These "reform" eugenicists, as opposed to "mainline" eugenicists, acknowledged that mental deficiency perhaps had environmental causes as well as heredity. Reform eugenicists still believed in the core tenets of eugenics: that the human species could be improved by human intervention. They also spoke of bettering the "population" rather than the "race," acknowledging desirable traits in all human groups.[57] This evolution, or shift, of the focus of eugenicists allowed for the idea to continue past the end of World War II.

0.6 Eugenics in North Carolina

The first sterilization bill passed in North Carolina, in 1919, was called, "An Act to benefit the moral, mental, or physical condition of inmates of penal and charitable institutions." The Act enabled medical staff to perform "any surgical operation…upon any inmate" if "said operation would be for the improvement of the mental, moral, or physical condition of such inmate." Mention of consent, age restrictions, or an appeal process were not in the act. The only oversight was by the governor and the secretary of the State Board of Health.[58] This law was never used due to fear over its constitutionality.[59]

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[56] Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, "Eugenics Record Office (ERO)," Eugenics Archive, accessed April 3, 2019, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/html/eugenics/static/themes/20.html.
[57] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 172, 173, 175.
[58] An Act to benefit the moral, mental, or physical condition of inmates of penal and charitable institutions, Chapter 281, 1919 Gen. Assem. (N.C.).
[59] Julius Paul, "Three Generations of Imbeciles are Enough: State Eugenic Sterilization Laws in American Thought and Practice" (unpublished manuscript, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Washington, DC, 1965), 420, accessed April 3, 2019, http://buckvbell.com/pdf/JPaulmss.pdf.

In 1929, acting on a bill sponsored by H.L. Milner, member of Burke County Board of Public Welfare, the General Assembly passed its second sterilization law, N.C. Statute Chapter 35, Article 7, applying the lessons from *Buck v. Bell*.[60] However, in 1932, Mary Brewer, mother of five, sued the state for attempting to sterilize her and won. Due to the lawsuit, in 1933 the North Carolina Supreme Court struck down the law for not providing enough safeguards. Later that same year, an amendment to the 1929 law was introduced by W. A. Thompson, a member of the Board of Directors of Caswell Training School, and prepared with assistance from R. Eugene Brown of the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare.[61] The amendment created a State Eugenics Board to oversee all sterilizations in the state, added an appeals process, and allowed social workers to file sterilization petitions.[62] Brown served as the first Secretary of the Eugenics Board.

While North Carolina was only one of thirty-three states to pass sterilization laws, it was unique for three reasons. The first was that North Carolina was the only state to allow social workers to petition the Eugenics Board, as opposed to other states where only doctors and psychiatrists could write petitions.[63] North Carolina also allowed non-institutionalized people to be sterilized. This became important after 1950, when the majority of sterilizations took place on non-inmates.[64] Voluntary sterilization for personal

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[60] "Our Seeds Sprouted," The Human Betterment League of North Carolina Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, November 14, 1972, Folder 133, Box 4, Human Betterment League of North Carolina papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 81-83.
[63] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 80; Kevin Begos, "Lifting the Curtain on a Shameful Era," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 12.
[64] Eugenics Board of North Carolina, *Manual: The Eugenics Board of North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC, 1948), 13, accessed April 3, 2019,

concentrative reasons was illegal until a bill was passed in 1963 explicitly allowing for sterilizations not authorized by the Eugenics Board.[65]

With the publication of Nazi crimes and growing scientific evidence to the contrary, the eugenics movement began to lose support following World War II. Most states ended their sterilization programs and left their sterilization laws to gather dust. North Carolina, however, accelerated its sterilization program after 1945. Between 1929 and 1974, when the Eugenics Board folded, more than 7,600 individuals were sterilized, the majority after 1945. Of these those sterilized, 85 percent were women and 40 percent were African American.[66]

0.7 Historiography

Eugenics historiography can be divided into two overarching categories. The first focuses on national trends, explaining the rise and popularity of eugenics in the United States, usually up to World War II. In 1963, Mark Haller published the first monograph on the subject in the U.S., *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought*. During the next twenty years, Haller and other historians chronicled the American eugenics movement up to World War II, largely based on self-published histories by the American Eugenics Society.[67] Around the 1980s, scholars acknowledged that eugenics in the United States continued after World War II and noted the connection between American and German eugenicists before and during the war. Daniel Kevles' *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*, published in 1985, was the major

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http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p249901coll22/id/417440/rec/2; Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 100; Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 42.

[65] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 119, 130.

[66] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 76; Gregory N. Price and William A. Darity, Jr, "The Economics of Race and Eugenic Sterilization in North Carolina: 1958-1968," *Economics and Human Biology* 8 (2010): 264.

[67] Kühl, *The Nazi Connection*, xiv.

work to come out of this period. Kevles compared the eugenics movement in the United States and Great Britain, explaining its vast influence in the former and "failure" in the latter.[68] *In the Name of Eugenics* is still heavily cited as authoritative.

The 1990s saw historians of eugenics begin to look more at victims of coercive sterilization. Philip Reilly, a physician, lawyer, and geneticist, published *The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States* in 1991, directly linking eugenicists' words and actions.[69] In 1994, Stefan Kühl's *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* explicitly connected American and Nazi eugenicists, demonstrating the many models for genocide the United States offered the Third Reich.[70]

In *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought* (1996), Marouf Arif Hasian, Jr. followed eugenics as an intellectual movement from its origins with Francis Galton to modern-day concerns about genetics.[71] Wendy Kline's 2001 monograph, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* also traced eugenics as ideology. She pays particular attention to how eugenics shifted over time to survive as a concept, especially as the word "eugenics" fell out of favor.[72]

The second trend in eugenics historiography is a growing set of state-by-state case studies that tend to focus on one method of eugenics.[73] Nancy Gallagher exemplified this

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[68] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, x, 64, 75-76.
[69] Reilly, *The Surgical Solution*, xiii, 89-93.
[70] Kühl, *The Nazi Connection*, xiv, xvi-xvii, 39, 42-43.
[71] Marouf Arif Hasian, *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought*, Science and the Humanities, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 3-4, 23-24, 141-143, 149-151.
[72] Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom,* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 2-3, 98-100, 124-125.
[73] Diane B. Paul, "Reflections on the Historiography of American Eugenics: Trends, Fractures, Tensions," *Journal of the History of Biology* 49 (2016): 646.

trend with *Breeding Better Vermonters*, a study that combined institutional history of state organs as well as the advocacy work of Henry F. Perkins of the University of Vermont.[74] Edward J. Larson in *Sex, Power, and Science* turned attention to the eleven states of the Deep South through the lenses of gender and race while demonstrating the use of science by eugenicists to justify their beliefs and actions.[75] These studies primarily deal with the eugenics movement during its peak in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s.

For his Ph.D. dissertation in 1978, William Ray Vanessendelft conducted an organizational history of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization (AVS). While the AVS was by the 1970s a national organization, it began as a mainline eugenic advocacy organization that shifted its focus and purpose over time to conform to changing societal norms.[76]

Johanna Schoen wrote about the effects of eugenic policies on women's reproduction in North Carolina in her work *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare*, adding to feminist analyses of reproduction and women's health. Overall, Schoen argued that birth control and medical technologies developed during the later twentieth century had both positive and negative effects on North Carolina women. She returned agency to these women; for some sterilization was coercive and for some it was "a great thing for poor folks."[77]

In 2008, Nicolette Hylan, an undergraduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, wrote her honors essay on "Selling Eugenic Sterilization: The

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[74] Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters*, 41, 66-68, 71-78, 83-84, 96-87, 98-99.
[75] Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 3, 32, 42-46, 49-54, 131-139.
[76] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," iii-iv, 11-12, 93, 98, 211, 219.
[77] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 2-3, 6.

Human Betterment League of North Carolina, 1947-1959." Hylan argued "that the unique timeframe of North Carolina's program can also be attributed to the emergency of the Human Betterment League (HBL) in 1947, a private organization…that enacted a publicity campaign to promote eugenic sterilization."[78] Hylan analyzed pro-sterilization materials distributed by the HBL through the lens of both paternalism and "maternalism," which she defined as "the ideology and behavior of elite white female social reformers and social workers who perceived themselves as occupying a motherly role towards the low-income objects of their activism."[79]

In his 2017 honors essay "Defining the 'Feeble-minded' for the 'Public Good': Sterilization in North Carolina," Philip Hinson argued that sterilization in North Carolina was separated from the "ideology of eugenics." He provided examples of circumstances that led to sterilization, particularly cases involving sexual misconduct, and labeled them as "social welfare-oriented" as opposed to "eugenics-oriented sterilizations."[80] Hinson focused "on the sterilization laws in NC and their role in creating a basis for a system that allowed involuntary sterilization to take place as late as the 1970s."[81] This role, according to Hinson, was in the vagueness of the sterilization laws' language, allowing it to be interpreted in accordance with its proponents' wishes.[82]

0.8 Contributions and Argument

Despite scientific pushback, public, as well as some academic, support for eugenic policies continued following World War II. Dr. William Allan and Dr. C. Nash

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[78] Nicolette Hylan, "Selling Eugenic Sterilization: The Human Betterment League of North Carolina, 1947-1959" (honors thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 5.
[79] Hylan defined "paternalism" as describing "a relationship between a person or group of people with social power who exert control over a socially disempowered person or group." Ibid., 1, 12, 13-15, 17.
[80] Philip Hinson, "Defining the 'Feeble-minded' for the 'Public Good': Sterilization in North Carolina" (honors essay, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2017), 2, 6, 18-19.
[81] Ibid., 3, 6.
[82] Ibid., 7, 11, 13.

Herndon of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest University both advocated for sterilization. To promote sterilization and other eugenic policies, James G. Hanes, of the Hanes clothing brand, Alice Shelton Gray, a nurse in World War I and founder of local chapters of the American Red Cross and American Legion, Dr. Herndon, and Clarence J. Gamble, heir to the Procter & Gamble fortune, created the Human Betterment League of North Carolina (HBL) in 1947. The HBL kept North Carolina's sterilization program alive well past other state programs.

How did the HBL do this? By relying on the same practices that were pioneered in California twenty years prior: public education and lobbying. The HBL produced its own literature with the help of authoritative scientists, conducted mass mailing campaigns, and lobbied the North Carolina General Assembly for its various causes. Why was the Human Betterment League able to thrive after WWII? Just as reform eugenicists shifted the basis of eugenics to include environmental as well as hereditary factors, the HBL shifted the focus of eugenics from compulsory sterilization to population control and later to genetic screening.[83]

While scholars have researched the American eugenics movement both on the national and state level, limited focus has been granted to North Carolina despite its atypical situation. Reilly acknowledges that "the success of the North Carolina program was partly due to lobbying by the Human Betterment League of North Carolina," though he offers no further analysis or explanation.[84] Schoen highlighted North Carolina's extensive sterilization program; however, she focused on how sterilization and eugenics overlapped with the birth control movement. She attributed the acceleration of North

[83] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," iii; Hylan, "Selling Eugenic Sterilization," 41-45.
[84] Reilly, *The Surgical Solution*, 138.

Carolina sterilization solely to Ellen Winston, the state Commissioner of Public Welfare from 1944 to 1963.[85] Schoen neglected the role of the HBL in persuading professionals, state officials, and the public urgency for sterilization and the correlation of the HBL's publicity campaign with the rise in sterilizations. Schoen wrote a top-down version of North Carolina eugenics in which health professionals alone chose sterilization as the best course of action. This ignores the agency of citizen lobbyists and their efforts to increase the use of sterilization due to their own racial and eugenic beliefs. Hylan does give proper credit to the HBL for its influence on the state's sterilization program; however, she keeps her analysis on the HBL's internal justification for its ideology.[86]

Schoen also does not demonstrate the shift that eugenics experienced during the later twentieth century. Just as eugenics did not die with WWII, the concept that humans can improve upon their own evolution continues to this day. While the word "eugenics" possesses a negative connotation today, new language has arisen to describe it. Population control, genetic engineering, genetic screening, and selective abortion are all ideas that stem from the idea of controlling human reproduction.[87] Hinson focused on this change or shift in sterilization advocates' language, though he attributed it to a disavowal rather than an evolution of eugenics as an ideology.[88]

This thesis explains why North Carolina's eugenics program lasted as long as it did using the extensive papers left by the HBL, Clarence Gamble, and C. Nash Herndon. It is also relevant today because we are still having the same discussions. New technologies are promising to make the dreams of early twentieth century eugenicists a

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[85] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 105-107.
[86] Hylan, "Selling Eugenic Sterilization," 18, 19, 20, 25-28, 50-51.
[87] Mark A. Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 146.
[88] Hinson, "Defining the 'Feeble-minded' for the 'Public Good'," 18-19, 22-25, 34.

reality. Even the rise of nationalism and white supremacy in North America and Europe seems a throwback to the 1920s. The President of the United States of America degrades immigrants, asserting: "They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime. They're rapists." As he tries to ban specific groups from entering the country, Americans are forgetting the Holocaust.[89] Early twentieth century eugenicists relied on this rhetoric of fearmongering against "the Other" to pass immigration restrictions and sterilization laws. "Never again" only happens if people remember what happened in the first place and acknowledge it as undesirable.

[89] Jose A. DelReal, "Donald Trump to Announce his Presidential Plans Today," *The Washington Post*, June 16, 2015, accessed April 3, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/06/16/donald-trump-to-announce-his-presidential-plans-today/?utm_term=.9f9c0be203a8; Executive Order 13769 of January 27, 2017: Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States. Executive Office of the President. 82 FR 8977–8982. February 1, 2017; Steve Hochstadt, "The Worldwide Problem of Holocaust Ignorance - and the Barriers to Solving It," History News Network, last modified February 12, 2019, accessed March 6, 2019, https://historynewsnetwork.org/blog/154183.

CHAPTER 1: THE FOUNDING OF THE HUMAN BETTERMENT LEAGUE, 1937-1960s

The 1930s witnessed the continuation of eugenic sterilization in the United States and its use by the German Third Reich starting in 1933. Yet the Nazi progression from sterilization to mass murder in the 1940s horrified the American public. Public outrage as well as new discoveries in genetics, caused many states to end their eugenics programs. North Carolina, however, became one of the only states that accelerated its eugenics program after 1945. Historian Johanna Schoen attributed the increased sterilizations to State Commissioner of Public Welfare Ellen Winston's personal direction. However, this thesis demonstrates that the continuation of the North Carolina eugenics program was promoted by the Human Betterment League (HBL). Clarence J. Gamble, James G. Hanes, C. Nash Herndon, and other prominent North Carolinians founded the HBL to promote eugenic policies.[1]

This chapter will explain how and why the HBL took root and thrived in North Carolina, the major players involved, and why eugenics lasted as long as it did in North Carolina. At the turn of the twentieth century, North Carolina led the nation in progressive public health policies. In their book celebrating the life of Gamble, Doone and Greer Williams explain that, under first North Carolina health officer Watson S. Rankin, "the North Carolina State Board of Health was the first in the United States to develop a system of county health departments...[with the] mission [to] improve rural

[1] The founding of the HBL cannot be attributed to any one person, as the idea was present in multiple people who came together to make it a reality. The list of charter members of HBL includes 12 people. On the documents of incorporation, only three names, George H. Lawrence, Arthur M. Jordan, and Jessie M. Stroup, are listed.

health."[2] This openness to public health allowed the birth control movement to establish a foothold in North Carolina during the 1930s. These factors attracted health reformers, contraceptive advocates, and eugenicists.

North Carolina is both typical for states that continued their eugenics programs after 1945 as well as unique. Along with North Carolina, Georgia and Iowa continued, even accelerated, their sterilization programs following World War II. The major difference between these states and North Carolina is who was sterilized during this time period. In both Georgia and Iowa, the majority of victims were considered mentally or physically disabled, most of whom were white.[3] In the 1960s, white North Carolinians worried about the high number of African Americans being added to welfare rolls. These concerns translated into social workers targeting African American women for sterilization. North Carolina also possesses a significant urban-rural divide: while much of the state is rural, there are several noteworthy urban areas across the state. These urban areas served as islands of middle- and upper-class white elites in the sea of poorer rural areas. These elites attributed poverty to heredity, labeling many lower-class people as "feebleminded." This combination of demographics, progressive public health policies, and concerned white, urban elites created a special situation in North Carolina that allowed eugenics to thrive.

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[2] Doone Williams and Greer Williams, *Every Child a Wanted Child: Clarence James Gamble, M.D. and His Work in the Birth Control Movement*, ed. Emily Flint (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1978), 130.
[3] Lutz Kaelber, "Georgia," Eugenics: Compulsory Sterilization in 50 American States, accessed December 7, 2018, http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/GA/GA.html; Lutz Kaelber, "Iowa," Eugenics: Compulsory Sterilization in 50 American States, accessed December 7, 2018, http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/IA/IA.html; Kathryn Anne Bagley, "Stealing Reproductive Rights: Compulsory Pediatric Sterilization in Georgia, 1939-1962" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2011), iii, 8.

1.1 Clarence J. Gamble

Gamble was one such citizen. In the 1920s, Dr. Clarence J. Gamble of Milton, Massachusetts, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, and heir to the Procter & Gamble fortune, became engrossed in the fledgling birth control movement. Like many of the HBL members, Gamble held mixed motivations for his support of birth control. He appreciated the importance of spacing pregnancies or avoiding them altogether while also believing firmly in eugenics. To these ends, he sought to make birth control legal and readily available. Gamble also obsessed over research and experiments to determine the most effective method of birth control. In these endeavors, Gamble worked separately, yet paralleled Margaret Sanger, an early advocate for contraception. Around the 1920s, Sanger picked up eugenicist talking points, altering her mindset from one of helping women in poverty and immigrants to preventing them from out-breeding their native middle- and upper-class betters. She advertised birth control as a method of social control as well as promoting women's health.[4]

Around 1934, Gamble became concerned with the decline in the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant birthrate. To Gamble, according to his biographers, "one unfortunate outcome of the fusion of intelligence, women's emancipation, and birth control was that graduates of women's colleges were the least fertile." This trend also applied to male college students, who typically had smaller families. Gamble tried to incentivize college graduates and professors to have large families by offering cash rewards, though his offers were rejected by Harvard University.[5] He wrote two articles on the matter: "The

[4] David M. Kennedy, *Birth Control in America: The Career of Margaret Sanger* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1970), 113-122.
[5] Williams and Williams, *Every Child a Wanted Child*, 180, 181.

Deficit in the Birthrate of College Graduates" in June 1946 and "The College Birthrate" in December 1947.[6]

In 1944, Gamble developed an interest in sterilization while in contact with physicians in Virginia.[7] Around this time, he joined the efforts of Birthright, Inc. Founded in 1937 by Marian S. Olden as the Sterilization League of New Jersey, this organization aimed to pass a compulsory state sterilization bill.[8] Anticipating arguments later used by the HBL, Olden viewed sterilization as a way of giving "idiots and morons" a better quality of life rather than segregating them in institutions their whole lives.[9] Ultimately, a sterilization bill could not be passed in New Jersey, a failure that Olden and her supporters attributed to Roman Catholic opposition.[10] These local failures encouraged League members to look past state-level sterilization and take on a national mission, changing the organization's name in 1943 to Birthright, Inc. Over time, Birthright changed its name several more times, in 2001 to EngenderHealth, and like HBL would change its mission focus.[11] As he would do with HBL, Gamble hopped from organization to organization depending on how much freedom he was allotted. Gamble was an attractive member to the Birthright Board of Directors because of his independent wealth

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[6] Ibid., 175-177.
[7] Clarence Gamble to Lena Hillard, October 25, 1944, Folder 449, Box 26, Clarence Gamble papers, Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical Library, Harvard University.
[8] William Ray Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization, 1935-1964" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1978), 9-10, 45.
[9] Ibid., 47.
[10] Ibid., 61, 101. E. S. Gosney and the Human Betterment Foundation in California also considered Catholics their greatest obstacle. Stephanie E. Clayton, "Propagation of the Fittest: The Endurance and Influence of the Human Betterment Foundation" (master's thesis, Claremont Graduate University, 2003), 55.
[11] Clayton, "Propagation of the Fittest," 61, 62.

and medical knowledge. He used his position to push his projects, such as paying field workers to travel door-to-door to instruct mainly women, about birth control.[12]

1.2 Gamble in North Carolina

The most relevant of Gamble's projects with Birthright was the demonstration of a sterilization program. This demonstration would, according to historian William Vanessendelft, "determine what techniques were most effective" in educating mental institution superintendents with the hope that they would then pressure the state to conduct sterilizations. North Carolina was chosen for the demonstration due to its "favorable" sterilization law, unique public health setup, and because Gamble had a field worker, Elise Wulkop, already teaching people about contraception.[13] Gamble also hired Lena Gilliam Hillard to conduct a Trojan condom study in Watauga County, North Carolina, where she traveled to women's homes and discussed birth control with patients directly.[14] Gamble not only wanted to increase the use of sterilization, but hoped to integrate contraception with public health to assist those in poverty.[15] By providing birth control to people in poverty, Gamble hoped to slow down their reproduction. Like other eugenicists, Gamble believed that poverty was a result of feeblemindedness, just another negative trait passed down through genes.

To convince North Carolina health officials of the need for an integrated birth control program, Gamble wrote an essay entitled "Contraception as a Public Health Measure" in 1938. He informed officials that they were in a "strategic position to relieve the mothers under [their] care of the monthly fear of undesired pregnancy, to improve

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[12] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 82, 83, 115.
[13] Ibid., 84-86.
[14] Gamble to Hillard, December 11, 1944, Folder 449, Box 26, Gamble papers.
[15] Williams and Williams, *Every Child a Wanted Child*, 130.

North Carolina's next generation by correcting the present undesirable differential birth rate, and to assure to each child an adequate physical and psychological birthright."[16] Not only did women deserve more reproductive control, but Gamble and other eugenicists believed that North Carolinians produced alarming numbers of "hereditary defectives," particularly by the largely rural and uneducated population.[17] A state-run contraception program would solve both these problems. To further this goal, Gamble financially supported the North Carolina Maternal Health League, founded in 1935 to open birth control clinics.[18] Among its members was George H. Lawrence, the Director of Public Welfare in Buncombe County, a sociology professor at the University of North Carolina, and a member of the State Board of Health. Lawrence was also on the Board of Directors of Birthright.

In 1945, a major wave of public opinion and professional concern helped Gamble, Birthright, and the Maternal Health League's work with sterilization. Newspapers across the state published reports submitted by the North Carolina Mental Hygiene Society, a eugenic organization, about the large number of draftees rejected by the U.S. Army. According to the press release, 56.8 percent of North Carolinian men were rejected, even though "figures for those rejected in this state on account of mental deficiency have not been made available."[19] The release described the three levels of mental deficiency and the need for sterilization. A study by Lawrence in Orange County in 1945 discovered that

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[16] Clarence Gamble, "Contraception as a Public Health Measure," 1938, Folder 420, Box 24, Gamble papers.
[17] Williams and Williams, *Every Child a Wanted Child*, 83; Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 63.
[18] Williams and Williams, *Every Child a Wanted Child*, 133, 143; Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 7. March 1937, two clinics with 84 patients. October 1938, 56 clinics in 50 out of 100 counties with 1,141 patients. Williams and Williams, *Every Child a Wanted Child*, 138.
[19] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 105-110.

"of the 357 men rejected [from the county] by selective service for mental deficiency, 38 percent had court records and 47 percent belonged to families who were clients of the County Department of Public Welfare."[20] This number was bumped up to 822 in a press release by the University News Bureau on May 5, 1946.[21] To Gamble and other eugenicists, these numbers were evidence of the degradation of American intelligence.

In a letter dated July 6, 1945, Gamble reached out to medical geneticist Dr. C. Nash Herndon of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest College, to consider "the possibility of using the information which you have secured to protect future generations by means of sterilization."[22] Johanna Schoen writes of Bowman Gray's "long history of interest in eugenics and had compiled extensive histories of families carrying inheritable disease."[23] Herndon studied heredity with his mentor and renowned eugenicist, William Allen, author of numerous studies including "Mating Customs in North Carolina: 1750-1900," published in September 1942, which stated "that the population [Allen] is studying does carry a number of pathological recessive [genes]" thus requiring eugenic prevention.[24] Herndon was one of the few original HBL members to change his mind about sterilization. In 1946, he told the press that sterilization could be used "to prevent the spread of inheritable diseases," while in 1959

[20] Elise Wulkop, "Report for April, 1946," April 1946, Folder 461, Box 26, Gamble papers.
[21] North Carolina Mental Hygiene Society, "Press Release," May 5, 1946, Folder 462, Box 26, Gamble papers.
[22] Gamble to C. Nash Herndon, July 6, 1945, Folder 456, Box 26, Gamble papers.
[23] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 245.
[24] William Allen, C. Nash Herndon, and Florence Dudley, "Mating Customs in North Carolina: 1750-1900," September 1942, Box N304, C. Nash Herndon papers, Coy C. Carpenter Library, Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest School of Medicine; Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 88.

he reportedly stated that sterilization did not solve the "defective" problem.[25] Herndon left no indication of what changed his mind, or at least his public endorsements.

In 1945, Gamble helped to fund a field study of 2,900 school children in Orange County conducted by the University of North Carolina and led by psychology professor Dr. A. M. Jordan, to look for "mental deficiencies."[26] Jordan found 447 children had I.Q.s below 70 and that "three percent of school age children were either insane or feebleminded." Gamble's field committee reviewed the "deficient" cases and reported seven cases to the North Carolina Eugenics Board for sterilization.[27] The study was partly funded by James G. Hanes of Winston-Salem, inheritor of the Hanes Hosiery Mills. Hanes became involved in eugenics after reading about the "mentally unfit" North Carolina draftees.[28] Following the Orange County study, he asked Gamble to turn his attention to 10,000 school children in Hanes' home of Forsyth County.[29] Both Gamble and Hanes were ultimately disappointed by the studies, as they did not increase public or professional acceptance and support for sterilization. Jordan reported in 1947 and 1948 on the two respective county studies that rural children were generally not found to be

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[25] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 88; Dorothy Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 5, 1959, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League of North Carolina papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; C. Nash Herndon, "Human Resources from the Viewpoint of Medical Eugenics," *Eugenical News* 35 (March 1950).

[26] I.Q.s were used to determine a person's "mental age." The I.Q. was given as a number, which was then show as a ratio with the person's chronological age. An average person would achieve an I.Q. score of 100 or above, meaning they were at minimum the same "mental age" as their chronological age, while those scoring well above were "mentally" above their age. An I.Q. of 70 was widely accepted as the threshold for feeblemindedness. Daniel J. Kelves, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 79.

[27] Wulkop, "Report for April, 1946," April 1946, Folder 461, Box 26, Gamble papers; Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 87-89.

[28] Kevin Begos, "Selling a Solution: Group founded by Hanes, others sent sterilization in new direction," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 72.

[29] Gamble to James G. Hanes, August 6, 1946, Folder 460, Box 26, Gamble papers; Begos, "Selling a Solution," 73.

less intelligent than their urban peers.[30] Despite these findings, according to Vanessendelft, Gamble's "[Birthright] field committee decided to return to the use of more general forms of education such as speeches, pamphlet writing, and press releases…to promote sterilization."[31]

Along with the failures of the school mental testing, conflicts between Gamble and Olden developed. Like Gamble, Olden desired a large amount of control of Birthright and the autonomy to pursue her own projects. Gamble and his field committee's autonomy was a threat to Olden's authority.[32] One argument erupted in the summer of 1946 over Olden's pamphlet, "Survival of the Unfittest," where in "a section [Olden] said there was a statistical link between low I.Q. and being Black." Gamble's personal opinion on the matter is unknown; however, his pragmatism caused him to suggest that Olden delete the line in fear that it would offend potential African American clients.[33] On November 8, Olden pushed the Birthright executive committee to vote to dissolve the field committee.

Despite the attempt to contain him, Gamble continued to run his own projects, working with Hanes and Lawrence. A Birthright field worker passing through North Carolina reported to the board of directors of Gamble's continued activities under the organization's name, as well as having "increased its membership and extended its territory." On March 7, 1947, the board of directors moved for a letter to be sent to Gamble clarifying the board's position.[34] Gamble's return letter of April 8 was not

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[30] Herndon, "Intelligence in Family Groups in the Blue Ridge Mountains," March 1954, Box N304-31, Herndon papers.
[31] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 87-89.
[32] Ibid., 115.
[33] Ibid., 117, 120.
[34] Ibid., 117-118; "Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of Birthright, Inc.," March 7, 1947, Folder 466, Box 27, Gamble papers.

enough to satisfy the board, and on April 11 the board moved "that Dr. Gamble's work should no longer be carried out under the auspices of Birthright, Inc.," citing "his entire lack of interest and loyalty to the national organization."[35] Upon hearing the news, Lawrence resigned from the board of directors, defending the usefulness of Gamble's work in North Carolina as well as praising Gamble's flexibility over the national Birthright's rigidness.[36]

1.3 The Human Betterment League of North Carolina

In March 1947, Lawrence and others met to organize the Human Betterment League of North Carolina, a state-level organization to promote sterilization and educate North Carolinians about the operation's potential for social change. Lawrence was elected the first president, Jordan the vice president, Hanes the treasurer, and Jessie M. Stroup the secretary. Despite his intimate involvement with the founding of the organization, Gamble was not listed as a member, and did not serve on the Board of Directors, or on any committees. He was described solely as a medical and public relations consultant. While Gamble did not appear as a member in HBL documentation, he did provide the organization with funds during its first two years.

The charter members chose the name "Human Betterment" to invoke the authority of the Human Betterment Foundation founded by E. S. Gosney in 1928 in California for the same purpose. Following its benefactor's death in 1942, the Human Betterment Foundation (HBF) was closed. During its first name change, Birthright had sought to incorporate the name "Human Betterment" to connect itself to Gosney's Foundation. However, Gosney's daughter, Lois Castle, requested the name not be

[35] "Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of Birthright, Inc.," April 11, 1947, Folder 466, Box 27, Gamble papers.
[36] George H. Lawrence to H. Curtis Wood, May 8, 1947, Folder 466, Box 27, Gamble papers.

invoked, concerned it would lead to confusion between the new organization and the defunct foundation. Wulkop, still a Birthright field worker, discovered the group's planned name and attempted to dissuade them, citing Castle's objections. However, the group went ahead with the name Human Betterment League because, Wulkop reported, they "felt that because of the distance and the local nature of their work, such confusion would not occur."[37]

The Human Betterment League of North Carolina was incorporated on May 16, 1947.[38] Its objectives were:

a. The study of the care of the mentally ill and mentally defective in North Carolina.
b. The encouragement of the best treatment and training of such persons and the assurance of measures which will prevent such mental handicaps.
c. Since no child can be brought up satisfactorily by mentally ill or mentally defective parents, the League will devote a part of its efforts to the solution of this important problem.
d. To educate the public in this field in order to assure the best possible care of the mentally ill, mentally defective, and children of these groups.[39]

By November of 1947, the fledgling HBL mailed out 40,000 copies of a self-generated questionnaire titled "What do you know about Sterilization?", 17,000 copies of which were sent to college students.[40] The goal of this questionnaire was to assess the public's understanding of sterilization to better target what kind of education was needed.

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[37] Wulkop, "Report to the Board of Birthright, Inc.," March 1947, Folder 466, Box 27, Gamble papers.
[38] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 81, 159, 176.
[39] The drafted constitution originally called for "The study of the care of the insane and feebleminded," however in a Board of Directors meeting on April 12, 1947, these words were switched out for "mentally ill" and "mentally defective," as it appears on the papers of incorporation. Jessie M. Stroup, "Charter of the Human Betterment League," March 1947, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[40] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 3, 1947, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers; "Statistical Analysis of Sterilization Questionnaire," 1947, Folder 467, Box 27, Gamble papers.

The first hurdle for the HBL was everyday Americans' conflation of sterilization with castration, which had served as a form of punishment for sex offenders since 1919.[41] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a wide variety of reformers believed castration actually calmed troubled men.[42] With the perfecting of vasectomies, belief in this calming effect shifted to sterilization. Besides this connection to criminal punishment, men, both professionals and the heads of households, feared castration as a loss of manhood which they believed would prevent them from enjoying sexual intercourse. There was also a lesser fear among men that sterilized women would become "frigid" and not respond to their men's sexual desire.[43] Separating castration and sterilization in the public's mind was the HBL's first task. As early as 1946, Gamble saw the need to assemble evidence that sterilized men continued enjoying sexual intercourse, with only the inability to have children.[44] Men in power did not consider women's comfort and enjoyment of sex in their concerns over castration. Men assumed women did not experience sexual pleasure and regardless should only submit to the desires of their husbands.

The second hurdle for the HBL was to sever the connection between sterilization and practices in Nazi Germany.[45] In 1933, the Nazis passed a "racial hygiene" law permitting involuntary sterilization of "any person suffering from a hereditary disease" including "Congenital Mental Deficiency, Schizophrenia, Manic-Depressive Insanity, Hereditary Epilepsy, Hereditary Chorea (Huntington's), Hereditary Blindness, Hereditary

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[41] "An Act to Benefit the Moral, Mental, or Physical Conditions of Inmates of Penal and Charitable Institutions," *N.C. General Session Laws of 1919*. Chapter 281: N.C. General Assembly.
[42] Moya Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina: A Sociological and Psychological Study* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), 33.
[43] Ibid., 29, 31, 61-62, 65-69.
[44] Gamble to Frank Lock, September 23, 1946, Folder 460, Box 26, Gamble papers.
[45] Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, 78.

Deafness, [or] Any severe hereditary deformity."[46] Following World War II, British social worker Moya Woodside lamented the Nazis' "excesses," which destroyed the credibility for what she and other eugenicists believed was fundamentally a worthwhile idea.[47]

To counter these views, the HBL relied on pamphlets, lectures, and mailing campaigns to propagate their preferred program of eugenics. Like Birthright before it, the HBL relied on the same three logics to promote sterilization: eugenic, economic, and humane. The primary argument for sterilization was to better the (white) gene pool by preventing "defectives" from reproducing. The second argument was economic. Segregating "defectives" for the entirety of their reproductive lives required decades of institutionalization in places such as Caswell Training School or the Goldsboro Hospital for Negroes. This was expensive and a burden on taxpayers who maintained the institutions. There was never enough room for all "feebleminded" or "defective" individuals in such institutions. League members countered people who advocated giving contraception to the "feebleminded" by arguing, in the words of Vanessendelft, that such people "had neither the intelligence nor the sense of responsibility to use them."[48] Feeblemindedness led to poverty, not lack of access to institutions that could help rural people escape cycles of poverty. The third argument was that keeping so many people locked up for most of their lives was inhumane. In contrast, sterilization was a one-time operation, much less expensive than life-long institutionalization, and allowed people to

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[46] "The Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring." (Approved translation of the "Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses"). Enacted on July 14th, 1933. Published by Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheitsdienst. (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1935). (Official translation of the law into English)
[47] Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, 78, 158-159, 160, 161; W. C. George to C. Nash Herndon, March 24, 1954, Folder 9, Box 1, W. C. George papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
[48] Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization," 50; Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, 105-109.

return to the world where they could be productive citizens without ever passing on their defective genes.[49]

Within the first year of its existence, the HBL mailed 110,000 items to 40,000 people. Hanes hosted a luncheon to promote sterilization to "thirty prominent men of Winston-Salem," nurse Alice Sheldon Gray gave a tea for "a large group of Winston-Salem women," and Gamble exhibited HBL literature at the Convention of the International Congress for the Study of Mental Deficiency.[50] By November 10, 1948, the HBL had mailed around 35,000 items in the previous six months alone.[51] At the suggestion of Gamble, the HBL regularly mailed letters of encouragement and congratulations to county Directors of Public Welfare depending on the number of sterilizations carried out.[52]

Press releases were sent to newspapers all over North Carolina, increasing concern of a feebleminded plague sweeping the state. This fear-mongering tactic was best displayed by a 1947 article in *The Charlotte Observer*. The article began, "In a country where the majority is supposed to rule, there's growing cause for alarm in the annual decrease in the level of American intelligence.... It's all due to the simple fact that those persons with the lowest I.Q. are breeding at a rate far in excess of those whose intelligence is normal or above." After citing "studies" conducted in various parts of the country, the reader was reassured: "Fortunately, there is a hopeful side in the picture – and North Carolina is one of the 27 progressive states with the necessary statutes to

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[49] Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, 48.
[50] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 8, 1948, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[51] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 10, 1948, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[52] Ibid.; Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 5, 1949; Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," December 11, 1953; Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 5, 1954, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

tackle the problem. However, North Carolina is reluctant to employ the implements it possesses to prevent the reproduction of the feebleminded." This reluctance, the article continued, had inspired a number of citizens to form the HBL "to awaken the people to the need for tackling the problem of mental deficiency."[53] An HBL press release from December 1947 informed readers about the organization's education campaign regarding sterilization and its importance.[54]

Throughout 1948 and 1949, newspapers printed highlights of speakers at HBL meetings, including many quotes from Gamble discussing the "protection" which sterilization offered both the feebleminded and "the children who might otherwise be born" into "broken homes."[55] HBL guest speaker, Frank R. Lock of Bowman Gray School of Medicine also spoke on the subject in 1948, noting that sterilization was "needed to prevent the transmission of insanity or feeblemindedness. Those mental defects are often handed on to the children, and even if they are not it is very unfair to let a child be born to be brought up by such a parent."[56] Some articles tried to inspire a bit of competition by comparing North Carolina's sterilization numbers to other states and even between counties.[57]

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[53] Randolph Norton, "Improved Citizenship Is Goal Of Human Betterment League," *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), November 23, 1947, 8.
[54] "Better Enforcement of Sterilization Law is Asked," *Rocky Mount Telegram* (Rocky Mount, NC), December 5, 1947, 8; "Morons Increase, League Declares," *Statesville Daily Record* (Statesville, NC), December 8, 1947, 10.
[55] "Sterilization of Feebleminded Extremely Important, Physician Asserts in Address," *Rocky Mount Telegram* (Rocky Mount, NC), February 10, 1948, 2; "For Feeble Minded…Sterilization Is Best for Deficient Parents," *The Gastonia Gazette* (Gastonia, NC), February 10, 1948, 12; Other examples of Gamble equating sterilization with protection: "Population Problem," *The Robesonian* (Lumberton, NC), November 17, 1948, 4 and "Boston Eugenicists Praises NC Sterilization Program," *Rocky Mount Telegram* (Rocky Mount, NC), April 28, 1949, 22.
[56] "More Sterilization Needed in the State," *The Gastonia Gazette* (Gastonia, NC), April 28, 1948, 20.
[57] "State Work in Mental Cases Wins Praise," *The Daily Times-News* (Burlington, NC), May 27, 1948, 13; Preston McGraw, "Sterilization Advised for Feeble-Minded," *Statesville Daily Record* (Statesville, NC), May 30, 1949, 3; "Sterilization Program Nil in this section," *The Belhaven Pilot* (Belhaven, NC), May 10, 1956, 7.

In 1951, *The Nashville Graphic* reported that between July 1948 and June 1950, a total of 468 people were sterilized in North Carolina, more than any previous biennium since the 1929 law. The Eugenics Board attributed "this increase to 'a better understanding of the law on the part of persons responsible for its administration, as well as of the general public.'"[58]

While HBL members reported overall positive reception of their materials and presentations, there were several instances of pushback. White college students were at times resistant to HBL's message. This was a significant problem as they were a target audience to raise up the race from defectiveness.[59] Why college students were unreceptive to the HBL's message is unclear. Nurture and environment-focused curricula may have discredited eugenics. The marketing of middle-class norms of smaller families might have influenced students. Personal religious beliefs also probably played a role.

One incident revolved around an HBL advertisement explaining the need for eugenic sterilization in the May 6, 1952 issue of the *Daily Tar Heel,* the University of North Carolina newspaper. On May 8, student James E. Marion wrote to the *Tar Heel* editor questioning the HBL's reasoning. If "some children born to mental defectives may posess [sic] normal minds," Marion wrote, "Who is to judge whether a woman shall be denied the right to give birth to these normal children?" Marion also challenged the HBL's economic argument, writing, "It is an accepted fact that a residual portion of the population will never be able to support themselves financially. What is to prevent state governments from enacting legislation to reduce the welfare expenses by sterilizing all of those unfortunate persons?" Marion also argued that since the feebleminded and insane

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[58] "'Sterilization Law' Used in 468 Cases," *The Nashville Graphic* (Nashville, NC), January 11, 1951, 2.
[59] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," December 20, 1955; Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 3, 1951, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

were usually not convicted in a court of law because they were "presumed to be unable to know right from wrong," how could such people give informed consent regarding sterilization?[60] During the semi-annual HBL board of directors meeting, the board determined that Marion's editorial was "clearly a presentation of the Catholic position upon the subject. It seemed best for us to ignore it."[61] Another example of opposition was with a Catholic psychiatrist at Butner Hospital who blocked sterilizations.[62] However, the fact that the HBL could afford to ignore these critics, and that these critics were lone individuals rather than organized groups, shows how little opposition the HBL faced in North Carolina.

1.4 Spreading the Message

At the HBL's annual meeting on November 5, 1949, Lawrence and Herndon claimed to see "a great increase in interest [in sterilization] among responsible officials, law enforcement as well as welfare and especially a change of attitude among physicians." Herndon also announced that he had performed six sterilizations within a week of the meeting.[63] The progress continued over the next several years. At the semi-annual meeting on May 8, 1952, according to the official minutes, Lawrence "noted accomplishments of the League, especially in public relations with officials and improved general attitude toward eugenics." Secretary Stroup added that "upon our wide circle of influence, requests [were] coming for our literature from all over the world." As if to punctuate the expansion of the mailing campaign, Stroup resigned as director of the

[60] James E. Marion, Letter to Editor, *The Daily Tar Heel* (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC), May 8, 1952, 2.
[61] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 8, 1952, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[62] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," December 11, 1953, Folder 15, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[63] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 5, 1949, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

mailing "program" because "the work has expanded beyond [Stroup's] strength to handle it."[64] In her place, Marian Moser of Winston-Salem was hired as Director of Literature Distribution, later Executive Secretary.[65]

By 1950, Gamble withdrew all financial support from the HBL. Despite his wealth, Gamble strongly believed in community funding for local projects after he provided seed money. He occasionally paid for sterilizations out of his own pocket when a county welfare department could not cover the cost of the surgery, though he treated these instances as emergencies.[66] Gamble raised the issue in the HBL's semi-annual meeting of 1949, stating "the desirability of North Carolina financing the expense within this state, most of which he has carried in the past."[67] A year later the HBL was completely funded by members for all in-state work.[68] British social worker Moya Woodside's book, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, was one of the last North Carolina projects funded by Gamble. The study, written in 1948 and published in 1950, served as a survey of the practice of sterilization in North Carolina since it first became law in 1919. Woodside then took stock of the state of affairs and urged for increased use of the law. She praised the young HBL for its efforts in educating the public.[69]

Social workers like Woodside wanted to stamp out any behavior that deviated from white, middle-class social norms. Urban professionals criticized people in rural

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[64] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 8, 1952, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[65] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 13, 1952, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[66] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 3, 1951, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers; Begos, "Selling a Solution," 73. The HBL did not financially assist counties with sterilizations.
[67] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 23, 1949, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[68] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 30, 1950, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[69] Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, 8, 166.

areas for illiteracy, high fertility, and considered them too ignorant and superstitious to be trusted with birth control.[70] For reasons stated above, social workers targeted rural women for sterilization. However, urban, white social workers treated black and white rural women differently. For white women, numerous pregnancies were simply a part of rural family life. Social workers, like Woodside, accused black women of "hypersexuality," of having uncontrollable, untreatable sexual urges.[71] Woodside explained the frequency of black pregnancies out-of-wedlock as stemming from legacies of life on the plantation, in encouraging "common law marriages, whereby the parties declare without legal formality their intention of living together, the casual desertions and separations, the large numbers of illegitimate births."[72] (During the 1960s, black women would become the focus of sterilization due to them making up large numbers of Aid to Dependent Children and welfare recipients. This will be explored more in Chapter 2.)

Unlike any other state, North Carolina gave social workers a great deal of control over their clients by allowing them to petition the Eugenics Board directly and on behalf of non-institutionalized clients. Under Director of Public Welfare Wallace H. Kuralt, social workers in Mecklenburg County in particular conducted a very enthusiastic campaign of sterilization during the 1950s and 1960s. Edwin H. Chapin, hired as an AFDC case worker and future Director of Mecklenburg Department of Social Services (DSS), remembered focusing on girls with low I.Q.s:

> We had some child who obviously wasn't gonna be able to protect herself who was coming into age of having babies and didn't have the capacity to make decisions or protect herself. Horror stories, you know, of 14, 15-year-old girls

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[70] Ibid., 60-61, 63.
[71] Nicolette Hylan, "Selling Eugenic Sterilization: The Human Betterment League of North Carolina, 1947-1959" (honor's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 74; Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, 5, 47.
[72] Woodside, *Sterilization in North Carolina*, 47, 83.

> whose, whose parents were caretaker, didn't want to, didn't want to think about sterilization, who ended up pregnant almost immediately. I can remember one, one couple whose daughter was very, very limited mentally and who rejected the thought of having their daughter sterilized and regretted it within two or three months--she was pregnant. So, it was mainly related to a girl's ability to care for herself and protect herself.[73]

Chapin also recalled a colleague sterilizing his entire caseload, sixty cases in total.[74] Merlene Wall, another AFDC case worker and later DSS director, initiated sterilizations for clients, including the two granddaughters of a client who were up at Broughton Psychiatric Hospital in Morganton.[75] Kuralt himself remembered social workers receiving no formal training in recognizing mental retardation, "recognizing the mental retardation that we were concerned about is initially wasn't all that difficult because the mother herself was concerned with the inability of the child to perform or to react."[76] In 1993, Kuralt denied any knowing of accusations of coercive sterilization, claiming "we were very strict in seeing to it that anything that was done was done voluntarily."[77]

Besides social workers, the HBL purposely recruited physicians and scientists to its membership roster. In 1959, the Board of Directors included Herndon, Jordan, Guion Johnson, Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina (UNC), W. Banks Anderson of Duke Hospital, and William Perry, Professor of Education at UNC.[78] By 1964, they added Charles E. Flowers, Jr. of the Baylor University Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, John C. Burwell, Jr. an OB/GYN in Greensboro, Henry T. Clark, Jr. of UNC and later Connecticut Regional Medical Program, and Eugene

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[73] Edwin H. Chapin, interview by Johanna Schoen, Charlotte, NC, June 19, 1997, full transcript provided by Schoen.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Merlene Wall, interview by Johanna Schoen, Charlotte, NC, June 19, 1997, full transcript provided by Schoen.
[76] Wallace Kuralt, interview by Johanna Schoen, Southern Shores, NC, December 4, 1993, full transcript provided by Schoen.
[77] Ibid.
[78] "Human Betterment League of North Carolina Board of Directors Terms of Office," November 1, 1960, Folder 16, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

Hargrove of the State Department of Mental Health.[79] To capitalize on its members' reputations, articles first published in scholarly journals were reprinted as pamphlets and brochures stamped with the journals' citation.[80] However, tension existed between social workers who wished to reduce welfare recipients and geneticists' increasing understanding of heredity. In the opening of his 1954 study "Intelligence in Family Groups in the Blue Ridge Mountains," Herndon stated that when "[attempting] to evaluate genetic factors in 'intelligence'…we have no really satisfactory method of measuring the attribute which we wish to assess." The study was "interested in studying the distributions and intra-family correlations of certain characteristics in a normal population in western North Carolina." Like Hillard before him, Herndon approached families at random in rural Watauga County to conduct I.Q. and other intelligence tests. In his conclusions, Herndon wrote that "our data indicate a normal range of intelligence among natives of the Blue Ridge Mountains, with a mean not greatly different from those observed in other rural areas," despite stereotypes of ignorant "hill-billies."[81]

Besides clashing with elitist social workers, scientists and physicians struggled with the implications of their research. Vocal racists such as University of North Carolina sociology professor W. C. George also advocated for educating the public about genetics "to direct their attention to the significance of genetics in the practical affairs of our lives" while also fighting to keep the South segregated.[82] In 1948, Herndon wrote to his friend and colleague Laurence H. Snyder, professor at the University of Oklahoma,

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[79] "Human Betterment League of North Carolina Board of Directors," Folder 16, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[80] Millicent McKeeither, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," October 3, 1962, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[81] Herndon, "Intelligence in Family Groups in the Blue Ridge Mountains," March 1954, Box N304-31, Herndon papers.
[82] George to Herndon, October 22, 1951, Folder 6, Box 1, George papers.

agreeing with Snyder that African Americans should be allowed to attend universities.[83] During this same exchange of letters, Herndon asked Snyder's advice on accepting a grant from Wycliffe Draper, a wealthy white supremacist who offered money to geneticists who would link intelligence to race. Herndon expressed concern over Draper's reputation tainting any research conducted with his money, thought Snyder allayed these fears by pointing out Draper's lack of conditions for accepting the grant. Herndon did accept the grant, using it to fund "Intelligence in Family Groups in the Blue Ridge Mountains."[84] In 1955, Herndon was president of the HBL, as well as president of the American Eugenics Society in 1954.[85]

1.5 Population Control

By the early 1950s, HBL members became interested in the fledgling field of population studies. The Population Council, established in 1952, was founded largely by eugenicists.[86] In September 1954, the United Nations held its first Population Conference in Rome, Italy. This was the first such conference on such an international scale. HBL members lauded the event as evidence "that the world is becoming aware of the problems of overpopulation."[87] Population control offered a way for eugenicists to renew public interest in their work while taking advantage of the urgency of the issue. Like early eugenicists, members of the HBL feared the high birth rates of people of color and those

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[83] Herndon to Laurence Snyder, March 8, 15, 1948, Box N303-B, Herndon papers; David W. Levy, *The University of Oklahoma: A History, Volume II: 1917-1950* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 358.
[84] C.C. Carpenter, "Memo to Herndon," November 15, 1951, Box N303-B, Herndon papers; Herndon to Snyder, March 10-18, 1950, Box N303-B, Herndon papers.
[85] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 12, 1954, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers; Herndon was HBL President 1955-59. "Presidents," Folder 1, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[86] Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 259.
[87] Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 5, 1954; Stroup, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 5, 1954, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

of the lower socioeconomic class. These fears focused both in the developing world abroad and domestically, particularly in the 1960s with the rise of Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty.[88]

Herndon reported to the December 28, 1956 Board of Directors meeting that he attended a conference on population control in New York.[89] A year later, *Time* published an article entitled "The Population Explosion," which stated that the "United Nations Population Commission finds that due to advanced medical care the death rate is lowered, but the birth rate remains high. The most worrisome aspect is that the increase occurred primarily in underdeveloped countries." The article continued, discussing Gamble's birth control work in Japan, including "the drafting of legislation."[90] In 1962, Moser attended a seminar on "The Church and Planned Parenthood," which discussed how the Methodist Church should respond to social economic problems. Moser presented "Goals for Immediate Action" in response to the "spectacular population growth," suggesting medical research, educating the public on family planning, "protective" sterilization, creating birth control clinics, and removing legal barriers to birth control information (which was still law in Massachusetts and Connecticut at the time).[91] By 1967, the HBL changed its purposes and objectives to include the "Study of population trends and methods of control."[92] This remained a part of HBL's mission into the 1980s.

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[88] Woodside, *Sterilization of North Carolina*, 161; Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 62; Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 258-259.
[89] Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," December 28, 1956, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[90] Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," December 12, 1957, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[91] O.B. Fanning, "The Church and Planned Parenthood: Report of a Seminar," February 16-17, 1962, 10-12, Folder 72, Box 2, Human Betterment League papers.
[92] Marian Moser, "Memo to Members of the Board of Directors of The Human Betterment League of North Carolina," September 16, 1967, Folder 28, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

1.6 Impact

While it is difficult to demonstrate the direct impact of the HBL on public and official opinion, some correlations can be drawn. Between 1947 and 1965, the HBL mailed or distributed approximately 583,675 pamphlets, brochures, and pieces of literature. Reported requests for literature came from twenty-nine different named locations, varying from the specific, Board of Health in Surry County, to the vague, Texas. HBL members, mainly Moser, met with seventeen named individuals or representatives of organizations. These individuals included Ellen Winston, commissioner of the North Carolina Eugenics Board, Ethel Speas and Sue Casebolt, secretaries of the Eugenics Board, a counselor for Reynolds Tobacco Company, and numerous county welfare and health directors. The HBL, again represented by Moser, attended and presented its literature at thirty-nine different conferences. Moser attended the North Carolina Conference for Social Services seventeen years in a row, the most frequently attended conference by the HBL. HBL members also gave a minimum of fifty-six lectures of civic clubs, associations, and professional groups around the state, with Herndon clocking thirty-three recorded lectures including at Purdue University in Indiana.[93]

Between 1946 and 1966, the North Carolina Eugenics Board authorized approximately 6,850 sterilizations. The period that saw the most sterilizations, at 704, was between 1950 and 1952, only five years into the life of the HBL.[94] In 1968, the year the HBL changed its objectives in its charter, the *Statesville Record and Landmark*

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[93] Stroup, Buddine, Millicent W. McKeither, Jessamine B. Cass, Board of Directors minutes, 1947-1965, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[94] Eugenics Board of North Carolina, *Biennial Report of the Eugenics Board of North Carolina*, (Raleigh, NC, 1934-1966), accessed April 3, 2019, http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p249901coll22/id/257383/rec/1.

reported that Sue Casebolt, secretary of the Eugenics Board, spoke to the Iredell County Association for Retarded Children on "The Eugenics Board and its Functions."[95] That same year, *The Charlotte Observer* reported on the HBL's newest board elections.[96]

[95] "Eugenics Talk Heard By Children's Group," *Statesville Record and Landmark* (Statesville, NC), February 28, 1968, 8.
[96] "League's Board Elects Members," *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), October 30, 1968, 4C.

CHAPTER 2: THE SHIFT FROM STERILIZATION TO GENETIC COUNSELING, 1960s-1988

The opening of the 1960s saw major upheavals in American society. The Civil Rights Movements, Vietnam War, and Cold War disrupted old ideologies. It appeared that Americans were moving toward a more progressive, global outlook based on constantly emerging science and technology. Despite this march toward progress, traces of eugenics remained, though not as conceived by Francis Galton or implemented by early twentieth century eugenicists and the Nazis. In its place came a new eugenics that acknowledged environmental factors and incorporated new genetic technologies into its ideology. Eugenicists shifted from largely negative eugenics to positive eugenics. Birth control became more popular and widespread with the advent of the pill in 1960, and sterilization shifted from being a method to control the lower classes to a tool of the middle class. With the retirement and passing of the old guard, "new eugenicists" took their place and molded eugenics to fit the world they experienced, one with rapidly improving technology and leaps in scientific understanding.[1]

These new eugenicists, new technologies, and both local and global events shaped the agenda of the Human Betterment League (HBL) in the 1960s onwards. By the end of the decade, the words "eugenics" and "sterilization" would all but disappear from HBL meeting minutes, as well as Clarence Gamble, George Lawrence, and C. Nash Herndon.[2] Some longtime members, such as James Hanes, Alice Sheldon Gray, Marian Moser, and

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[1] Marouf Arif Hasian, *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 2-4, 23-24, 141, 245; Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 257-261, 264, 267-268.

[2] George Lawrence resigned from the Board of Directors in 1961, citing pressure from his public welfare work as well as his imminent retirement and move out of state. Millicent W. McKeither, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," June 22, 1961, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League of North Carolina papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

others remained. While Moser reported on the number of institutionalized and sterilized individuals at every Board of Directors meeting, meeting minutes show a growing interest in problems of population control and genetic screening. The HBL also developed more modern methods of advocacy, such as lobbying state legislators and, in the early 1970s, producing two educational films.

Despite the disappearance of the words "eugenics" and "sterilization" from HBL literature and programing, the concept of improving humans' heredity did not go away. This shift from "mainstream" and even environment-acknowledging "reform" eugenics by the HBL demonstrates how the eugenics that attracted so many Progressive Era reformers and elites changed in the 1960s and 1970s. This shows that eugenics, like all ideologies, evolved to fit the times and circumstances of the present. Some argue today that with the new technologies available, and that will no doubt be available in the near future, breeding better humans may be within humanity's grasp.

When interviewed for the 2002 *Winston-Salem Journal* series "Against Their Will," Steven Selden, author of *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America*, pointed out that early eugenicists "didn't have the technology to achieve their goals…. We do."[3] Only by looking back on the consequences of earlier experiments in eugenics can the gravity of the decisions that lie in the future be appreciated.

2.1 Targeting Welfare Recipients

Fear of the lower classes over-breeding received new urgency in the 1960s with concern about welfare fraud. During the Great Depression, the federal government passed the Social Security Act of 1935, creating multiple assistance programs such as Aid to

[3] Kevin Begos, "Lifting the Curtain on a Shameful Era," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 13.

Dependent Children (ADC).[4] Unlike other programs created by the Social Security Act, such as Unemployment Insurance, which catered mainly to white men, ADC was paid for partially by the states and went to families without a breadwinner's earnings. In the beginning of the program, these were generally white widows.[5] During the 1940s and 1950s, large numbers moved away from increasingly mechanized agriculture to cities. However, during this period, good-paying manufacturing jobs were beginning to move overseas, and some labor unions shut out black workers. More and more urban African Americans turned to welfare for assistance.[6]

By 1960, 3.1 million people received ADC and by mid-decade that number was 4.3 million. The vast majority of recipients lived in single-mother households in which the mother was divorced, deserted, or never-married.[7] Due to the rapidly increasing welfare rolls, by 1964, the nation considered itself in the grips of a "welfare crisis."[8] Experts across the county attempted to explain the phenomenon, perhaps the most infamous being the "Moynihan Report" leaked piecemeal from the U.S. Department of Labor in 1965. The report blamed African American poverty on the "deterioration of the Negro family" which was due to black men being unable to obtain livable wage-paying jobs and thus abandoning their families.[9] While black men were painted in a sympathetic light, black women received no such kindness. The very nature of the "matriarchal" family structure was classified as early as the 1920s by sociologists as "a sign of

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[4] ADC was renamed Aid to Families of Dependent Children in 1962.
[5] Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 8-9; Jennifer Mittelstadt, *From Welfare to Workfare: The Unintended Consequences of Liberal Reform, 1945-1965* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 3.
[6] Chappell, *War on Welfare*, 10, 51; Mittelstadt, *From Welfare to Workfare*, 94-95.
[7] Chappell, *War on Welfare*, 10, 50; Mittelstadt, *From Welfare to Workfare*, 3.
[8] Chappell, *War on Welfare*, 50; Mittelstadt, *From Welfare to Workfare*, 86, 211-212.
[9] Chappell, *War on Welfare*, 2, 35-38.

disorganization among urban black families."[10] The panic also created the stereotype of women on welfare as lazy and immoral, giving birth to illegitimate children just to receive larger welfare checks.[11] This stereotype would later be given a name, the welfare queen.[12]

In North Carolina, the "welfare crisis" brought African American women into the sights of county welfare departments and the HBL for sterilization. At a public hearing on April 1, 1959, State Senator Wilbur Jolly of Franklin County proposed that unmarried women with three children should be sterilized.[13] A month later, HBL member Nat Crews was encouraged by bills like Jolly's. "So much activity indicates an awareness of the social as well as the financial problem involved," Crews stated at a board meeting, "People [I feel], are not only becoming more conscious of this situation, but are becoming better educated as well." Herndon, however, said at the same meeting that he was "most disturbed by the possibility of confusing our present eugenics bill…. Sterilization as a punishment Dr. Herndon believes is the wrong approach, social ills should not be confused with mental ills."[14] The "controversy" of women giving birth to increase their ADC payments came up in another HBL meeting ten years later.[15]

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[10] Chappell, *War on Welfare*, 38; Mittelstadt, *From Welfare to Workfare*, 2, 181.
[11] Chappell, *War on Welfare*, 52; Mittelstadt, *From Welfare to Workfare*, 101.
[12] The term "welfare queen" was coined by George Bliss when reporting on the trial of Linda Taylor, the "original" welfare queen, for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1974. The trope was famously used by Ronald Reagan in his 1976 Republic nomination bid and his 1980 presidential campaign. Susan Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels, *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined All Women* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 178.
[13] John Railey, "'Wicked Silence' State board began targeting blacks, but few noticed or seemed to care about program," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 103.
[14] Dorothy Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 5, 1959, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[15] Jessamine B. Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 30, 1968, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

While the state, counties, and HBL fretted about theories and taxes, African American women worried about survival. In 1965, Nial Cox Ramirez was eighteen years old, living with her mother and siblings in Plymouth, North Carolina, and dependent on welfare relief. After discovering her pregnant, the family social worker told Ramirez to consent to sterilization, or her mother would lose her welfare payments.[16] Similarly, Elaine Riddick Jessie, of Winfall, North Carolina, was only fourteen years old when she was coercively sterilized in 1968. Jessie lived with her grandmother, Maggie Woodard, who was on welfare. Marion Payne, Woodard's social worker, discovered that Jessie was pregnant during a visit. She "pressed Woodard to consent to have Jessie sterilized. Finally, Woodard, who [was] illiterate, signed her 'X' on a consent form." Shortly after giving birth to her only child, Jessie was sterilized.[17]

These stories illustrate racist biases on the part of the white social workers towards their black clients. Two interviews are enlightening about white attitudes toward African American recipients. During her investigation, Schoen interviewed numerous retired social workers and public welfare directors. Schoen interviewed African American social worker Elsie Davis in 1989 about her encounters with eugenics during 1960s. "The expectation was that black people were not able to take care of themselves…. They were all illiterate, retarded," Davis recalled, "So it was consensus that these women don't have any rights. So we can say to them that they can't have any

[16] Kevin Begos and John Railey, "Sign this or else…," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 47-48; Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 75-76.
[17] Kevin Begos and John Railey, "'Still Hiding': Woman sterilized at 14 carries a load of shame," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 17-22.

children."[18] In 2002, the *Winston-Salem Journal* tracked down the doctor who conducted Ramirez's sterilization, Dr. A. M. Stanton, who was of the opinion that sterilization "was probably a good thing…. I think some people did it on purpose (had children) to get a little bit of extra money from the welfare department."[19]

Targeting black women for sterilization was part of a systematic, paternalistic outlook, in which, like Progressive Era reformers before them, members of the HBL and social workers across the state believed they knew what was best for lower income members of society. Even retired social worker Davis acknowledged, "It was a system rather than the individual, who didn't have any rights at all."[20] While there were certainly those who were openly racist and fought against the Civil Rights Movement, the HBL did not take a position on segregation or integration. The opinion of individual members is unknown, though previously cited letters by Herndon provide evidence that he was pro-integration.[21] Due to the silence of the issue in HBL records, their advocation of sterilization and economic language is revealing.

As implied by Stanton, the economic argument continued to play a large role in support for sterilization. The proclaimed justification for targeting ADC mothers was the increasing cost of welfare to taxpayers.[22] As the welfare state expanded to include more people and introduced more programs, the cost for such programs increased as well. As in the 1920s and 1930s, non-welfare recipients resented having to pay for what they saw as lazy people who refused to work and continued having children simply to receive a

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[18] Begos and Railey, "Sign this or else…," 50; Schoen, *Choice and Coercion*, 109.
[19] Begos and Railey, "Sign this or else…," 53.
[20] Ibid., 50.
[21] Herndon agreed with Snyder that African Americans should be allowed into white institutions of higher education. Herndon to and from Snyder, March 8 and March 15, 1948, Box N303-B, C. Nash Herndon papers, Coy C. Carpenter Library, Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest School of Medicine.
[22] Begos, "Lifting the Curtain," 3.

check while adding to the burden of the welfare system with their children. The HBL relied on the economic argument for sterilization, family planning, and genetic screening all the way until its end in 1988.

2.2 Moving away from Sterilization

By the 1950s, geneticists could not, in historian William Vanessendelft's words, match "specific defects with specific genes," making hereditary arguments obsolete and forcing sterilization advocates to adapt their language.[23] During this time, geneticists began rebranding themselves as objective scientists in order to disentangle themselves from their eugenics origins. Despite this shift in the field of genetics, Herndon, himself a geneticist, continued working with the HBL and advocating sterilization. Still taking cues from Birthright and reform eugenicists, Herndon and HBL members hedged that while social ills might not, wrote Vanessendelft, be "genetically transmissible, [these issues] frequently made an individual unfit for parenthood and that alone was grounds for sterilization."[24] If the so-called feebleminded did not necessarily produce genetically inferior children, they were unable to raise their children properly. For HBL members, this meant instilling middle-class norms in children and providing them with financial opportunities. Without these, children of the feebleminded were considered stunted in their growth and development, leading to the same outcome as if they had been genetically inferior. If the feebleminded produced "environmentally feebleminded" children, they would probably end up on the welfare rolls just like their parents. Just as the "genetically feebleminded" sucked up state funds and taxpayer dollars, so too would the "environmentally feebleminded." With the middle-class taxpayer's best interests, and

[23] William Ray Vanessendelft, "A History of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization, 1935-1964" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1978), 109.
[24] Ibid., 57.

supposedly the those of the feebleminded, at heart, the HBL recycled its economic argument.

At the November 2, 1959 Board of Directors meeting, Ethel Speas, Secretary of the North Carolina Eugenics Board, shared her concern about the "legal aspect of eugenic sterilization," as it was "a very technical problem" and expressed the need for education as never before.[25] Despite this direct call for action, the issue of sterilization disappeared after the Board of Directors meeting on November 1, 1960.[26] Gamble was last mentioned in meeting minutes on May 10, 1965, a year before his death.[27]

At the April 30, 1968 meeting, acknowledging declining sterilizations due to improving birth control, Moser proposed changes to HBL's purposes:

1. The study of population trends and methods of control,
2. The examination of such related problems as mental illness and retardation, and
3. Exploration of measures to conserve the human resources of the state. Program Emphasis: Education of the public in family planning and in population problems and controls.[28]

Ironically, Ellen Winston, former State Commissioner of Public Welfare and member of the Eugenics Board, was present when the change was made. The last mention of sterilization was in 1971, though explicitly on a voluntary basis.[29]

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[25] Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 2, 1959, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[26] Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 1, 1960, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[27] Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting agenda," May 10, 1965, Folder 8, Box 1; Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 10, 1965, Folder 15, Box 1; Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 10, 1965, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[28] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 30, 1968, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[29] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," October 6, 1971, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

2.3 Family Planning

In the 1960s, the HBL shifted from focusing solely on sterilization to advocating for family planning more broadly. At the annual meeting in 1963, Wallace Kuralt, Superintendent of the Mecklenburg County Department of Public Welfare, discussed his county's birth control program.[30] Kuralt also played a large role at the state level. In 1963, he and numerous physicians lobbied for a voluntary sterilization law, which was passed as General Statutes of N.C. Chapter 90 Article 19, Section 271-275.[31] In 1967, Kuralt partnered with state representative Arthur H. Jones to "[expand] the indications for abortion."[32] While a bill did pass, it did was not as expansive as Kuralt and Jones hoped.

By 1968, HBL members broached the subject of the need for a film about family planning.[33] The film was originally conceptualized as demonstrating birth control devices but this was decided against, "in order to have a broader acceptance." With that in mind, members also requested input from African American leaders due to feelings that "the script appeared too slanted toward the under-privileged, and that other classes of people needed to be reached."[34] HBL also reached out to directors of county Departments of Public Welfare for feedback on script drafts.[35] After three years of work, *Windsong*

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[30] In 1960, Kuralt initiated a birth control program coordinated between the DPW and Health Department using the new Enovid birth control pill. Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," November 12, 1963; "An Expanded Family Planning Program," March 30, 1966, Folder 45B, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

[31] North Carolina was one of first states to do so. Roddy M. Ligon, Jr., "North Carolina Voluntary Sterilization Law," Folder 78, Box 2, Human Betterment League papers; Schoen, *Choice and Coercion,* 180-181.

[32] Schoen, *Choice and Coercion,* 180-182, 279.

[33] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 30, 1968, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

[34] Mrs. Cecil Hines, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 1, 1969, Human Betterment League papers.

[35] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," September 23, 1969, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers; The film received five endorsements from professors at Duke University Medical Center, Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University, UNC Chapel Hill School of Medicine. Folder 94, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.

premiered on March 2, 1971 to an audience of 134. The fourteen-minute-long film also aired on WSJS-TV in Winston-Salem on Sunday, March 21. By May, Moser reported that twelve copies of the film "had been sold to various groups in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia."[36]

Windsong's primary message was about spacing births to prevent poor maternal health and economic hardship. The film appealed to its viewers' emotions by showing distressed and overworked parents with many children contrasted with happy couples with one or two children. The film ended with the message: "A better life is worth planning for…. Choice, not chance, it's as simple as that."[37] The film won a gold medal at the 14th International Film and TV Festival of New York in the Health and Social Welfare category.[38] Requests for copies of *Windsong* came from as far north as New York and as far west as Utah, as well as one request from an U.S. Air Force base.[39]

By 1973, HBL was listed under "Family Planning" in the phone book and sold thirty-eight copies of *Windsong* nationwide. Members showed interest in producing a second film on genetic counseling.[40]

2.4 Genetic Counseling

1972 was a busy year for the HBL. On July 22, 1972, James G. Hanes died. He had served as treasurer since the founding of the HBL. His son, Gordon Hanes, took over the role, but Gordon, like Gamble before him, informed the HBL that it would need to

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[36] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 11, 1971, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[37] *Windsong*, Human Betterment League of North Carolina, 1971.
[38] "Film Shot in County Gets Festival Award," *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel* (Winston-Salem, NC), October 24, 1971, Folder 93A, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.
[39] Susan White, November 3, 1977; Linda L. Queen, May 31, 1973; Ruth Watson Lubic, January 3, 1973, Folder 95, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.
[40] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 18, 1973, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

begin funding its programs and activities through memberships rather than rely on the Hanes family.[41] In November, the HBL celebrated its 25th anniversary.[42]

That same year, HBL President Harold O. Goodman, a geneticist at Bowman Gray School of Medicine, brought up the possibility of the HBL turning to genetic counseling. Goodman believed the HBL "could play an important role by providing educational materials."[43] In 1973, HBL changed its charter to include "education of the public in family planning, genetic counseling, and in population problems and control."[44]

The push toward genetic counseling culminated in the production of a second film, *Wednesday's Child*, named for the "Monday's Child" nursey rhyme in which "Wednesday's child is full of woe." It combined contemporary knowledge of genetics with fearmongering about the "double tragedy for child and parents" to have a child with a genetic disorder. The video depicted parents grieving over a crib while the voice-over spoke about the regret and guilt parents could feel for bringing "defective" children into the world. Another scene showed a man contemplating suicide while remembering his in-laws saying, "I told her not to marry into that family of degenerates." The film ended by reassuring its viewers that, if caught early enough, certain disorders could be treated.[45]

Like *Windsong*, *Wednesday's Child* also won the gold medal at the 18th International Film and TV Festival of New York in 1975.[46] Requests for copies of the

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[41] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," October 18, 1972, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[42] "Our Seeds Sprouted," November 14, 1972, Folder 45B, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[43] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 9, 1972; Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," October 18, 1972, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[44] "Certificate of Incorporation of The Human Betterment League of North Carolina, Inc." October 18, 1973, Folder 102, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.
[45] *Wednesday's Child*, Human Betterment League of North Carolina, 1975.
[46] "Human Betterment film takes top world award," *The Suburbanite*, November 12, 1976, Folder 84A, Box 2, Human Betterment League papers.

film again came from far away, including a high school in Texas and the McMaster University Department of Pediatrics in Ontario, Canada.[47]

2.5 Lobbying

While the majority of the HBL's efforts went to educating middle-class North Carolinians, members also directed their education efforts at the state's legislators. The HBL's first attempt at lobbying was in 1956, when member Nat Crews suggested writing to county registrars, who issued marriage licenses, about an increase in incestuous marriages in the state. In response, member Dr. Green mentioned a bill, proposed by other organizations, to deal with the issue, as well as with "issuing [marriage] licenses to mentally retarded." Green "emphasized" the controversial nature of the issue and urged his colleagues to tread lightly. Members agreed to endorsed of the proposed bill.[48]

Three years later, the HBL was still concerned with marriage. In 1959, six bills were before the General Assembly concerning unmarried mothers. The activity excited Crews, for he felt that it indicated "an awareness of the social as well as the financial problem involved." However, Herndon was less enthusiastic. Herndon informed the HBL that he "was most disturbed by the possibility of [the legislator and public] confusing [the proposed bills with] our present eugenics bill." Herndon feared that the proposed bills would use sterilization as a "punishment" against unmarried mothers, which Herndon believed was "the wrong approach, [as] social ills should not be confused with mental

[47] Betty Ambrose to HBL; Susan Judge to HBL, September 10, 1975, Folder 87, Box 2; List of *Wednesday's Child* showings, Folder 90, Box 2, Human Betterment League papers.
[48] Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," December 18, 1956, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

ills." After discussing the issue, members agreed not to make a statement or endorsement on the issue.[49]

One member tried to use the HBL as a vehicle for his own personal mission. Edward Benjamin, a retired attorney, advocated for an euthanasia law for "hopelessly defective infants" in at least five meetings over the span of 1968 to 1977.[50] Benjamin included "Mongolism," or Down's Syndrome, as worthy of euthanasia, writing that "there are mongoloids who can do a few things, but who have to be looked after by some adult constantly, who ought to be put down at birth, in my opinion."[51] As with sterilization, Benjamin saw euthanasia as humane and practical financially. He argued that a "common sense euthanasia law" was needed "in order to save terrible suffering on the part of parents and children and outrageous unnecessary expense on the part of the State."[52] He even offered the HBL $5,000 in 1977 to "make trail in the legislature on an optional euthanasia bill."[53]

In 1975, the HBL gave its first and only endorsement of a national law, H.R. 7988/S. 1715, the National Genetic Diseases Act. The Act sought to "to provide for basic and applied research, research training, testing, counseling, and information and education programs with respect to genetic diseases." Besides letter writing, Gordon Hanes had lunch with U.S. Senator Robert Morgan in Winston-Salem. Morgan later

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[49] Buddine, "Board of Directors meeting agenda," May 5, 1959, Folder 8, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[50] Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 30, 1968; Mrs. Cecil Hines, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," October 21, 1970; Cass, "Board of Directors meeting minutes," May 9, 1972, Folder 24, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers; Mrs. Cecil Hines, "Board of Director meeting minutes," October 21, 1970; "Board of Director meeting minutes," April 28, 1976; "Board of Director meeting minutes," October 11, 1977, Folder 15, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[51] Edward Benjamin to E. Davis, November 4, 1975, Folder 6, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[52] Benjamin to Harold Goodman, June 18, 1976, Folder 6, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[53] Benjamin to Marian Moser, October 11, 1977, Folder 15, Box 1; Benjamin to Moser, October 12, 1977, Folder 6, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

wrote to Hanes, "Regarding your request for help on SB 1715, the National Genetic Diseases Act, I have informed members of the staff of the Senate Subcommittee on Health of your interest."[54] Hanes also took the opportunity to promote *Wednesday's Child*, suggesting to Morgan that he present the film to other senators.[55] The HBL even convinced Ernie B. Hamblin, producer of both *Windsong* and *Wednesday's Child*, to write to his senator, William L. Scott, in support of the bill.[56] The bill passed Congress on April 22, 1976, and was signed into law as Public Law 94-278.[57] In 1979, the HBL applied for funds under the National Genetic Diseases Act "for an educational program in genetics." However, they did not receive the funding.[58]

Within North Carolina, H.B. 540, proposed on March 23, 1977, sought to create a "comprehensive school health education program." The program would include "the subject matter of mental and emotional health, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, nutrition, dental health, environmental health, family living, consumer health, disease control, growth and development, first aid and emergency care, and any like subject matter."[59] At a board meeting on April 17, 1978, the HBL agreed to endorse the measure, though they felt "that more emphasis should be placed on prevention and family

[54] Robert Morgan to Gordan Hanes, September 11, 1975, Folder 40, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[55] Hanes to Morgan, October 24, 1975, Folder 47, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[56] William L. Scott to Ernie B. Hamblin, November 14, 1975, Folder 37, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[57] An Act To Amend The Public Health Service Act To Revise And Extend The Program Under The National Hearth And Lung Institute, To Revise And Extend The Program Of National Research Service Awards, And To Establish A National Program With Respect To Genetic Disease; And To Require A Study And Report On The Release Of Research Information, H.R. 7988, 94th Cong. § 402 (Apr. 22, 1976).
[58] Moser to Edward D. Martin, January 18, 1979, Folder 37, Box 1; Martin to Moser, February 21, 1979, Human Betterment League papers.
[59] An Act To Establish A Statewide School Health Education Program, N.C. Gen. Stat. § Chapter 115 Article 24 (July 1, 1978).

planning."[60] Moser forwarded to June Stallings, the Coordinator of Supportive Services with the North Carolina Department of Human Resources, "letters to three key legislators who will be considering HB 540 next week." Moser had received the names of these legislators from North Carolina Representative Ted Kaplan of the Appropriations Committee.[61] While the bill passed the General Assembly on July 1, 1978, the law contained no explicit mention of family planning or sex education.[62]

On February 22, 1979, state Representatives proposed "A Bill to be Entitled An Act to Provide Additional Funding For The Genetic Health Care Program" as H.B. 466 in North Carolina. The proposal stated that "it is essential to provide Genetic Health Care Services to reduce the occurrence of these problems and diseases," sounding very similar to early sterilization laws seeking to "reduce" feeblemindedness. The Act would provide funds to increase genetic counseling services, establish more community-based clinics, and provide medical care to patients with genetic disorders.[63] At the suggestion of HBL member Elizabeth (Lib) Moore, the HBL sent letters to all ninety-seven members of the Appropriations Committee, writing that the HBL urged the committee "to support appropriations for H.B. 466, to provide appropriate resources for genetic health care."[64] In 1980, the HBL wrote to the Appropriations Committee again, insisting that "investment in such preventive programs will relieve human suffering in the short run

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[60] Emphasis in the original. "Board of Directors meeting agenda," April 17, 1978, Folder 9, Box 1; "Board of Directors meeting minutes," April 17, 1978, Folder 15, Box 1; Moser to June Stallings, May 18, 1978, Folder 76, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[61] Moser to Stallings, May 18, 1978, Folder 76, Box 2, Human Betterment League papers.
[62] An Act To Establish A Statewide School Health Education Program, N.C. Gen. Stat. § Chapter 115 Article 24 (July 1, 1978).
[63] An Act To Provide Additional Funding For The Genetic Health Care Program, § Chapter 1255 H.R. HB 466, 1979 Gen. Assem. (N.C., July 1, 1980).
[64] "Board of Directors meeting minutes, May 14, 1979, Folder 15, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

and pay large dividends in cost effectiveness in the long run."[65] Like eugenicists advocating for sterilization laws earlier in the century, the HBL continued to maintain its combination of humane and economic arguments. H.B. 466 was ratified and went into effect on July 1, 1980.[66]

2.6 Herndon's Repudiation

Herndon, President of the HBL from 1955 to 1959, resigned from the Board of Directors in 1963, citing illness. He does not appear to have participated in HBL activities after this date. In 1976, Herndon interviewed Elizabeth Allan Berger, daughter of William Allen, Herndon's mentor. During the interview, Herndon denied involvement with negative eugenics:

> Herndon: From a semantic viewpoint, the word "eugenics" acquired something of a negative connotation I think … during, um, the, well, right after the Hitler period and so on.
> Berger: Yes. And all the compulsory sterilization over there and that sort of thing.
> Herndon: Which was not at all what these people [the American Eugenics Society] were interested in talking about…. We used to talk about positive eugenics.[67]

This of course was not the case, for Herndon or the American Eugenics Society.[68] The Genetics Department at Bowman Gray, of which Herndon headed starting in 1943, was

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[65] Mrs. Herbert C. Bradshaw to North Carolina General Assembly Appropriations Committee, May 1, 1980, Folder 47, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[66] An Act To Provide Additional Funding For The Genetic Health Care Program, § Chapter 1255 H.R. HB 466, 1979 Gen. Assem. (N.C., July 1, 1980).
[67] Elizabeth Allan Berger, interview by C. Nash Herndon, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, NC, March 12, 1976.
[68] The American Eugenics Society (AES) was created in New York City in 1924 by Harry Laughlin and others to educate the public about eugenics and advocate for sterilization. Besides sponsoring Fitter Families and Better Baby contests, in 1928, the AES sponsored a writing contest "for essays on the causes of decline in 'Nordic' fertility." Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 73; Between the late 1930s and 1940s, the AES began steering away from "class and race biases." Kühl, *The Nazi Connection*, 81; Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present*, The Control of Nature (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995), 120, 123; Kelves, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 172; Philip R. Reilly, *The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 78.

heavily involved in Forsyth County sterilizations. In a report from September 1943, Herndon himself wrote,

> A project aimed at eugenic improvement of the population of Forsyth County was begun in co-operation with Dr. J. Roy Hege, Forsyth County Health Officer. This project consists of a gradual, but systematic effort to eliminate certain genetically unfit strains from the local population. About thirty operations for sterilization have been performed.[69]

In a paper presented in 1950, Herndon wrote, "I feel that no feebleminded individual can provide a proper home environment for raising children, and therefore recommend sterilization for all such patients regardless of whether the mental defect is inherited or acquired."[70]

2.7 Lawsuits and the End of Eugenics Board

In 1973, Nial Cox Ramirez became the first person to sue the Eugenics Board for violating her constitutional rights.[71] In 1974, with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, Elaine Riddick Jessie also sued the Eugenics Board, asking for $1 million in damages.[72] Both lawsuits failed. In 1976, another lawsuit was struck down. *In re Joseph Lee Moore*, jurists considered the case of Moore, who was sterilized as a fourteen-year-old boy at the request of the Forsyth County Department of Social Services in 1975. The case reached the North Carolina Supreme Court; however, the Court upheld the 1933 sterilization law.[73]

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[69] Quoted from Herndon's Annual Report for the Department of Medical Genetics for 1943-44. Danielle Deaver, "Forsyth in the Forefront: Medical school to probe its role in county plan for sterilization," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 35.
[70] C. Nash Herndon, "Human Resources from the Viewpoint of Medical Genetics" (paper presented at North Carolina Education Association, Boone, NC, February 14, 1950), printed in *Eugenical News* 35 (March 1950): 3, Folder 77, Box 2, Human Betterment League papers.
[71] Begos and Railey, "Sign this or else…," 52.
[72] Begos and Railey, "Still Hiding," 21.
[73] Mark A. Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 93-94.

Despite upholding the constitutionality of state sterilization, opposition to compulsory sterilization was growing across the country. On June 8, 1977, the North Carolina General Assembly passed House Bill 920 "An Act to Repeal G.S. 143B-151 and G.S. 143B-152 So As To Abolish The Eugenics Commission." The act stated that "the procedures for sterilization of persons who are mentally ill or mentally retarded (when appropriate) were placed in the judicial system; and Whereas, there is no longer a need nor an appropriate function for the Eugenics Commission."[74]

2.8 End of the Human Betterment League

In 1977, the HBL celebrated its 30th anniversary. Despite the achievements of the organization, Gordon Hanes believed the "primary mission" of the HBL had been met and continued operation was too costly. Taken aback, many members resisted, insisting that there was "still a strong need for HBL."[75] While Hanes may have seemed pessimistic and even defeatist, over the next ten years, his concerns came to pass.

In 1980, a mini-retreat was conducted to determine the purpose of the HBL going forward. Problems cited were no active membership, members who did not know what HBL was, and finances. The retreat decided the goal for HBL was to be "to promote awareness in NC of the value of genetic health care services in reducing infant mortality and developmental disabilities."[76]

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[74] (S.L. 1977, c. 497) "An Act to Repeal G.S. 143B-151 and G.S. 143B-152 So As To Abolish The Eugenics Commission" Session laws and resolutions passed by the General Assembly (1977) 581 http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p249901coll22/id/373414.

[75] "Board of Directors meeting minutes," September 19, 1977, Folder 15, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.

[76] "Board of Directors meeting minutes," February 8, 1980, Folder 15, Box 1; Goodman, handwritten notes, February 28, 1980, Folder 39, Box 1; Louise J. Smith, "Board of Directors Mini-Retreat," February 2, 1980, Folder 141, Box 4, Human Betterment League papers.

In 1984, the group changed its name to the Human Genetics League of North Carolina (HGL) "to reflect more accurately its emphasis on genetic issues."[77] The charter reflected this change as well:

> The purpose for which this corporation is organized is to stimulate awareness of the impact of human genetic and birth problems and of the resources available for counseling and treatment. The ultimate goal shall be to give every baby born in North Carolina the best possible chance for a happy and productive life. The means to achieve the purpose shall be: (a) to sponsor public discussion each year on the nature of genetic disorders and birth defects that are particularly common in North Carolina; (b) to promote public education of the current advances in medicine and science that might reduce the frequency and burden of these disorders; and (c) to encourage implementation of programs that promise to be feasible, cost effective, and compatible with human values and dignity.[78]

Despite the change, on September 6, 1985, HGL President Kate Garner wrote to the directors, "I am seriously concerned about the future of this organization…. Memberships already were down; there are too few renewals, even among directors. That means that income is also down but, more importantly, our support system is weak."[79] Even among directors, many were resigning, largely due to health problems. This perhaps speaks to the age gap between supporters of the HBL and younger citizens who no longer held eugenic notions.

Garner's concern carried over into 1986, when she again wrote the directors. The Curriculum Committee, the only program really left which was trying to add genetics to high school curricula, was dying due to inactivity and a lack of a chairperson.[80] "I am frustrated," Garner wrote, "that I cannot see any progress on the educational projects we

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[77] "Human Genetic League of North Carolina," Folder 20B, Box 1, Human Betterment League papers.
[78] "Articles of Amendment to the Charter of The Human Betterment League of North Carolina, Inc," November 8, 1983, Folder 102, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.
[79] Emphasis in the original. Kate Garner to Directors, September 6, 1985, Folder 99, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.
[80] Curriculum Committee to Kate Garner, September 8, 1987, Folder 102, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.

should be accomplishing nor on funding for establishing headquarters/staff." Garner also discussed the lack of participation from both members and directors.[81]

The year 1987 marked the HBL/HGL's 40th anniversary; however there are no printed materials announcing the occasion. The few members who attended the meetings worked on a proposal for R. J. Reynolds Company to present a seminar on Alzheimer's Disease, promoting the latest research and genetic counseling.[82] As far as the records show, the proposal was never sent or even completed. Garner resigned as president at the end of 1987.

On April 28, 1988, the executive committee mailed 800 brochures to doctors throughout North Carolina; only one responded by joining the HGL.[83] On June 20, 1988, HGL President Wayne Adams wrote to the board of directors to inform them that the few members who attended the last meeting had voted to disband the organization:

> It is apparent to us – the Executive Committee – that it is futile to try to continue with such a small membership, a totally voluntary board, and very limited resources. Further, we feel that we have virtually struck out in our membership recruitment. During the past two years, thousands of letters, brochures, and education materials have been developed and mailed, at considerable expense but no response. It is time to recognize that we have reached the end of the road.[84]

After forty-one years, the Human Betterment/Genetics League of North Carolina disbanded on June 30, 1988.[85]

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[81] Kate Garner to Directors and Consultants, July 1, 1986, Folder 99, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.
[82] Kate Garner to Directors, July 8, 1987, Folder 99, Box 3, Human Betterment League papers.
[83] Joyce P. Stines, "Executive Committee meeting minutes," April 28, 1988, Folder 151, Box 4, Human Betterment League papers.
[84] Wayne T. Adams, Jr. to Board of Directors, June 20, 1988, Folder 151, Box 4, Human Betterment League papers.
[85] The only indication of the final day was "the end of the fiscal year." According to the HBL's By-Laws, the fiscal year ended on June 30.

CONCLUSION

Between 1974 and the *Winston-Salem Journal*'s 2002 investigative series "Against Their Will," many claimed that the work of the Eugenics Board was unknown. Former State Director of Public Health and Eugenics Board member from 1966 to 1974 Jacob Kooman claimed in 2002 that he did not "remember seeing an article about the function of the eugenics board, or someone pointing one out to me. I don't remember a single clipping."[1] These claims are unfounded. Chapter 1 demonstrates that multiple newspapers throughout North Carolina covered the Human Betterment League's work from 1947 onwards. My public history project "What We Knew: The North Carolina Eugenics Program through newspapers" drives this point home more explicitly by providing examples of North Carolina newspapers, from large cities to small towns, covering nine key events in the lifecycle of the state's eugenics program.[2]

The *Winston-Salem Journal* received the bulk of its material from historian Johanna Schoen, who was working on *Choice and Coercion* throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In the conclusion of *Choice and Coercion*, Schoen wrote, "I felt I had an ethical responsibility toward those who had been sterilized under the program, that I owed them a form of public recognition."[3] Following the "Against Their Will" series, in February 2003, North Carolina Governor Mike Easley issued a public apology to the victims of the

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[1] Kevin Begos and John Railey, "Board did its duty, quietly," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 30; Kevin Begos and John Railey, "'Still Hiding': Woman sterilized at 14 carries a load of shame," in *Against Their Will: North Carolina's Sterilization Program and the Campaign for Reparations*, by Kevin Begos, et al. (Apalachicola, FL: Gray Oak Books, 2012), 22.
[2] Sarah Wilds, "What We Knew: The North Carolina Eugenics Program through newspapers," accessed April 14, 2019, https://svwilds.wixsite.com/hblnc.
[3] Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare*, Gender and American Culture (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 243-244.

state's eugenics program. He also appointed a special commission to, Schoen reports, "consider providing restitution to those who were sterilized under the program. In August 2003, Easley approved a list of restitution recommendations, including the provision of education and health benefits to sterilization victims."[4] In addition to these measures, on April 7, 2003, the General Assembly ratified Session Law 2003-13, "An Act To Repeal The Law That Authorizes The Involuntary Sterilization Of Persons Who Are Mentally Ill Or Mentally Retarded, To Permit The Sterilization Of Mentally Ill Or Mentally Retarded Wards Only When There Is A Medical Necessity, And To Make Conforming Changes To The General Statues," repealing Article 7 of Chapter 35 of the General Statutes. Easley signed the bill on April 17, 2003.[5]

3.1 Reparations

In 2010, Governor Bev Perdue established the North Carolina Justice for Sterilization Victims Foundation, which was given $250,000 and three years to find survivors. By 2011, 34 victims had been verified.[6] In 2012, a five-member task force charged with considering the possibility of reparations gave its final report. The task force recommended $50,000 per living victim, mental health services for victims,

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[4] Ibid., 19, 241.
[5] AN ACT TO REPEAL THE LAW THAT AUTHORIZES THE INVOLUNTARY STERILIZATION OF PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY ILL OR MENTALLY RETARDED, TO PERMIT THE STERILIZATION OF MENTALLY ILL OR MENTALLY RETARDED WARDS ONLY WHEN THERE IS A MEDICAL NECESSITY, AND TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES TO THE GENERAL STATUTES, Session Law 2003-13 H.B. 36, 2003 Gen. Assem. (N.C. Apr. 7, 2003), https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/SessionLaws/HTML/2003-2004/SL2003-13.html.
[6] Ann Doss Helms and Tommy Tomlinson, "Eugenics survivors prove elusive: N.C. says at least 1,500 of those sterilized under state authority in 1929-74 are still alive, but it lacks the money to track them down," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 21, 2011, 11A.

expanding the foundation, and setting up North Carolina eugenics exhibits around the state. By the time the report was released, the foundation had verified 72 victims.[7]

In July 2013, North Carolina became the first state in the nation to approve compensation for sterilization victims. The General Assembly set aside $10 million to be divided among survivors. Reparations would go to cases of proven coercion: "If a person was a 'competent adult' at the time of sterilization, the burden is on that person to 'rebut the presumption that claimant gave informed consent.'" Victims were given until June 30, 2014 to file claims.[8]

By December 2014, $4.4 million was paid out to 220 out of 786 claimants. Each of the 220 received $20,000.[9] At the same time, it became clear that not all victims would receive reparations, as coerced sterilizations were performed at the behest of local doctors, who never sent petitions to the Eugenics Board. Due to the wording of the 2013 reparations law, only victims who could prove they were sterilized under the authority of the Eugenics Board were eligible for compensation.[10] In 2015, Governor Pat McCrory ratified a budget granting an additional $15,000 to the 220 victims previously verified.

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[7] Tommy Tomlinson, "Final report recommends $50K for eugenics victims: Baseline set for N.C. legislators to work from as they tackle issue," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), January 28, 2012, 3B.
[8] Ann Doss Helms, "A little hope for eugenic victims: Survivors of a North Carolina sterilization program look forward to their long-awaited compensation," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), July 28, 2013.
[9] Jim Morrill, "Words costing victims money: Law may keep people involuntarily sterilized from compensation," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), December 6, 2014.
[10] Eric Mennel, "Payments Start for N.C. Eugenics Victims, But Many Won't Qualify," *NPR*, October 31, 2014; Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*, 2nd ed, American Crossroads (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 234.

These payments were made in November 2015.[11] In 2018, a third round of payment of $10,454 was made in February to each of the 220 qualified victims.[12]

Following North Carolina's lead, in February 2015, Virginia became the second state to compensate sterilization victims. A budget of $400,000, allowing for $25,000 per victim for sixteen victims, was passed to compensate Virginians forcibly sterilized by the state between 1924 and 1979.[13] The following year, an additional $800,000 was budgeted for reparations, allowing up to 48 victims to receive $25,000 each.[14]

In California in 2018, Senate Bill 1190, the "Eugenics Sterilization Compensation Program," was proposed to compensate the estimated 600 living sterilization victims. The bill died in Assembly in November that same year.[15]

3.2 Contributions and Argument

For all the *Winston-Salem Journal*'s back-patting for its role in North Carolina's apology and reparations, I agree with Nicolette Hylan when she wrote, "The [*Winston-Salem*] *Journal* minimized the extent to which North Carolinians were collectively responsible for eugenic sterilization by falsely contending that few people knew about the

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[11] Gary D. Robertson, "N.C. Compensation: Eugenics victims to get more payments," *Associated Press* in *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), September 28, 2015; Richard Carver, "N.C. eugenics victims projected to get final state compensation payment soon," *Winston-Salem Journal* (Winston-Salem, NC), January 17, 2018.

[12] Richard Craver, "Final payment goes out to 220 eugenics victims," *Winston-Salem Journal* (Winston-Salem, NC), February 9, 2018.

[13] Stern, *Eugenics Nation*, 234; Alicia Petska, "Virginia to be second state to offer sterilization compensation with budget's signing," *The News and Advance* (Lynchburg, VA), March 27, 2015.

[14] "Forced-sterilization-compensation effort receives more state funding," *Inside NOVA* (Woodbridge, VA), March 31, 2016.

[15] Emily Galpern, "A Bill to Compensate Survivors of Eugenic Sterilization in California," *Biopolitical Times*, accessed April 3, 2019; Lilia Vega, "California could give compensation to forced sterilization survivors," KALW 91.7FM San Francisco, last modified August 8, 2018, accessed April 3, 2019; "SB-1190 Eugenics Sterilization Compensation Program," California Legislative Information, accessed April 3, 2019, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1190.

program."[16] The claim that no one knew is so frequent in twenty-first century coverage of state eugenics programs it is impossible to cite them all. As Hylan stated though, it is an unsubstantiated claim in North Carolina, as suggested by the record of the Human Betterment League (HBL).

The HBL was only one of many eugenics advocacy organizations, indeed, one of several state Human Betterment Leagues. North Carolina's HBL stands out, however, for its longevity and impact. The HBL's extensive education campaign and lobbying kept the state's eugenics program alive and running past World War II up until the 1970s. It demonstrated the shift in language eugenicists made to keep their core ideas alive and acceptable to the scientific community and wider public. These ideas are still alive today, again, just cloaked in different language. The concept of bettering humans was not created by Sir Francis Galton and did not die with the end of state-sponsored sterilization. With the advent of new technologies and understandings of human genetics, the possibility of making eugenicists' dreams a reality is upon us and there are people today who would do just that. Keeping in mind the justifications used by past eugenicists allows us to recognize them in the present and, hopefully, avoid the abuses of the past.

[16] Nicolette Hylan, "Selling Eugenic Sterilization: The Human Betterment League of North Carolina, 1947-1959." (Honors essay, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 15.

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