

From a social viewpoint, disability was closely linked to poverty — a condition that existed in ancient times and continues today, where the rate of unemployment for persons with disabilities is now over 65%.

*They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord,
And wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to
The depths:
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wit's end.*

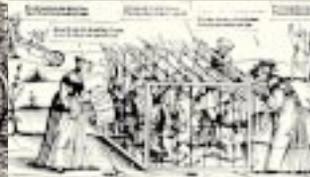
Psalm 107

INVOLVEMENT BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: Survival as outcasts and beggars.

STEREOTYPE:

Burdens of Charity: People with disabilities are viewed as clients entitled to food and shelter and little else; the disability is often viewed as punishment for some sin, and any help rendered is more from contempt than sympathy. Persons with disabilities receiving this "cold charity" are viewed as draining public resources and are expected to show proper appreciation.

Similar arguments have been used for locating institutions away from the community, where the air was apparently fresher and had a soothing effect upon the inmates.



At times, persons with disabilities were "shipped off" to other lands, so they would no longer pose a burden on their communities. These boats would sail from port to port, charging admission to view their strange human cargo. Eventually, the ships would abandon their "passengers" at another port, forcing them to fend for themselves. Some argued that the fresh sea air had a curative affect.

During this time, small steel imprisonments called "idiot cages" also became common in town centers to "keep people with disabilities out of trouble." Mostly, they served as entertainment for townspeople.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TREATED AS SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND PUBLIC BURDENS.



FOOL (fool): a) A person with little or no judgment; b) A man formerly kept in the household of a nobleman or king to entertain by joking and clowning; a victim of a joke or trick.

Between 1563 and 1601, Queen Elizabeth of England passed a series of laws requiring the state to take care of the "poor and disadvantaged." Basic care was provided for the unemployable poor, almshouses

were established for the aged poor, and workhouses were built for vagrants who refused to work. Many with disabilities were placed in almshouses or workhouses, where the conditions were grim.



St. Mary of Bethlehem, a large asylum in London better known as "Bedlam," had windows opening onto the sidewalk, allowing passersby to witness the people living within.

A modern parallel can be drawn to our institutions of the 1950s and 1960s, where a larger number of persons were admitted to meet a growing demand for services, resulting in dehumanizing conditions and a poor quality of life.



1620
The first book on teaching sign language to Deaf people, containing a manual alphabet, is published by Juan Pablo DeBonet.

1752
1st Hospital in the American colonies for the treatment of people with mental illness opens in Pennsylvania in a private home. The patients are moved to the Pine Street Hospital in Philadelphia after it opens in 1756.

1758-1828
Franz Joseph Gall, a highly respected brain anatomist, identifies 39 distinct areas of the brain associated with intellectual functions.

1798
A system of marine hospitals is established to care for sailors who are sick or have become disabled.

1755
The first free school for the Deaf opens in Paris by Abbe Charles de L'Epee.

1755
Samuel Heinicke establishes the first oral school for the deaf in the world in Germany.

1760
Thomas Braidwood opens the first school for the Deaf in England.

1768
The Public Hospital for Persons of Insane and Disordered Minds opens in Williamsburg, VA. Its first patient is Zachariah Mallory of Hanover County, VA.