Similar research was published by other professionals, including Hill Folk by Davenport and Danielson; The Duck Family, by Finlayson; and Mongolian Virginians, the Win Tribe, by Estabrook and McDougle. The Almosts: A study of the feeble-mindedness was a popular text for emerging special educators. (The “Almosts” referred to the people with mental retardation as being almost human.) These studies supported similar conclusions to Goddard’s research, and further stigmatized people with disabilities and their families. Not until many years later was Goddard’s research rejected as invalid.

Using the case history of a resident in his institution named Deborah “Kallikak” Kallikak, Goddard found criminals, prostitutes, and vagabonds: people of below normal intelligence. With the bar maid, Goddard found criminals, prostitutes, and vagabonds: people of below normal intelligence. Of Martin’s lineage through his offspring to Philadelphia where he married a woman of the upper class. From this history, Goddard traced the lineage of Martin “Kallikak’s” upper class family, finding only successful, upstanding individuals of normal or better intelligence. On Martin’s mother through his offspring with the bar maid, Goddard found criminals, prostitutes, and vagabonds: people of below normal intelligence.

The eugenic research of superintendents in the US had a direct influence on attitudes toward people with disabilities in Nazi Germany.

As American professionals were calling for sterilization, Nazi Germany was blaming people with disabilities for wasting valuable resources.

One case of sterilization came before the Supreme Court concerning a woman named “Kallikak.” Those who brought her to court produced a family tree, showing that the girl was already in the third generation of people with limited intelligence. Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes proclaimed “These generations of imbeciles areoverlaying,” and he ordered sterilization. Later studies proved that the woman was in fact not “feeble-minded,” and that her family tree was concocted.

In reaction to misguided fear about persons with developmental disabilities, and as a means of social control, the popular movement led to tens of thousands of forced sterilizations. A popular belief at the time was that mental retardation and mental illness were completely genetic, and were the cause of moral, if not all, social, the periodic sterilizations, imprisonment, and violence. The response was to segregate at every level of society, so that they could not reproduce their “evil strain” and “destroy the gene pool.”

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1882 Institution in Syracuse, NY opens farms colonies.
1883 Francis Galton, a cousin to Charles Darwin, coins the term ‘eugenics.”
1888 Maryland opens the Asylum and Training School for the Feeble-Minded.
1889 Laura Bridgman, world-famous blind student of the Perkins School, dies at age sixty of pneumonia.
1892 Ellis Island opens.
1894 National Deaf-Mute College becomes Gallaudet College.
1896 Charles Eliot Norton (Editor of the North American Review) advocates for “harmless destruction” of insane and deficient minds.
1897 Martin Baur discusses benefits of deinstitutionalization at the Association for Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons.