

Disability History

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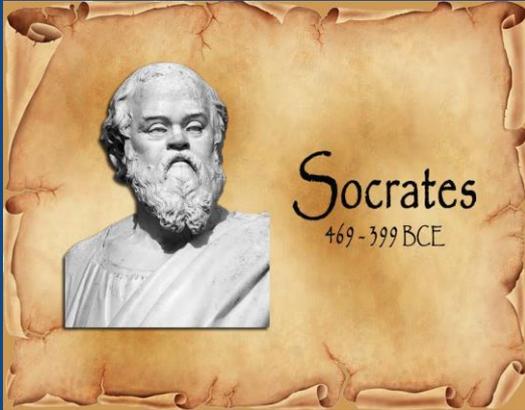
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**– language used to create electronic documents called pages that are displayed on the World Wide Web*



3500 B.C.—
1000 A.D.



- ▶ **First written record of prosthesis** (ancient sacred poem of India Rig-Veda, 3500 B.C.)
- ▶ **First recorded reference to developmental delay** (obscure document “Therapeutic Papyrus of Thebes,” 1552 B.C.)
- ▶ **First consideration of what constitutes a good quality of life** (philosopher Socrates challenges Athenian citizens, 470-399 B.C.)
- ▶ **“Born deaf become senseless and incapable of reason”** (Aristotle, 355 B.C.)

3500 B.C.–1000
A.D. – *continued*



- ▶ **Earliest medical schools in Alexandria** (physician Herophilus finds one of the schools and finds connections between brain defects and disability)
- ▶ **Brain recognized as central organ of the nervous system and the seat of intellect** (Greek physician and scholar Galen)

787 A.D.–1601 A.D.

- ▶ **Treatments for meningitis and hydrocephalus and levels of intellectual functioning** (Physician Avicenna, 980-1037)



- ▶ **First asylum for abandoned infants** (Datheus, archbishop of Milan, 787)

- ▶ **Laws requiring the state to take care of the "poor and disadvantaged"** (Queen Elizabeth, between 1563-1601)

Religion in providing basic services and shaping attitudes toward people with disabilities



► Fear and obsession with God; belief that people with disabilities **get what they deserve**; the notion of **predestination**

► **Exile; refuge** in leper colonies or church shelters; establishing **orphanages, hospitals, and homes** for the blind and the aged

Renaissance (1300–1600)

- ▶ Disability becomes a **medical issue** requiring the services of trained professionals
- ▶ A gradual understanding of science leads to **new and often painful treatments** for persons with disabilities
- ▶ Social reform and new ideas in education offer **opportunities** for people with developmental disabilities



1800s–1930s



- ▶ **Quality of education and services decline** as demand for institutional placement increases
- ▶ **Quality of services further declines** as suspicion of all people who are different grows
- ▶ Persons with developmental disabilities **blamed for many of society's problems** and are the **first victims of the holocaust** (over 200,000)

1900s

- ▶ Disability no longer limited to moral or medical definitions; now viewed by many as a **social construct**
- ▶ People with disabilities face **new opportunities and threats** as America's largest minority



- ▶ Persons with intellectual disabilities **advocate for themselves and others** with disabilities, proclaiming **"We are people first!"**

1911–1945



- ▶ **Services slowly available** to persons with physical disabilities; many with developmental disabilities largely forgotten
- ▶ **Parents assert their leadership** and begin to organize; parent advocacy leads to increased funding, better community services and larger institutions
- ▶ Influenced by the civil and human rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, people with disabilities **begin to fight for their rights**

1946–Present

- ▶ Activists **remember the past** and work to ensure that mistakes are not repeated



- ▶ Naming and claiming of who we are, where we come from and where we want to go; **disability culture**
- ▶ Seeking **full participation**
- ▶ **Community integration** for everyone

More recourses to explore

- ▶ **Respect Ability:** <https://www.respectability.org/resources/education-resources-disability-issues/> (Education Resources on Disability Issues)
- ▶ **Everybody: An Artifact History of Disability in America**
<https://everybody.si.edu/>
- ▶ **Pics4Learning:** <http://www.pics4learning.com> (A copyright-friendly image library with content-related pictures)
- ▶ World Health Organization. (2001). *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.