Introduction

At a ceremony held in Oregon's capitol building in December 2002, Governor John Kitzhaber stood before an overflowing crowd and apologized for the more than twenty-six hundred sterilizations performed in that state between 1917 and 1983.[1] Since the summer, Kitzhaber had been under mounting pressure from a vocal coalition of mental health advocates, disability rights groups, and sterilization victims to express public remorse for what he referred to at the December event as the "misdeeds that resulted from widespread misconceptions, ignorance and bigotry."[2] Kitzhaber's apology was the second in a series initiated by Virginia's governor, Mark Warner, who in May 2002 deemed his commonwealth's sterilization program "a shameful effort in which state government should never have been involved."[3] The governors of North Carolina, South Carolina, and California followed suit, delivering similar statements of regret over the next twelve months. Tangible and symbolic gestures usually accompanied these apologies. In Virginia, for example, two of the approximately eight thousand people sterilized between 1924 and the 1970s unveiled a highway marker recognizing the injustice suffered by Carrie Buck. The first person affected by Virginia's sterilization law, Buck was the plaintiff in *Buck v. Bell,* the infamous 1927 U.S. Supreme Court case in which the justices overwhelmingly upheld the constitutionality of involuntary sterilization. In Oregon, acknowledging that a "great wrong" had been done "in accordance with eugenics," Kitzhaber designated December 10 as Human Rights Day, a day on which hence-

forth "we will affirm the value of every human being."[4] North Carolina's governor, Mike Easley, approved compensation, in the form of health care and education benefits, to any living resident of the seventy-six hundred sterilized by the state between 1929 and 1974.

Although these five states represent a fraction of the thirty-three that had sterilization laws on the books at some point in the twentieth century, their actions are noteworthy. For many victims, these apologies assuaged the pain and indignity they had endured after forced operations. As public utterances predicated on an awareness of the past, the governors' statements helped to foster valuable historical research into the personal stories of those sterilized and the activities of the responsible health and welfare agencies. They also sparked important bioethical discussions in legislative, university, and community forums about the potential for medical abuse and miscommunication, particularly with regard to genetic and reproductive technologies.

Yet these apologies can close rather than open retrospective windows and they raise serious questions about how we remember—and forget—eugenics. By drawing a fairly stark line between an abhorrent and benighted chapter of pseudoscience in which misguided authorities were ensnared by Nazi-inspired ideas of racial hygiene and a much savvier and sagacious present in which such mistakes will not be repeated, the apologies can create a specious sense of security, even hubris. As admonitions against future medical coercion or exploitation, such statements are well-meaning reminders at best and, in a post–Cold War global era defined by a dense traffic of restitutive and contritional pronouncements, vacuous truisms at worst.[5] Most worrisome from a historian's perspective, they can make it more difficult to extract eugenics from the shadow of Nazism. Without doubt, familiarity with German racial hygiene is imperative to grasp the international and philosophical milieu in which eugenics arose and to understand how medical abuse can converge with dictatorial politics to produce genocide.[6] The atrocities of the Final Solution should never be minimized. Nonetheless, the looming presence of the Holocaust in our collective memory, into which context the apologies must be placed, has helped to privilege renditions and narratives of eugenics in America that, ultimately, flatten and simplify the historical terrain.[7] *Eugenic Nation* seeks to explore continuities, permutations, and ramifications of better breeding in the United States that have been obscured; in so doing, it proposes a revised chronology, decenters the vantage point from which the story is often

told, and excavates a set of topics that have rarely received more than a passing nod.

There are several reasons to challenge the prevailing historical understanding of eugenics and its underlying assumptions about time, place, and thematic relevance. First, the declension narrative of Nazism is so potent and seductive that it has often served as the principal lens through which much U.S. scholarship has framed eugenics. There is a deep emotional charge to associating any practice or person with Nazism, and when writing history, the recitation of such connections can stand in for careful analysis of historical contingencies and can verge on sensationalism. Of course, it is vital to document the parallels between the United States and Germany and acknowledge the shared historical trajectories of these two countries.[8] Several prominent U.S. eugenicists corresponded regularly with their German counterparts, eugenic and lay periodicals applauded the passage in the 1930s of Nazi marriage and sterilization laws (which were partly derived from American models), and at least two eugenicists received honorary degrees from German universities during the rise of fascism.[9] By the eve of Hitler's defeat, leading U.S. scientists, journalists, and politicians had positioned themselves against Nazi-style doctrines of racial superiority and noted anthropologists were jettisoning biological determinism and embracing cultural explanations of human difference.[10] In 1952, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) committee that included well-known American geneticists issued a far-reaching statement on the falsity of the "race concept."[11]

Given that eugenics in the United States is frequently aligned with scientific racism, the fall of Nazism and the abandonment of overt racial categories by many postwar eugenicists have encouraged the view that eugenics disappeared, or at least languished, in the 1940s. Hereditarianism, however, did not perish after World War II; it was repackaged. Exhibiting more flexibility than their predecessors, postwar eugenicists partly accepted the role of extrinsic factors and incorporated tenets from demography, sex research, psychoanalysis, and anthropology into their repertoires. Guided by experiments in endocrinology and human genetics that were examining hormonal function, sex selection, and chromosomal patterns, and increasingly attentive to theories of polygenic disease causation and genetic susceptibility, most postwar eugenicists let environmental precipitants in the door without, however, relinquishing the ultimate primacy of heredity.[12]

Eager to sever any association with state coercion, eugenicists in the postwar period shifted their scope in two directions. In the first direction, they began to place greater emphasis on individual choice and private decision making, often under the emergent rubric of medical genetics. This was the case with genetic counseling, which was launched at a handful of heredity clinics and university-based human genetics departments in the 1940s. Using family pedigree charts and armed with fledgling knowledge of the biochemistry of a variety of genetic diseases, genetic counselors advised couples on the probability that their offspring would carry deleterious or lethal traits.[13] They publicly disdained earlier eugenicists' fixation on race and instead believed that the universal gene pool could be improved through judicious mating and a personal reluctance to propagate defects.[14] The individual was also the focus for practitioners of constitutional medicine and biotypology, specialties that mixed physiology, psychology, and anthropometry in a quest to identify omnipresent human types that corresponded not to racial classifications, but to binaries such as hyperkinetic and hypokinetic, introvert and extrovert, endomorph and ectomorph.[15]

If genetic counselors and biotypologists headed in the first direction, population experts headed in the second. After World War II, as the United States became a global superpower, a core group of eugenicists merged their interest in salvaging and retooling eugenics with the export of Western-led modernization to the Third World. This resulted in organizations such as the neo-Malthusian International Planned Parenthood Foundation and the Population Council, founded in 1948 and 1952, respectively, which pursued family planning and birth control abroad.[16] Wary of totalitarianism, most postwar eugenicists distanced themselves from arguments about the need to capitulate individual rights to the national collectivity and moved simultaneously into the domains of marriage, the family, and the geopolitics of international development.[17]

Thus, efforts to encourage better breeding continued in the United States, primarily through family planning, population control, and genetic and marital counseling. At the same time, a few organizations, such as the Pioneer Fund, formed in 1937, forged ahead undaunted with studies aimed at furnishing a scientific basis for racial discrimination.[18] In addition, as content analyses of the most widely assigned biology textbooks demonstrate, eugenic explanations of social behavior were heartily endorsed in classrooms around the country into the 1960s.[19] During the 1940s and 1950s, there were heated debates about

"good" versus "bad" eugenics—the latter usually equated with "pseudoscience"—but the term itself did not fall into general disrepute until the 1970s.[20] Indeed, the American Eugenics Society (AES) did not feel compelled to change its name to the Society for the Study of Social Biology until 1973 (although its directors clarified that this did "not coincide with any change of its interests and policies").[21] Lastly, the stringent immigration and sterilization laws passed decades earlier remained in force, affecting the ethnic and demographic composition of the United States and the lives of thousands of patients and inmates in state institutions.[22]

The second reason to challenge the prevailing historical understanding of eugenics is that until recently, the eugenics historiography, like much of the history of medicine, has been quite East Coast–centric. For the most part, scholars have explored eugenics from the vantage point of organizations such as the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) and the AES, and individuals, such as Charles B. Davenport and Madison Grant, all based on the Atlantic seaboard. For the first generation of historians delving into eugenics, archival repositories such as the American Philosophical Society Library—which houses the papers of the ERO and Davenport—were the logical place to start, and the books and articles resulting from this research produced an exceedingly rich foundation.[23] With New York, Washington, D.C., and Boston as epicenters, most students of eugenics developed a narrative that tacitly enshrined the East Coast as the geographical reference point and then projected that interpretation across the rest of the country, often with only remote interest in regional variations. Certain seminal events, such as the creation of the ERO in 1910 and its closing in 1940, or the sparsely attended Third International Eugenics Congress, held in New York in 1932, crystallized into salient signposts. However, if we turn to the South, Midwest, and West, these temporal markers chafe against alternative chronologies. For example, it was in the cereal capital of Battle Creek, Michigan, that John Harvey Kellogg incorporated the first sizable eugenics organization, the Race Betterment Foundation, in 1906.[24] One year later, the hardtack state of Indiana stood at the vanguard, ushering in the country's first sterilization law. We also see that, in the 1930s, as the ERO was coming under fire, several Southern states passed sterilization laws for the first time, the number of sterilizations performed nationwide increased markedly, and several groups on the West Coast, such as the California Division of the AES and the American Institute of Family Relations (AIFR), amplified their activities.[25]

Over the past decade, studies focused on Vermont, Virginia, North Carolina, Minnesota, Indiana, and Oregon have underscored the multidimensional presence of eugenics from coast to coast.[26] They have demonstrated the longevity of hereditarianism across the arc of the twentieth century and detailed the range of alliances that eugenicists forged with socialists, free-love advocates, feminists, horticulturists, pediatricians, obstetricians, public health advocates, philanthropists, industrialists, and a motley cast of politicians and legislators. At the same time, it is now impossible to disregard the global reach of eugenics, which thrived in places as diverse as Norway, Japan, China, Argentina, and Canada.[27] Eugenics was a worldwide phenomenon; what its heterogeneous adherents shared was faith in the application of biology and medicine to the perceived problems of modern society. And in many countries, such as Mexico, Chile, and France, eugenics grew in popularity not in the 1910s and 1920s, but from the 1930s to 1950s, inspiring socialist education campaigns, the professionalization of social work, and the construction of planned housing communities for fecund working-class families.[28] Once situated in this multiregional and transnational panorama, the timetable and topography of eugenics in the United States appears more elongated and striated than previously imagined.

In particular, by turning our gaze thousands of miles west, away from the headquarters of the ERO, we encounter a history that was both paradigmatic of large-scale national trends and particular to the region. It is surprising that the American West has been largely overlooked, given that California performed twenty thousand sterilizations, one-third of the total performed in the country, that Oregon created a State Eugenics Board in 1917, and that the impact of restrictive immigration laws designed to shield America from polluting "germ plasm" reverberated with great intensity along the Mexican border. In addition, the "West" spawned metaphors and myths for the initial generation of American eugenicists, who updated the Manifest Destiny doctrines of the 1840s with a twentieth-century medical and scientific vocabulary to expound on the noble westward march of Anglo-Saxons and Nordics.[29]

From the perspective of the American West, conventions tear at the seams; in their wake materialize novel subjects and avenues of inquiry. For example, the Second National Conference on Race Betterment (SNCRB), held at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in 1915, needs to be understood not just as part of an ascendant eugenics

movement that had one foot on the West Coast, but also in terms of the circulation of tropical medicine from the Panama Canal and Philippines to San Francisco. A closer look at the implementation of medical inspections and immigration regulations along the Mexican border illustrates the eugenic dimensions of the Border Patrol, which was formed in 1924 to help enforce the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act and regulate Mexican immigration. The affinity between eugenic and environmentalist ideas about the purity and preservation of nature can be captured by reviewing the origins of the interpretative parks movement and the Save-the-Redwoods League, both of which were generously supported by Charles M. Goethe, the Sacramento businessman who launched the Eugenics Society of Northern California (ESNC).[30] Last but certainly not least, the AIFR, founded in 1930 by Paul Popenoe, an ardent sterilization proponent, not only points to the concerns of eugenicists in the rapidly expanding city of Los Angeles before and after World War II but also illuminates the eugenic designs behind the personality, marital compatibility, and sexual function tests that were formulated during the Cold War era.

A third reason to challenge the prevailing historical understanding of eugenics is that, as feminist scholars have shown, placing gender and sexuality at the center of the analysis reconfigures the history of eugenics, demanding substantial temporal and thematic revisions, and delineating a story that is at once more ordinary and more complex.[31] For example, when the reproductive and erotic body is highlighted, an uninterrupted line can be drawn from the sterilization laws passed by state legislatures in the 1910s that targeted "morons" and the "feebleminded" to the sexual surgeries performed by federal agencies on poor female welfare recipients during the 1960s.[32] As the twentieth century progressed, and following the simplification and routinization of the salpingectomy (removal of one or both fallopian tubes, which still entailed greater risks and longer convalescence than the vasectomy) in the 1930s, more operations began to be performed on women than men.[33] This transition indicates that the forced sterilization of women in the United States was interwoven with the enlargement of the welfare state, the denigration of dependent and single mothers, and the perceived burden of "illegitimate" children.[34] This was certainly the case in North Carolina, where sterilizations of African American women deemed "unfit" and incapable of proper parenting rose in the 1950s and 1960s.[35] For more than fifty years, involuntary sterilizations were motivated by a shifting mix of anxieties about sexual deviance and the

promiscuity of teenage girls, fears of biological deterioration, and a discourse of institutional cost saving.

In addition to urging a reevaluation of sterilization practices, foregrounding sexuality and gender complicates many of the conceptual retaining walls that have circumscribed eugenics and other social and cultural phenomena. For example, the records of North Carolina's Eugenics Board show that while black women were being disproportionately sterilized in the 1950s and 1960s, some of them, intent on obtaining birth control, actually filed applications for the operation.[36] Although only about 6 percent (468) of the eight thousand total sterilizations in North Carolina were requested, the insistence of a vocal minority to obtain approval for the procedure reveals the extent to which the battle for reproductive control was framed by eugenic categories and priorities. Feminist scholars have recognized this symbiotic relationship for quite some time and have shown how male physicians gradually took over birth control, eugenicists appropriated the agenda of family planning, and the women's movement struggled to reverse these trends in the 1960s and 1970s.[37] All too often, however, these issues are distilled into a thumbnail sketch of the hot-button figure of Margaret Sanger, who has been alternately described as a die-hard eugenicist with virulent race and class prejudices or as a true if misguided feminist who cultivated strategic alliances with eugenicists but did not fully accept the implications of their ideas.[38]

A tendency to depict eugenics in black and white has elided uncomfortable nuances. For instance, according to one scholar, the majority of women in Puerto Rico (mostly middle- or working-class) who underwent sterilization had a positive or neutral assessment of the procedure, which was their preferred contraceptive option.[39] Yet it is common for scholarship on twentieth-century Puerto Rico to ignore this feminist attitude toward sterilization as well as the vibrancy of the early feminist movement, which fought for reproductive autonomy, and instead echo condemnations of the scientific experts who pushed "la operación" as a "remedy" for a purported overpopulation problem. Although the experiences of Puerto Ricans who underwent surgery in New York City hospitals may have more in common with those of African American and Native American women who spoke out against forced tubal ligations in the 1960s and 1970s, much of the history of sterilization needs to be considered a fractious interplay between diverse feminist groups, those sterilized, physicians, the welfare bureaucracy, and eugenicists.

Finally, if attention to gender and sexuality has illustrated some of the gray areas of reproductive politics, it also sheds light on how everyday eugenics played out, above all, among white middle-class Americans.[40] After World War II, as eugenicists turned toward genetic and marital counseling, their target populations changed.[41] Instead of tallying the "undesirable" and "feebleminded," they began to devote greater attention to married heterosexual couples, who they hoped would amply procreate. Although some historians juxtapose these two approaches as "positive" (fostering the reproduction of the "fit") and "negative" (impeding the reproduction of, and even euthanizing, the "unfit"), such a distinction implies that they can be fairly easily entangled. In California, however, the most strident champions of "positive" eugenics, Popenoe and Goethe, who used that term to explain their interests and the organizations they founded, were also the most heavily invested in "negative" campaigns such as compulsory sterilization and unyielding immigration restriction. Rather than accepting such descriptors transparently, it is crucial to historicize their rhetorical function and be cognizant of their explanatory limitations. Scholars have also relied on the terminology of "mainline" and "reform" to characterize, respectively, the racist eugenicists of the 1920s, such as Harry H. Laughlin, and their more moderate successors, such as Frederick Osborn, the longtime president of the AES who foregrounded population planning and demography.[42] Yet, once gender is factored into the equation, these lines too become blurred.

Beneath the surface of the distinction between "mainline" and "reform" lay a significant continuity in twentieth-century hereditarianism. In the 1940s and 1950s, many eugenicists traded in their previous interest in determining the biological differences between discrete racial groups for a fascination with the male-female dichotomy, which was envisioned as stretching along a continuum of overlapping gradations of personality, temperament, and compatibility. The disarticulation and transposition of "race" onto gender and sexuality was an integral component of the midcentury "shift from the categorical to the scalar" and was central to the perpetuation of a hereditarian and evolutionist vision of civilization and its discontents in the United States.[43] This reconfiguration helped to spur national alarm over homosexuality (manly women and effeminate men), frigid wives, and sexual dysfunction, and contributed to the pronatalist zeal of the "baby boom."[44] The racial panics of the 1920s reemerged as the sexual conformity of the 1950s,

even as institutional racism and the racialized baggage of social Darwinism perdured, the latter often embedded in population and family planning or psychotherapeutic constructs of gender and sex.

Through these temporal, spatial, and topical lenses, the systematic affront to eugenics occurred not in the 1930s and 1940s, but during the civil rights era, when its two principal pillars, sterilization laws and national origins immigration quotas, were dismantled through a combination of grassroots mobilization and legislative action. By the 1960s and 1970s, there was increasing uneasiness and anger, in streets and assembly halls, about the lingering and persistent ramifications of hereditarianism on specific groups, such as poor African American women who were being unwittingly sterilized, Mexican American youths whose life options were restricted by the results of intelligence testing and vocational tracking, and middle-class white women who were eager to finally wrest birth control out of the hands of male family planners.[45] Furthermore, the patriarchal culture, gender imbalances, and racial prejudices of the medical establishment were coming under attack from many sides.[46] A sea change was underway, as evidenced by the media and congressional uproar over revelations that the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) had conducted unethical and harmful syphilis experiments on poor rural blacks in Macon County, Alabama, for more than forty years.[47] The 1973 hearings on the now notorious Tuskegee experiments catalyzed the formulation of informed consent protocols, which nations had been urged to adopt after the Nuremberg Trials, and bolstered the claim that racial minorities had been pawns, not beneficiaries, in the advancement of American medicine and science. The protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s—ranging from desegregation, black power, Chicano nationalism, and second-wave feminism to gay liberation—arose in part as an assault on the decades-long effects of eugenics-based policies and rationales. Certainly, the 1960s should not be reduced to a revolt against eugenics, but this tumultuous era cannot be comprehended outside of the troubled history of hereditarianism in the United States.

Eugenics is an elusive word. It has had divergent connotations and has galvanized disparate projects across the world.[48] As the preceding pages suggest, the transformation of eugenics over time makes it imperative to define it in contextual, not absolute, terms. However, this does not imply a lack of precision. When Sir Francis Galton, the British statistician and cousin of Charles Darwin, coined the term in 1883, he combined

the Greek *eu* (good or well) with the root of *genesis* (to come into being, be born) and added the modifying suffix *ics*.[49] After trying out various formulations, in *Essays in Eugenics*, published in 1909, Galton wrote that eugenics was "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage."[50] If "science" encompasses both theory and practice, knowledge and skill, and "race" comprises the human species, interpretations that correspond to Galton's description of eugenics as a kind of interventionist religion and his emphasis on the betterment of all human "specimens" and "stock," then *eugenics* can simply be defined as better breeding. Indeed, in 1911 Davenport reiterated this definition of *eugenics* as "the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding."[51] Of course, the operative word is *better*, the significance of which was, and continues to be, the source of the intense politicization of eugenics. Who decides what potential progenitor or offspring is "better" and has the leverage to enforce such preferences? What is the rationale for selection and who, ostensibly, in the short and long term, will benefit or suffer? What if members of a given society disagree on who and what is superior and inferior, normal and abnormal? What roles should the state and the individual be allowed or encouraged to play in the development and enforcement of eugenic programs? What restrictions, if any, should be placed on commercial access to genetic technologies and information, particularly those that enable certain people and groups potentially to buy eugenic enhancement while others are left behind? Nestled in Galton's foundational definition are the perplexing questions that have haunted attempts at better breeding for more than a century.

Whether today or at the height of the Cold War or in the late 1800s, both supporters and detractors have linked eugenics to anxieties about biological deterioration and hopes for genetic optimization. Over time, these oscillating concerns have continuously, albeit unevenly, affected our understandings of race, sexuality, reproduction, and nature. For example, in the 1980s, some scholars expressed worry that the development of genetic tests for diseases such as Tay-Sachs and sickle-cell anemia had the potential to revive the associations between particular racial groups and biological defects that had been so popular in the 1920s and 1930s. One sociologist suggested that instead of overtly guiding medical and public policies, these stereotypes were now being insidiously and sometimes inadvertently furthered by genetic screening programs that allowed eugenics to enter surreptitiously through

the back door.[52] Several decades earlier, Hermann J. Muller, a Nobel Prize–winning geneticist with socialist leanings, proposed artificial insemination and the establishment of sperm banks stocked with superior "germinal material" as the ideal route to genetic perfectibility. He was confident that his plan was compatible with the values of a democratic society, since the donations from "persons of unusual moral courage, progressive spirit, and eagerness to serve mankind" would be voluntary.[53] Although Muller asserted that his scheme of artificial insemination was a far cry from the controlled procreation of a Hitler or Mussolini, his assumption that women would happily serve as the wombs of such superlative progeny was offensive to many Americans, especially feminists struggling to win greater reproductive freedom.

These two examples illustrate how medical or social programs designed to encourage the breeding of some people and not others have incited anticipation, trepidation, and controversy in the United States. It is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to discuss the motivations for and implications of genetic testing and "genius" sperm banks without grappling with bioethical dilemmas and revisiting the legacy of eugenics. Over the past decade, with the launching of the Human Genome Project and the prospective ramifications of the decoding of the human genome for genetics and reproduction, these issues have become more salient than ever before. One of the greatest ironies of our contemporary era is that sensitivity to the discrimination and abuse promoted by eugenics, understood mainly in terms of state coercion and violative bodily intrusion, has made many scientists and legislators wary of regulation, a position that has only boosted the commercialization of reproductive and clinical genetics. Even with the bioethical concepts of autonomy, choice, consent, and beneficence codified into medical practice and research, American society is characterized by wide discrepancies in genetic health access and literacy that can easily turn one person's perfection into another person's defectiveness. One biologist has suggested that, if driven solely by market demand, Americans' tendency to choose the "best" for their children could eventually translate into two branches of *Homo sapiens:* a wealthy genetic elite that replicates itself through designer babies and a medically underserved genetic underclass.[54] Although such futuristic specters of the survival of the richest and fittest may be overblown, the ubiquity of such scenarios in books and on television underscores the value of exploring how eugenics has been and continues to be conceived in modern historical memory. Eugenics has left discernible imprints on race relations, the immigrant ex-

perience, marriage patterns, sexual expression, contraceptive use, standardized testing, and even parks and recreation systems. A fruitful way to begin to track the broad social reach and the continuities and shifts in better breeding is by returning to the context in which eugenics emerged more than one hundred years ago.

In the late 1800s, far-reaching processes of industrialization, urbanization, immigration, imperialism, and secularization were remaking national, cultural, and economic landscapes across the globe. It was a period of technological innovations, from the railroad to the telegraph; of medical discoveries, from X-rays to microbes; and of the birth of new interpretive human sciences, such as sociology and psychology. But the underbelly of Progress (with a capital P) was riddled with perceived social ills such as sprawling urban tenements, malnourished children, disease outbreaks, environmental degradation, class conflict, and racial strife. As assorted elites in various countries sought to make sense of a world in flux, they increasingly turned not to religion but to science, which offered authority, rationality, and incisive explanatory power. Evolutionism, physical anthropology, and bacteriology could help diagnose, ameliorate, and perhaps even perfect society.

If there was one word to which reformers gravitated to express their predicament, it was *degeneration,* a term imbued with both scientific and moral meaning.[55] A concern with degeneration was sparked in part by Darwinism and the ascendance of monogenesis, which posited that humans were much closer to animals, specifically primates, than suggested by polygenesis.[56] Not only was reversion to a more primitive state possible, according to the hierarchies formulated by physical anthropologists, it was already embodied by types further down on the evolutionary ladder. The turn of the twentieth century was the heyday of racial taxonomies that placed whites and Europeans at the apex of civilization, blacks and Africans on the bottom rungs, and nearly everyone else in the suboptimal middle position of hybridity and mongrelization.[57] In the United States, the solidification of these racial hierarchies was integral to the entrenchment of Jim Crow segregation after Reconstruction and the rise of Sinophobia and anti-Asian discrimination, and it helped to rationalize colonial ventures in Latin America and the Pacific. Furthermore, doctrines of racial decline coincided with the advent of modern contraception and fertility drops in parts of Western Europe and the United States, each of which prompted some reformers to worry that the flagging birthrate of the "fit" was being outpaced by the rampant propagation of the "unfit."

In the United States, degenerationism translated into alarm about immigrant invasions and miscegenation, and admonitions against "race suicide," which President Theodore Roosevelt, for one, was convinced was jeopardizing America's vitality and global stature.[58]

Eugenics was sown in the soil of degenerationism. From the outset, it had strong affinities with contemporaneous notions of racial decadence and spoke much the same language as the burgeoning disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and sexology. However, the coalescence of organized eugenics movements required the convergence of the competing and complementary hypotheses in plant and animal biology that gave rise to modern genetics. One of the initial catalysts was the neo-Lamarckian theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, which posited that environmental forces, both favorable and unfavorable, could alter human heredity and be transmitted down the familial line. Formulated by the French naturalist Jean Baptiste de Lamarck in the early nineteenth century, this version of natural selection stressed the role of external stimuli in either improving or damaging hereditary material. On the one hand, neo-Lamarckism promoted optimism in reformers who hoped that cleaning up urban decay and instituting public and personal hygiene could produce more vigorous "stock." On the other hand, it also made reformers skeptical about their ability to impede the likely and natural regression of humans back down the evolutionary scale. Neo-Lamarckism provided the basis for eugenics movements in "Latin" countries such as France, Romania, Argentina, and Mexico. Following neo-Lamarckism, for example, Mexican and Brazilian eugenicists supported public health measures and prohibition campaigns that they believed would offset the permanent destruction inflicted on the national "race" by overwork, alcoholism, tuberculosis, and syphilis.[59]

At the same time that neo-Lamarckism was alternately fueling hope and dismay, another concept of heredity was on the horizon. Linked to the studies of Galton, the German cytologist August Weismann, and the rediscovery of the hybridization experiments of the Austrian monk Gregor Mendel, this theory claimed that hereditary material was transmitted from generation to generation with absolutely no modification. As this doctrine of strict hereditarianism was being formulated, Galton embarked on the inquiries into the biographies of famous men that would convince him that musical, intellectual, and other traits were not learned but innate.[60] Emboldened by his conclusions, Galton began to espouse eugenics, organized projects to stimulate breeding among the

upper classes, and calibrated anthropometric and biometric techniques to measure and correlate the physique, psychology, and physiology of a cross section of British families. While Galton gathered biometric data on "hereditary geniuses," Weismann refuted neo-Lamarckism from the perspective of cell biology. Weismann contended that the human body contained two completely distinct kinds of cells—germ and somatic. In the 1880s, he had first asserted that germ cells were located in the gonads and produced sperm and eggs and that all other bodily tissues were composed of somatic cells. Moreover, he claimed that hereditary material was fixed in the germ cells, which determined the arrangement and expression of the somatic cells but were never reciprocally affected by them. By disputing the theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, Weismann challenged the environmental reform impulse of neo-Lamarckism and infused hereditarianism with a heavy dose of fatalism.[61]

Despite Weismann's principles, however, it was not until 1900, when scientists rediscovered the results of Mendel's experiments, that neo-Lamarckism gradually lost its tenacious hold.[62] Working with pea plants in an Austrian monastery in the 1860s, Mendel had painstakingly elucidated the patterns underlying the transmission of hereditary material from parent to offspring.[63] Most important, he had postulated that to be expressed in the next generation, some hereditary factors needed to be passed on by both parents whereas others required only one progenitor. He had labeled these traits, respectively, recessive and dominant and then had calculated his well-known 3:1 ratio, which he had replicated in thousands of garden experiments with smooth, wrinkled, long, and short peas.[64] Along with these postulates, Mendel's laws of segregation and independent assortment—which stated that during the formation of gametes, the germ cells disaggregated and then recombined independently, producing different variations—rapidly gained currency among scientists.[65]

After 1900, Mendelianism became the basis of modern genetics. In subsequent decades, Weismann's germ and somatic cells were renamed genotype and phenotype by the Danish geneticist Wilhelm Johannsen; chromosomes were identified as the locus of the gene; the workings of sexual selection were determined; and certain diseases caused by dominant genes, such as Huntington's disease, and by recessive genes, such as phenylketonuria (PKU) were identified.[66] In 1953, James Watson and Francis Crick proposed that genetic material was contained in DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), structured as a double helix consisting of

paired combinations of four nucleic acids held together by hydrogen bonds. By this time, the field of genetics had expanded beyond Mendel's original formulas into highly involved and technical laboratory experiments crossbreeding mice, flies, and worms and a complicated universe of acronyms and cryptic scientific notations. Geneticists were mapping the metabolic pathways of dozens of genetic diseases and discovering masking effects (epistasis) and patterns of incomplete dominance and codominance. Moreover, the intersection of genetics with new-fangled medical imaging (such as X-ray crystallography) and the techniques of molecular biology and biochemistry (such as karyotype analysis and eventually electrophoresis) was generating voluminous information about plant and animal genomes.[67]

In the United States, eugenics was informed principally by Mendelianism. Although neo-Lamarckism held some sway in the first decade of the century, especially among idealist Progressives, by the onset of World War I the emphasis was on strict hereditarianism.[68] This was evident in the family pedigree studies, which relied on Mendelian ratios to delineate the transmission of bad "unit characters" or genes that might cause criminality, alcoholism, or feeblemindedness from generation to generation. These studies often profiled poor rural white families through morality tales in which irresponsible and degenerate offspring recklessly reproduced more of their kind. In rare exceptions, a family member chose the respectable path of childlessness or, when fortunate enough to have been born with a majority of good genes, sought out vigorous mates.[69] During the 1920s, it was the application of Mendelianism to humans, and above all the corollary that specific racial and degenerate types had distinct "unit characters," that propelled eugenic campaigns for sterilization, interracial marriage bans, and immigration restriction. If surgical operations and marriage laws would protect the nation from the feebleminded and defective from within, then tight immigration laws would do the same from without.

Eugenics achieved its greatest national visibility in the 1920s when it was virtually synonymous with biological racism and modern degenerationism. Furthermore, it was during this decade that eugenicists achieved two critical victories: *Buck v. Bell,* the U.S. Supreme Court case that upheld the constitutionality of Virginia's sterilization law (1927), and the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act (1924), which set a quota of 2 percent on all immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe based on the 1890 census and closed the gates to practically all new-

comers from Asia. Instead of constituting a decrescendo, however, these triumphs worked to naturalize eugenics into the body politic and into state, federal, and county institutions and laws. Thus, ultimately eugenics had a broader reach in the 1930s and 1940s because the precepts of its initial generation of adherents—in defective "unit characters"—had been codified into law. Notably, spurred by *Buck v. Bell* and the economic pressures of the Depression, sterilizations peaked in the United States from 1935 to 1945, even as many eugenicists admitted that sexual surgeries could do little, in the short or long run, to curtail the spread of deleterious recessive genes, which were transmitted heterozygously and often remained unexpressed.[70]

Historical definitions of American eugenics are grounded in the conflation of hereditarianism and biological racism that solidified in the 1920s, an association that melded further in the 1940s as the brutal extremes of Nazi racial hygiene and extermination campaigns were recognized. For the most part, our understanding of eugenics remains trapped in the vortex of the interwar period, even though revamped eugenic projects prospered into the 1960s. After World War II, many eugenicists embarked on the task of redefinition. Osborn, who led the charge of "reform" eugenics, blamed postwar discomfort with "eugenics" on Hitler, who had "prostituted" the term and was responsible for the American public's eagerness to "drop the word from its vocabulary."[71] In order to renew hereditarianism and demonstrate its applicability, Osborn returned to Galton. In his book *The Future of Human Heredity,* Osborn invoked Galton's vision of eugenics and reiterated the British statistician's call for a systematic plan of study and education. Echoing Galton, Osborn wrote, "the improvement of the race should be man's highest aspiration toward which all men should work."[72] In the postwar period this would entail initiating policies to reduce "defects and abnormalities that have a genetic origin," modifying familial and environmental factors to ensure that children's natural abilities would flourish, and encouraging couples to visit heredity clinics to make genetically informed and rational decisions about reproduction. Even as Osborn promoted genetic counseling, the optimization of intelligence, and medical genetics—all in the name of enhancing the gene pool—he and his contemporaries, especially in population planning, did not condemn, and often quietly endorsed, sterilization, which they viewed as an integral, if sometimes mismanaged, facet of a comprehensive eugenics program.[73] From the perspective of its postwar crusaders, eugenics

could emerge unscathed from the horrors of the Final Solution if the original intent of Galton's definition were honored and made to conform to principles of democracy and individualism.

Eugenic Nation foregrounds Galton's definition of eugenics because of its historical provenance, staying power, and flexibility. It can serve as a compass to explore changes and continuities in American eugenics over the twentieth century. As recently as 1994, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, authors of *The Bell Curve,* justified their arguments about race and intelligence by emphasizing the validity of Galtonian biometrics and eugenics.[74] Over and over again, Galton was (and is) the point of departure for eugenicists who sought to redefine their science, for scholars narrating the past, and for philosophers delving into bioethics. Guided by this definition, *Eugenic Nation* approaches eugenics in the United States as a multifaceted set of programs aimed at better breeding that straddled many social, spatial, and temporal divides. At times I use *hereditarianism* interchangeably with *eugenics,* both for the purposes of word variation and to describe ideas and practices based on the primacy of heredity over cultural or behavioral explanations. *Eugenic Nation* seeks to push the bounds of what has been considered eugenics, not to vilify but to raise questions about the extent to which medicine, biology, and the hereditarian impulse have shaped modern society.

In 1905, Lewis S. Terman, a freshly minted graduate of Clark University with a Ph.D. in psychology, accepted a job as principal of San Bernardino High School. Like many before and after him, Terman was motivated by more than professional opportunity; he hoped that the aridity of southern California would cure him of a chronic tubercular infection.[75] The relocation not only rejuvenated him, it also set him on the path to becoming one of the most prominent psychologists of the twentieth century. After a few years in the Southland, Terman moved to Stanford University, where he devoted himself to the nascent discipline of psychometrics and set out to redesign the mental test invented by Alfred Binet in France in the early 1900s, an undertaking that resulted in the Stanford-Binet intelligence test. Just over a decade later, he and his protégés had administered intelligence tests to thousands of children, had helped to introduce mental testing in dozens of school districts, and had set up the California Bureau of Juvenile Research (CBJR) to study the cognitive aptitudes of the state's youngest generation.

Terman was pivotal to the national eugenics movement; he was a longtime member of the AES who maintained an undying belief that in-

ferior or superior intelligence was determined principally by genetics. Tracing his trajectory illuminates the meteoric rise of standardized testing and demonstrates how correlations between race and intelligence became embedded in statistical methods.[76] The numerical classifications for feeblemindedness, moronity, and idiocy and the expected average intelligence quotients (IQs) of different racial groups that he detailed in *The Measurement of Intelligence*, published in 1916, dominated psychometrics for years.[77] The eugenicists and nativists who championed the 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act and encouraged the feebleminded threshold (usually an IQ of 70 or below) for compulsory sterilization relied chiefly on Terman's scales.

Terman was very much a creature of the American West. He was one of hundreds of entrepreneurial Easterners and Midwesterners suffering from respiratory ailments who sought relief in the dry climates of Denver, Los Angeles, and El Paso.[78] He arrived in California just as the young universities of Stanford, the University of California at Berkeley, and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) were achieving prestige and renown. Like other transplanted men of science and letters at the cusp of the twentieth century, such as David Starr Jordan and Luther Burbank, Terman embraced eugenics as a vehicle to build a new social and racial order in postconquest and post–Gold Rush California. He cofounded the Eugenics Section of the Commonwealth Club of California (CCC) and belonged to the Human Betterment Foundation (HBF) and the California Division of the AES. His psychometric rankings and the surveys conducted by the CBJR (which designated itself the "Western representative" of the ERO) fostered the channeling of immigrant, especially Mexican, schoolchildren into vocational tracks and the manual trades. Moreover, in the 1930s, when Terman began to evince agnosticism about the causal links between race, intelligence, and heredity and started instead to probe norms of gender and sexuality, he collaborated with Popenoe to calibrate his Male-Female (M-F) Test at the AIFR.[79] Terman's career, which stretched into his work on "gifted children" in California schools in the 1960s, constituted a critical facet of eugenics in the United States. It is also a revealing sliver of the history of science and medicine in the American West.

Recently, historians have started delving into the intriguing ways that agribusiness, public health, and physics shaped the American West.[80] In general, this scholarship fits under the rubric of "New Western" history, an analytical and thematic turn initiated in the 1980s that sought to chase away the lingering ghost of Frederick Jackson Turner and open up

a more textured interpretive landscape. "New Western" historians rejected the main tenets of Turner's "frontier thesis," which asserted that the United States, distinguished from Europe by its ethos of individualism and democratic values, had been born out of the struggle between barbarism and civilization that unfolded in the sequential frontiers of the trans-Mississippi wilderness.[81] Practitioners of ethnic, gender, and environmental studies spearheaded this revisionism and sought to repopulate the West with a panoply of historical actors that had been all but erased in heroic and masculinist narratives of westward expansion and the settlement of vacant lands by intrepid pioneers. "New Western" historians contended that the Turnerian model of virgin territories and apocryphal yeomen left no room for women, immigrants, or minorities, and, moreover, that violence, conquest, and colonization stood at the center of the incorporation of the West into the continental United States.[82]

Initially "New Western" historians embarked on recovery efforts, seeking to give voice to subjects whose stories had been silenced or ignored. Through careful reconstruction, scholars began to bring to life the experiences of women and minorities, expose the fraught dynamics of gender, race, and class, and demonstrate how subaltern identities were forged in the postcolonial and multicultural context of the American West.[83] If one of the "New Western" history's aspirations was to explore the American West as a multiracial region par to none other, then scholars swiftly realized that many routes to ethnicity and race passed through the realms of science and medicine.[84] For instance, much of the impetus behind the anti-Asian agitation that gripped San Francisco and the West Coast starting in the 1870s may have been based in white working-class resentment at the perceived encroachment of "coolie labor," but the animus and ridicule directed at Chinese immigrants almost always drew on images of contagion and constitutional malaise. Again and again, West Coast nativists graphically portrayed Chinese men as effeminate, enervated, and spotted with suppurating pustules or ugly lesions.[85] Medicine and public health molded the adaptation of Asian immigrants to the West, from the health inspections and psychological exams they endured on Angel Island to the antiprostitution and antivice campaigns waged by Progressives in Chinatowns or the public hygiene angles of the Americanization campaigns that were promoted from inside and outside of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino communities.[86]

In a similar vein, Mexicans were simultaneously racialized and medicalized, sometimes in competing directions. Whereas eugenicists

claimed that Mexicans needed to be placed under an exclusionary immigration quota because they constituted a mongrel—half Southern European and half Amerindian—"race," agricultural growers contended that this same biological composition endowed Mexican laborers with remarkable "stooping abilities" and the capacity to work long hours in the fields.[87] From 1917 until the late 1930s, Mexicans entering the United States along the southern border were subjected to aggressive disinfection rituals that were based on exaggerated, nearly hysterical, perceptions of them as dirty and diseased.[88] Associations of Mexicans with typhus, plague, and smallpox solidified in the 1920s and were fused with stereotypes of Mexican women as hyperbreeders whose sprawling broods of depraved children threatened to drain public resources.[89] Furthermore, more than in any other region of the country, the racialized public health measures implemented in the American West were initially devised and assayed in U.S. colonies. From the 1890s on, the cities, towns, and inhabitants of the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawai'i, and the Panama Canal functioned as laboratories for the elaboration of modern modalities of epidemiological surveillance and disease control that in short order were transposed to San Francisco's Chinatown or El Paso's Chihuahuita barrio.[90]

Colonialism also circulated back to the American West in the racial taxonomies that informed miscegenation statutes, which forbade unions between whites and persons of color, as identified by a hodgepodge of classifications including mulatto, Malay, Mongolian, and Negro. It was in the West, not the South, where miscegenation laws "reached their most elaborate, even labyrinthine, development, covering the broadest list of racial categories."[91] First enacted in early America in the 1660s and in the West in the mid to late 1800s these legal edicts were emboldened by the eugenic racism of the 1920s. They were not overturned until after World War II, when the California Supreme Court declared the state's miscegenation law unconstitutional in *Perez v. Lippold* (1948) and the U.S. Supreme Court issued a similar verdict on the federal level in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967).[92] A related genre of segregation was ensured by laws that decreed as "violable the marriages of idiots and the insane" and "restricted marriage among the unfit of various types, including the feebleminded and persons afflicted with venereal disease."[93] Taken together, these laws sought racially and medically to manage courtship, love, and sexuality through policing the boundaries of the intimate.

Eugenic ideas about biological purity and reproductive control resonated strongly in the American West and were espoused by many

transplanted white professionals, such as Terman, who emphasized medical and scientific approaches to crafting a new biopolitical order. Starting at the turn of the twentieth century, eugenicists strove to manage racial, ethnic, and class interactions and categories through marriage, sterilization, and alien land laws. However, if eugenics was propelled by the racial and classificatory imperatives of elite settlers, it also flourished because of the region's particular investment in agriculture and nature. For example, contemporaneous with Mendel, Burbank, the whimsical "plant wizard," was also experimenting with plants in his Santa Rosa garden. Through inventive hybridization techniques, Burbank produced the Shasta daisy, the Humboldt blackberry, and what we today call the Russet potato. At the same time, he believed that the "human plant" could be improved through propitious mating, cleanliness, fresh air, and exercise, a conviction that led him to help establish one of the country's first eugenics groups.[94] In 1906, after receiving a request from Davenport, Burbank agreed to serve as a founding member of the Eugenics Section of the American Breeders' Association (ABA), which published the influential *Journal of Heredity* and acted as a precursor to the ERO and the AES.

Burbank was accompanied by Jordan, the president of Stanford University. Whereas Burbank came to eugenics through horticulture, Jordan arrived through his dual interests in animal biology and environmentalism. An ichthyologist, Jordan converted to Darwin's theories of evolution after studying the marine life of the Pacific Slope in the late nineteenth century.[95] In 1891, the same year that he accepted Leland Stanford's offer to run his new private university in Palo Alto, Jordan, an avid mountaineer, cofounded the Sierra Club with John Muir. Jordan adamantly believed that some species needed to be protected and preserved while others should be eliminated or excluded. He applied this logic to plant, animals, and people alike. In addition, for Jordan there was a eugenic connection between nature conservation and pacificism. Jordan opposed U.S. entry into World War I because he thought that war was dysgenic: it stole the nation's healthiest and fittest men, leaving the rest to breed lesser offspring.[96] From his base in northern California, Jordan became one of the most prominent Progressives and eugenicists in the early twentieth century and played a pivotal role in the formation of the ERO in 1910. According to Davenport, it was largely owing to Jordan's stature and persuasion that Mrs. E. H. Harriman, after receiving personal correspondence from the Stanford biologist explaining the

country's need for a dedicated eugenics organization, decided to finance the ERO.

The sex and gender contours of American eugenics are also delineated by illuminating patterns in the American West. For example, in 1917, after the passionate lobbying of the suffragette and feminist physician Bethenia Owens-Adair, Oregon's governor signed a law sanctioning the sterilization of the feebleminded in state institutions. When this statute was ruled unconstitutional in 1921, the Oregon legislature reworded the law, making consent or a court order a prerequisite for surgery, and passed an amended version in 1923. By the Great Depression, as states became increasingly worried about the costs of incarceration, and release in exchange for sterilization became customary, officials began to promote operations with much enthusiasm.[97] The experiences of Oregon and Washington, where substantial numbers of those targeted for sterilization were classified as "sexual deviants"—often men caught in flagrante delicto with other men—demonstrate how eugenic practices often operated as methods of sexual regulation.[98] Furthermore, they suggest important avenues for future research into the intersections of medicine, sexuality, and the state.

Finally, the American West also served as auspicious terrain for the development of eugenics during the postwar period. It was geographically removed from the criticism that some agencies and individuals heaped on the ERO and other East Coast organizations starting in the 1930s, and, moreover, by that time, hereditarianism had soaked into key institutions and organizations. For instance, the California Division of the AES, founded in 1929, remained active into the 1940s, helping to fortify an extensive nexus of psychologists, physicians, and scientists who remained engaged in eugenically inspired projects into the 1960s. Terman, Goethe, and Popenoe corresponded with one another during the midcentury, expressing their mutual support for family planning, managed parenthood, and confidence in psychometric tests as valid tools for categorizing human traits. Furthermore, it was at the AIFR that postwar eugenics burrowed intimately into the prosaic worlds and simmering angst of thousands of Californians and millions of Americans, underpinning the conformist norms of the "happy days" of the 1950s.

Eugenic Nation proceeds chronologically and thematically. Chapter 1 begins in 1915 at the PPIE, where West Coast eugenics initially coa-

lesced under the aegis of the Race Betterment Foundation. In this chapter, I describe the context in which advocates of race betterment from across the country united in the cosmopolitan city of San Francisco to articulate a vision of human improvement for the twentieth century. Many of the actors who star in this chapter—Jordan, Popenoe, Claude C. Pierce, and Terman—reappear later. One of the striking features of race betterment at the PPIE is the extent to which it was shaped by colonial medicine, particularly tropical medicine as implemented in the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Panama Canal. Furthermore, the racial imperatives behind colonial medicine, and concepts and practices such as quarantine and prophylaxis, not only informed eugenics, they also became entwined in the American public health mentality.

Chapter 2 draws more connections between colonial medicine and eugenics, this time along the U.S.-Mexican border, where a protracted quarantine scrutinized, and simultaneously racialized, the bodies of Mexican immigrants. Against the backdrop of an unusual and disturbing public health regime not seen anywhere else in the United States (not on Ellis or Angel Islands nor along the Canadian border), the U.S. Border Patrol began policing the binational boundary line. I argue that the Border Patrol, like the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act to which it was attached, should be seen as the product of a negotiation between capitalist growers and nativist restrictionists, and in this sense was part of the eugenic puzzle of the 1920s. In addition, the mandate of the Border Patrol to protect the white American family from intrusion and contamination was strongly influenced by ideas of racial purity.

In chapter 3, *Eugenic Nation* moves back to California for an in-depth exploration of the unfolding of the eugenics movement in that westernmost state from 1900 to the 1940s. Beyond painting a picture of the organizational and individual network that mobilized California's dynamic eugenics movement, I seek to demonstrate how hereditarian initiatives were literally instituted by the state, through agencies affiliated with the Department of Institutions. California was home to an interwoven tripartite system, in which the sterilization program, antialien deportation policies, and psychometric research aimed mainly at children and adolescents worked in concert with one another to create one of the most activist eugenics movements in the country and even the world. This chapter begins to answer the question of why California outpaced all other states in the number of sterilizations performed be-

tween 1900 and 1979, sketching some of the racial, class, and gender components of this history.

The relationship between nature-making and eugenics in California is the focus of chapter 4, which begins at Vollmer Peak in Berkeley, named after the iconoclastic eugenicist and criminologist August Vollmer. From there the chapter examines, through the portal of the redwood tree and the Save-the-Redwoods League, the deep affinities between conservationist arguments about species survival and early twentieth-century fears of "race suicide." One of the overarching arguments of this chapter is that narratives of Western conquest and colonization, and, more broadly, the mythology of the American West, were infused with eugenic notions of regeneration and the possibility of racial perfection. This chapter dissects such tropes in the writings of Burbank and Jordan. It also seeks to show how eugenics was inscribed on the California landscape by helping to shape park systems and, quite concretely, in dedicatory plaques and memorial groves. The section on place-names focuses on the fascinating and disquieting biography of Goethe, an avid conservationist who was largely responsible for introducing the naturalist ranger into the national park system.

Chapter 5 continues probing the history of eugenics in California by describing the founding and mission of the AIFR. Established in 1930 by Popenoe, the AIFR had become the country's premier marriage counseling center by World War II, sponsoring a family-centric eugenics that resonated powerfully with the sex-gender dictates of midcentury America. The AIFR offers a compelling window onto the remaking of eugenics during the Cold War, and illustrates how planned parenthood, mate selection, and marital advice were implemented and affected the attitudes, behavior, and uncertainties of Americans. Furthermore, analyzing the AIFR's operating principles with regard to sex, gender, and the family sheds light on the layered transition from the discrete racial typologies of the 1920s to the variance continuums of the 1950s. The trajectory of Popenoe and the AIFR reveals—not linearly, neatly, or completely—how the eugenic racism of the 1920s became the hereditarian sexism of the 1950s.

Eugenic Nation concludes with a chapter reassessing the extent to which the protest and liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s challenged the legacy and longevity of eugenics in the United States. This chapter provides a brief overview of the criticisms leveled at eugenics from the early decades of the twentieth century to midcentury

and argues that the sustained attacks of the 1960s were of a different order of magnitude. Not only were some racial groups, such as Mexican Americans on the West Coast and African Americans in the South, fighting stereotypes that had long been buttressed by doctrines of biological inferiority and superiority, but a heterogeneous lot of activists were assailing eugenic landmarks. In 1970, for example, Media Women, a loose contingent of radical feminists, stormed into the offices of *Ladies' Home Journal* with a long list of demands, one of which was the cessation of the column "Can This Marriage Be Saved," penned for almost two decades by Popenoe. Furthermore, starting in the mid-1960s and cresting in the early 1970s, civil rights and feminist organizations denounced the federally funded involuntary sterilizations of poor and minority women. In Los Angeles in 1975, ten Chicanas filed suit against the University of Southern California/Los Angeles County General Hospital for tubal ligations performed on them without their consent. The calls for sexual and bodily liberation that were integral to the radicalism of the 1960s should be reevaluated in light of a protracted century of hereditarianism.

Rather than imply that eugenics was totalizing and all-encompassing, the title *Eugenic Nation* was chosen to express the extent to which the United States was (and continues to be) shaped by the faults and frontiers of better breeding, often in ways that are so naturalized that they are not readily apparent. Additionally, *Eugenic Nation* narrates a regional story about the American West, above all about California, that had a profound and dialectical impact on the national level. Starting in the early 1900s, California eugenicists simultaneously applied concepts of heredity to the Pacific Slope and molded the broad and assorted agenda of American eugenics. Instead of distilling this into either a regional story about medicine, race, and sexuality in the American West or magnifying its conclusions outward in a fashion that sacrifices some of the fine grain of place, *Eugenic Nation* seeks to articulate these two geographical and conceptual scales.