

MENTAL HYGIENE



[REDACTED] - (W) - Resident Buncombe
 Proceedings instituted by George H. Lawrence, S
 Medical history by H. C. Whems, M. D.
 Sterilization recommended by Dr. Whems
 Social history: [REDACTED] years of age, who is the mother of 3 children
 Married woman, [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] years. On a psychological examination
 given by Dorothy Hamilton she was found to have an I. Q. of 56.
 The family has been financially dependent for many years and there
 is a history of inter-marriage with Indian and Negro.
 Diagnosis: Feeble-mindedness
 Operation will be performed by surgeon on staff of Biltmore
 Hospital at time of delivery.
 Consents: Consent is signed by [REDACTED], patient,
 and by [REDACTED], husband.



"A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY
 THE GREATEST GIFT NEXT TO LIFE ITSELF"

Above: Collage of stills from *Surviving Eugenics*, including a photograph of the original Alberta Eugenics Board members, 1929. Photograph courtesy of the University of Alberta Archives Accession #81-104-259 (J. MacEachran Collection). Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Front cover: Collage of material provided by eugenics survivor Glenn George Sinclair. Courtesy of Glenn George Sinclair.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Surviving Eugenics was created by team members of the Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada, a Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and housed at the University of Alberta. It is directed and produced by Jordan Miller, Nicola Fairbrother, and Rob Wilson.

This guide was written by Jacalyn Ambler, who had previously worked as a volunteer summer intern with the project in 2010; it is also available as a free pdf from www.eugenicsarchive.ca/film

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PARTICIPANTS



Judy Lytton (nee Faulkner) is a eugenics survivor and a current member of the Governing Board for the Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada. Judy was placed in the Provincial Training School (PTS) in 1951 at the age of seven, until she was discharged in 1960. She studied hairdressing in 1961, graduating with top marks. Judy lives in Edmonton with her husband Gary and is actively involved with her church.



Roy Skoreyko and his brother were placed at the Provincial Training School of Alberta when Roy was 10 years old. He remembers the fear of living with 'locked doors' and the lack of privacy, the good staff and the 'tough guys'. He was sterilized when he was 16 years old. After leaving the Provincial Training School, Roy dedicated his efforts to working for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.



Ken Nelson was admitted to the Provincial Training School of Alberta (Michener Centre) at the age of eight when his placement with an adoptive family fell through. Ken felt the loss of his adoptive family deeply. While at the Provincial Training School Ken was sterilized, like many people, without his consent. Ken remembers clearly both his sterilization and how difficult it was to grow up in an institution. Ken later met and married a woman who had a daughter and feels great pride in his role as a father.



Leilani (O'Malley) Muir was born in Calgary, Alberta, into a poor family. Abused by her mother, Muir was institutionalized at the Provincial Training School (PTS) in Red Deer at the age of 11. After two years of living at the PTS, Muir was given an intelligence quotient (IQ) test, where she scored below 70, and was diagnosed as a "moron". This test score contributed to the decision made by the Eugenics Board after a brief interview with Muir, and she was approved for sterilization, alongside numerous other PTS residents. At the time, she was lied to and told that she was having her appendix out. Subsequent IQ tests administered in her adulthood revealed that Muir actually has a normal IQ.



Glenn G. Sinclair was sent to the Provincial Training School of Alberta at the age of seven, having previously lived in an orphanage. He recalls the experience of being taken before the Eugenics Board, and how within five minutes his life was changed forever. Fearing he might never be able to get out of the Provincial Training School, Glenn made his escape from his life as a trainee in the middle of the night. His success in doing so gave him the desire to control his own destiny and the belief that he could make his way in the world.



P. Jonathan Faulds QC is an Edmonton-based lawyer with Field LLP. He represented hundreds of people wrongfully sterilized by Alberta's Eugenics Program and more recently helped lead a consortium of lawyers in the negotiation of Canada's Indian Residential School settlement. He has given professional seminars on issues in legal practice and aboriginal law.



Lesley Cormack is an historian of science, interested in the history of geography and mathematics in early modern England and Europe. She has been Dean of Arts at the University of Alberta since 2010. Dr. Cormack was previously Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver (2007–2010). Before that, she spent 17 years at the University of Alberta as a Professor, taking on Associate Chair (2000-2002) and Chair (2003-2007) roles with the Department of History and Classics. Dr. Cormack holds an MA and PhD, both from the University of Toronto. She currently serves as President of the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science.



Robert A. Wilson is a professor in the Departments of Philosophy and Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta, Canada, and the founding director of Philosophy for Children Alberta and of Eugenics Archives (eugenicsarchive.ca). His areas of specialization include the philosophy of mind and cognitive science, philosophy of biology, and disability studies. Rob is the author or editor of six books, including *Boundaries of the Mind* (2004) and *Genes and the Agents of Life* (2005), both published with Cambridge University Press, and is currently completing book projects on eugenics and on kinship. He grew up in Broken Hill and in Perth, Australia and completed his M.A. and Ph.D. at Cornell University.

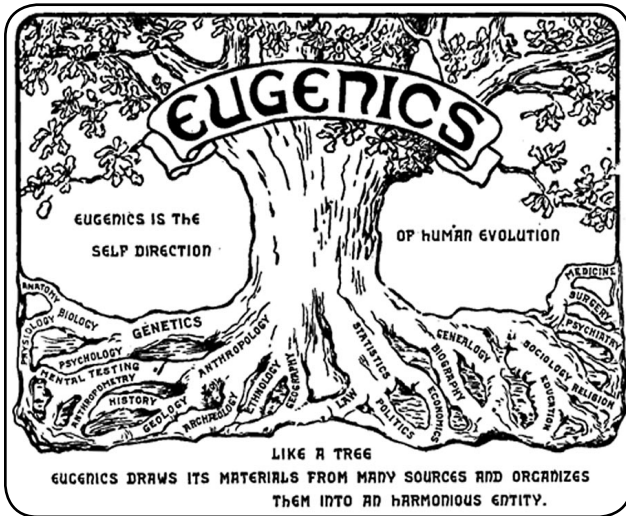


David King is a former member of the Alberta legislature, having served from 1971 to 1986. He was Legislative Secretary to Premier Peter Lougheed from 1971 to 1976 and Minister of Education from 1979 to 1986. David King is noted as the one responsible for the repeal of the *Sexual Sterilization Act* of Alberta in 1972 (Power, 2011). In 2010, he was recognized by the Alberta Teachers' Association and later the Canadian Teachers' Federation as a Friend of Education. He is an outspoken critic of eugenic policies.



Sandra Anderson is an attorney in Alberta, and prior to her retirement, worked at Field LLP. Anderson served as council for Leilani Muir and other sterilization victims. She has been a active speaker at educational venues on eugenics in Alberta. Her primary areas of practice have been in labour, employment, and privacy law (ATA), but her most notable cases have been those dealing with "the abrogation of fundamental human rights" (Eisler et al, 1997). The Alberta Teachers' Association presented her with the Public Education Award in 2012. Anderson serves on the Board of The Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Region, and has been active in speaking about the history and atrocities of eugenics in Alberta.

THE LIVING ARCHIVES ON EUGENICS PROJECT



“Eugenics is the self-direction of human evolution” reads the logo from the Second International Eugenics Conference, 1921.

Eugenics beliefs and practices aimed at “improving human stock” were influential across the world in the 20th century, including in Canada. In 1928, the province of Alberta introduced the *Sexual Sterilization Act*, which promoted the practice of surgical sterilization for those deemed “mental defectives.” This practice remained in effect until the legislation was repealed in 1972.

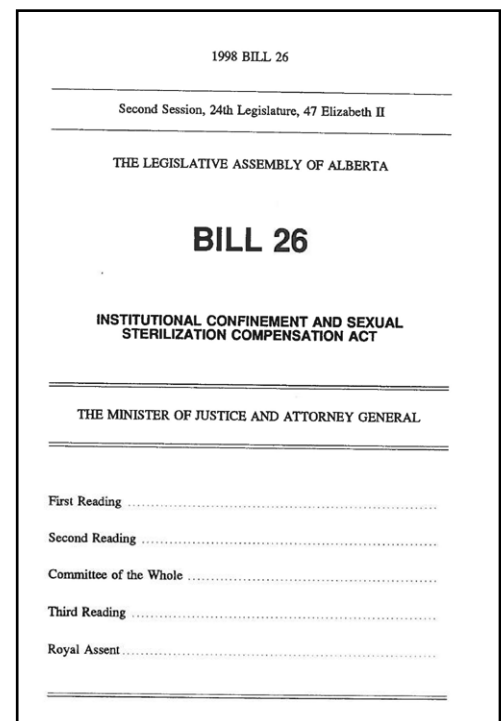
The Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada project has developed accessible resources to explore the history of eugenics in Canada’s west and the contemporary significance of that history. The project has worked directly with eugenics survivors in Alberta to tell their own personal stories, hosting a range of public outreach events and creating online resources at **Eugenics Archives** to engage students, local community members, and the broader public. *Surviving Eugenics* is one of the resources created by the project. This discussion guide is structured to encourage the use of the broader range of resources created by the project in thinking about eugenics and its contemporary significance.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FILM

In 1996, Leilani Muir won a landmark legal case against the Canadian province of Alberta for wrongful sterilization and confinement at the Provincial Training School in Red Deer, an institution for “mental defectives.” *Surviving Eugenics* traces the history behind the case along with the wider history and ongoing significance of eugenics in Canada.

Anchored by survivor narratives from Leilani and four other eugenics survivors from Alberta, and drawing on expert testimony from those involved in the case, *Surviving Eugenics* provides a unique insiders’ view of eugenic history while raising broader questions about disability and human variation in contemporary North American society.

Please be aware that this film deals with sensitive subject matter, and may not be easy to watch. Viewers and group classroom facilitators should keep this in mind when deciding whether the film is appropriate for respective audiences.



Front page of Bill 26, Alberta, 1998. Courtesy of Eugenics Archives.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is an interactive tool designed to help you engage with *Surviving Eugenics* and learn more about the topics explored in the film. It contains a variety of solo and group discussion questions and activities designed to help audiences prepare for the film, discuss and analyze it, and learn more about the events, people, and issues that it describes.

This guide was developed for a range of different audiences, including high school students, post-secondary students, community group leaders, and professionals in fields affected by the legacy of eugenics. The activities and questions are designed to be appropriate for as many audiences as possible, while also exploring the full range of topics and questions associated with the film.

To aid with facilitation, questions and activities are grouped into different modules corresponding to the different themes of the film:

- **Facing Eugenics** reflects on the stories and experiences of survivors.
- **Practicing Eugenics** examines the social, political, and scientific realities of eugenics theory and practice, in Alberta and elsewhere.
- **Rejecting Eugenics** focuses on the process of repealing Alberta's *Sexual Sterilization Act*, Leilani's suit against the province, and the compensation of survivors.
- **Beyond Eugenics** discusses the reality and risks of eugenics in the 21st century and the ways in which society can manage those risks.

Each module contains discussion questions for individual or group reflection, as well as one or more activities for further exploration. In addition, these modules correspond to sections of the film accessible as chapters from the main DVD menu.

Within each section, the most accessible discussion questions appear first. Teachers and facilitators should feel free to mix and match to create lesson plans that best meet the needs of each audience.



The Michener Centre, formerly known as the Provincial Training School, Red Deer, Alberta. *Courtesy of Red Deer and District Archives (N2690), Red Deer, Alberta, Canada*



Parts of the guide refer to resources available at the free and accessible at the Eugenics Archives website www.eugenicsarchive.ca

Eugenics Archives is structured around 12 interactive tools and driven by over 900 entries relating to eugenics to provide for self-directed learning. Where the guide refers directly to a resource from the site, that resource will be bolded. Familiarizing yourself with the site in advance and ensuring that discussion participants have access to the site will deepen face-to-face discussions and extend the learning experience.

PRE-FILM DISCUSSION



A typical training school ward. *Courtesy of Surviving Eugenics.*

Brainstorm as a group what is known about eugenics and what words and concepts the word brings to mind. Prompt the discussion by asking about association with:

- Theories and facts
- Values, emotions, and stereotypes
- People and places
- Events and dates

Ask participants to share recollections of where and when they learned about eugenics as an idea, and the practice of eugenics in Alberta. Are answers very different, or similar? Are there group participants who have never heard of either of these terms?

Individually, read **the Eugenics Archives** **concept entry about eugenics**. How much of this information was part of your brainstorm, and how much is new?

Consider the title of the film, *Surviving Eugenics*. Based on the meaning of each word, ask participants to guess what the film will be about, either through group discussion or individual written responses.

Survey the group. Who has heard of Leilani Muir? What does the group know about Leilani? What events, ideas, and other people are brought to mind by her name?

Ask participants to write down definitions for a series of words figuring prominently in the film. Either in small groups or as a collective, build definitions of each word.

- Natural selection
- Charles Darwin
- Eugenics
- Disability
- Sterilization
- Positive eugenics
- Alberta's Human Rights Act
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

POST-FILM DISCUSSION

What was the most memorable part of the film for you? If you had to summarize the film in a single quote or image, which one would you pick?

What did you learn from the film that was the most surprising?

The film's message is mainly told through survivor narratives. How did you feel while listening to their stories? Why do you think the film has been created this way? What advantages do you think this might have over a film told from a single historical perspective?

What stood out to you about the survivors who shared their stories during the film? Was there anything about how they looked or sounded that surprised you?

Take another look at the 'eugenics' brainstorm on the board. Do you see concepts, people, etc. that are missing? Where would you add those?

Are there events, concepts, or people that you were surprised were not discussed in the film? What were they, and why do you think they were left out?

Do the events described in this film fit with what you know about Alberta's history? Has the film changed how you view that history?

Do you interpret the meaning of the film's title differently now that you've seen it? Why do you think the filmmakers chose that title? What emotions and experiences do you think they were trying to capture?

Has your perception of eugenics changed as a result of the film? How?

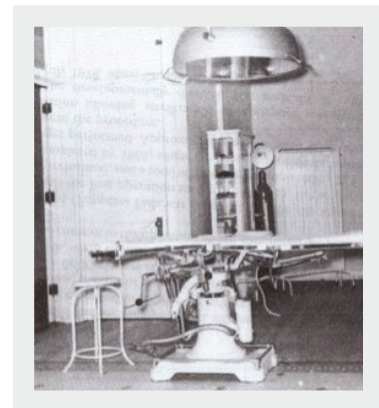
What additional questions do you have after watching the film? These may relate to concepts, ideas, or events that are still not fully understood, or areas where more context or background is needed.

Brainstorm a list, either individually or as a group.

ACTIVITY creating a film poster

This activity centres around exploring the Eugenics Archives **media library** and the relationship of the items in those archives to the events captured in *Surviving Eugenics*. Participants will select images from the media library and combine them with text to create posters for the film.

There are two options for this activity. The first option prompts participants to think more deeply about how and why the film resonated with them, and what was most memorable. The second invites participants to think about the different potential audiences for *Surviving Eugenics*, and the relationship each audience might have with the film.



Operating table where sterilizations were performed.

Courtesy of Goc, Michael, ed. (1997), *Island of Refuge: Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled, 1897-1997*. Friendship WI: New Past Press.

Option One

Working individually or in pairs, create a poster that you think best communicates the content of the film.

- Use the Eugenics Archives **media library** to find images that represent key places, people, ideas, and themes.
- Think back to just a couple of hours ago, before you had seen the film. How much did you know about the subject matter? What images and words do you think may have been most interesting to you?

Option Two

The facilitator will assign each individual or group to design a poster for a specific audience. When designing the poster, keep the following in mind:

- What is the age and education level of this audience?
- How familiar are they likely to be with the subject matter of the film?
- What kinds of topics will interest this group?
- What images and words are most likely to intrigue them and compel them to watch the film?

Sample audiences (the group can also brainstorm audiences):

- High school social studies students
- University biology students
- Medical professionals
- Social workers
- Local historians
- Local civil servants or politicians
- General interest (for posting in a local movie theatre or on a street)

Discussion Questions:

- Why did you choose the image(s) you did? Was it hard to choose, or did you know right away which images you wanted to use?
- If you worked with a partner or group to create your poster, was it easy to agree on which images should be used, or did you disagree? How did you end up choosing?
- If your poster uses more than one image, how do those images go together? Do you think other people who look at the poster might think of different connections between the images? Why?
- Did you add words (besides the title) to your poster? If so, where did you get them from? What do they mean to you? How do you think they might resonate with your audience?
- Do you think it would be easier to create a film poster for a very general audience, or a more specific one? Why?
- Which poster(s) created by the group resonate most with you personally, and why? Do different posters resonate for different reasons? What were the intended audiences for these posters, and did they surprise you?

MODULE 1

Facing Eugenics

These modules correspond to sections of the film accessible as chapters from the main DVD menu.

When we talk about survival, we often put a lot of emphasis on what has been survived, rather than on the agency and experience of the person in question and how that experience may have affected them. How does the film help us imagine a different meaning of that word?

In the film, survivors describe the different types of abusive treatment they received at provincial institutions. In the words of one survivor, this treatment meant that “you didn’t feel human at all.” Which practices described in the film do you think are dehumanizing? Why do you think these practices were so common at training schools and other such institutions?

Read the Eugenics Archives description of **the Provincial Training Centre**, where the survivors featured in the film were institutionalized. Another type of ‘Institution’ identified in the archives is residential schools. **Go to the map** and choose two or three schools located in Alberta. Read the entries – what are the similarities between how children were treated in these schools and the Provincial Training Centre?

Some of the images used in the film are taken from survivor Glenn Sinclair’s personal archives. Why do you think Glenn has kept these mementos? Do you have any mementos you’ve kept of painful times or experiences? Why did you keep them?

As the **Eugenics Archives** note, “it was not simply people with certain traits who were subject to eugenic measures, but certain sorts of people.” After listening to the survivor narratives contained in the film, what do you think is meant by this?



Dr. Leonard J. LeVann, Medical superintendent of the Provincial Training School, Red Deer, Alberta, 1950 - 1972.
Photo courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Children were disproportionately affected by Alberta’s eugenics program; all of the survivor narratives included in the film are from people who were institutionalized and sterilized as children. What factors do you think might explain this? Read the Eugenics Archives entry on **childhood innocence** (particularly the sections on ‘Sterilization’ and ‘Children as a focus of social intervention’). Do you think these ideas may have influenced Alberta’s eugenics program? How and why?

Read the Eugenics Archives entry on the **psychological aspects of dehumanization**. Do you think any of these concepts may be useful in explaining why people institutionalized in training centres and other institutions were treated so poorly?

ACTIVITY listening to our 'stories'



Leilani Muir, at the time when she left the Provincial Training School. Courtesy of Leilani Muir.

'Our Stories' is a section of the Eugenics Archives website, cataloguing video testimonials from eugenics survivors. Some of these stories are shared by survivors of Alberta's *Sexual Sterilization Act*, including the cast of *Surviving Eugenics*; others reflect newer challenges and ongoing policies that continue to affect people parenting around disability today.

The goal of these activities is to help participants explore this collection of videos and think about the connections they may have to each other and to the themes discussed in the film. Three options for viewing and discussion are suggested; facilitators are encouraged to view the videos beforehand and modify these activities to fit the needs of each group.

Surviving Eugenics Survivor Narratives

Leilani, Judy, Glenn, Ken and Roy

Watch one or more of the oral histories given by Leilani, Judy, Glenn, Ken, and Roy. These videos combine some of the footage used in the film with additional details and stories.

Individually, or as a group, reflect on the following questions:

- These oral histories incorporate more personal stories and broader reflections than the clips that appear in the movie. Did you have a different experience watching each person speak individually than you did watching the range of clips in the film?
- These oral histories describe and show different methods that each survivor has to cope with the trauma of sterilization and the impact that it has had on his or her life. What are some of those strategies? Which ones resonate most with you?



Roy Skoreyko in *Surviving Eugenics*.

- In these videos, each survivor speaks about how they feel their life has been affected by not having children. Do you notice any common feelings or thoughts that come up concerning this topic? Do you think that being naturally unable to have children would feel the same as having that ability taken away from you by someone else?
- What extra context does it provide for you to see survivors like Judy and Ken with their families?
- At the end of her testimonial, Leilani Muir reflects on the importance of this story being kept alive by a new generation. Now that you know more about eugenics, do you feel a responsibility to help educate others? What actions do you think you could take to do that?



Group review of an early version of *Surviving Eugenics*.

Newgenics Narratives

Barb, Candace, Kyle and Nick

Watch the oral histories captured for Barb, Candace, Kyle and Nick

- In Kyle's video, he reflects on people who may not want him to parent and says that "they don't know the real me, so their opinions do not matter." Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you were being judged for something that was beyond your control? What did you do to regain that sense of control?
- 'Support systems, friends, family, and community' are common themes in these videos. Reflect on how important your own support system was in growing up or in raising a family. How instrumental was that support system in learning how to parent?
- How do the stories Candace and Nick share about being formally assessed for intelligence make you feel about IQ tests? Do you think there is still a need for such assessments in our society? If so, how do you think we might change them to treat people with different sets of abilities more equally? If not, why not?
- As this series of testimonials reiterates, having children and parenting are human rights. What factors might prevent or hinder someone from exercising these rights? Do you think that all Canadians today are equally able to exercise these rights?

- Several of these testimonials include a desire to parent, but an acknowledgement that help will be needed to do so. What measures can we take as a society to help ensure that everyone - regardless of family and friends - has access to this help? How many of these things are we currently doing?
- Nick is an artist. If you had seen Nick's work prior to hearing him speak, how would it make you feel? What kind of associations would it bring up? Would you be surprised that these works are made by someone with a 'cognitive disability'? Does this make you reconsider how you think of disabilities and the disabled?

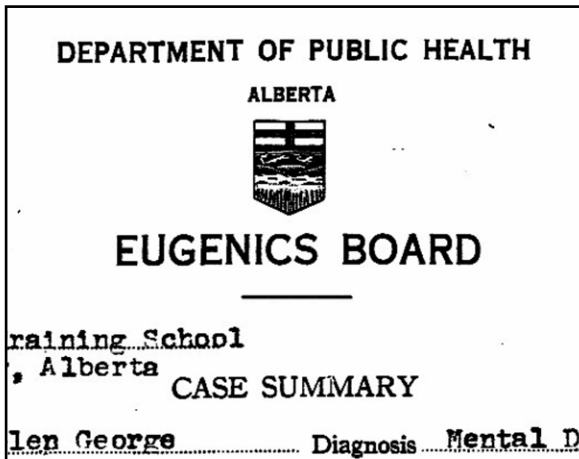
Eugenics and 'Newgenics'

Discussing the connection

- What themes do these two sets of videos share? Does thinking about those themes help you understand why the 'newgenics' testimonials are included in the project?
- Has learning about the history of sterilization in Alberta changed how you view reproductive rights? Do you think your reaction to the 'newgenics' testimonials is the same as it would be if you hadn't watched the film?
- Each oral history video ends with the reaction of the person being interviewed as they watch the final product. Why do you think the team who created the video decided to end the clips this way? Can you think of some advantages and risks of using video as a means of capturing personal stories?

MODULE 2

Practicing Eugenics



Document from archive of Glenn George Sinclair.

In the film, Rob Wilson notes that eugenics as a movement was based on the belief that certain characteristics are passed down through families. Are you surprised by the characteristics that he lists? Why or why not? Why do you think these traits are not generally seen as genetically heritable today? Read the Eugenics Archives entry on **Pauperism** - does this provide any insight as to why a belief in heritability might have been prevalent at this time?

Read the Eugenics Archives entry on social Darwinism. What is the relationship of **'social Darwinism'** to actual Darwinism? What factors may have led to the emergence of social Darwinism, and the rise of its popularity?

In the film, Judy Lytton describes being asked only three simple questions before being sterilized. Did this surprise you? Why do you think the Board paid so little attention to assessing potential candidates for sterilization?

Jon Faulds mentions, in the film, that girls in Alberta's provincial training schools in the 1950s were particularly likely to be sterilized. Why do you think young women were singled out in this way?

As the film notes, many of the people who were institutionalized and sterilized in Alberta were singled out because of deprived childhoods and other circumstances that may have made them less able to perform on aptitude tests. What do you think the risks are of singling people out in this way? What problems might it perpetuate, and what harm might this do to individuals and to society as a whole?



Nazi eugenics propaganda: "The inferior multiply stronger than the healthy population".

IQ tests are often held up in our society as objective measurements of someone's capability. The film suggests that IQ test performance may be more subjective than that. Does that suggestion surprise you?

In the film, Sandra Anderson mentions that Alberta and British Columbia were the only two provinces to pass sterilization laws. The rest of the country, however, was not immune from the influence of eugenics. Read Eugenics Archives entry on **eugenics in Canada** and explore the map of Canada on the "Around the World" tool on the site. Does the entry explain why sterilization legislation was enforced in British Columbia and Alberta but not in other provinces? Do any of the eugenics measures effected in other provinces surprise you?

The Eugenics Board was officially established as a safeguard to ensure that sterilization was only done according to the parameters of the legislation. But as the film points out, the Board authorized the sterilization of many people who did not fit the prescribed criteria, and also authorized more radical surgical procedures that were beyond the scope of the program, such as removing reproductive organs. Why do you think the Board was never held accountable for these activities before the Act was repealed?

Use the site to remind yourself or discover who the “Famous Five” and Tommy Douglas were. Are you surprised that Alberta’s “Famous Five” and Saskatchewan’s Tommy Douglas, who are

known for progressive thinking, were active supporters of eugenics?

How do you think they would have justified advocating for certain rights, like the right to vote and the right to health care, while working to limit others?

Although we tend to think of rights as being universal, the Famous Five’s eugenics advocacy clearly shows that rights-seekers did not always see rights this way. What other cases can you think of (either historical or contemporary) where individuals or groups sought rights for some members of society, but not for others?

ACTIVITY constructing a eugenics timeline

Understanding the chronology of certain events can help put them into context. The Eugenics Archives website includes **an interactive Timeline tool** showing the timing of events related to the history of the eugenics movement.

This activity invites participants to put a series of events in order, either as a group or individually. Participants can then use the **Timeline tool** to see how accurate the constructed timeline is, and explore related events and where they appear on the timeline.

Either individually or as a group, construct a timeline (vertical or horizontal) with 1830 on one end and 2015 on the other.

Without consulting notes or the internet, try to put the following 20 events in their respective places on the timeline:

1. Alberta repeals the *Sexual Sterilization Act*
2. The term ‘eugenics’ is coined by Francis Galton
3. Emily Murphy publishes “Overpopulation and Birth Control”
4. Binet-Simon intelligence test and new term “moron” endorsed by the American Association for the Study of the Feeble Minded
5. Canada enacts the Canadian Human Rights Act
6. Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene established
7. West Virginia Sterilization Law repealed
8. Provincial Training School opens in Red Deer, Alberta
9. Leilani Muir sues Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Alberta
10. “The Problem of the Feeble Minded: A Growing Menace Which Must be Dealt With” is published in *The United Farmers of Alberta*
11. British Columbia passes *An Act respecting Sexual Sterilization*
12. First Alberta Eugenics Awareness Week
13. Germany passes *The Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring*
14. Tommy Douglas writes his thesis, *The Problems of the Subnormal Family*
15. Alabama repeals sexual sterilization legislation

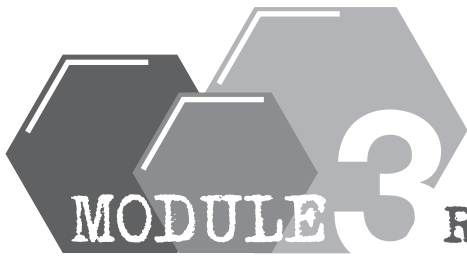
16. Alberta passes *Sexual Sterilization Act*
17. United Nations General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
18. Council of Canadians with Disabilities is Founded
19. Canadian residential schools begin operation
20. Indiana passes first compulsory eugenics statute in the United States

Alberta? Do you think there is any relationship between these events? Can you think of any common social beliefs and pressures at the time that might explain both events?

- Several pieces of immigration legislation appear on the timeline, including:
 - Canada’s **Chinese Immigration Act**
 - Canada’s **Immigration Act, 1910**
 - **1882 American immigration law banning “undesirables”**
- Were you surprised to see immigration legislation mentioned on this timeline? What connections might exist between immigration and eugenics? Follow the links and read the Archives entry for each piece of legislation - do they confirm these connections? Do you notice any similarities between these laws?
- The timeline records several instances of Alberta renaming certain legislation in the 1920s, replacing words like ‘insanity’ and ‘lunacy’ with references to mental health and disease. What do these changes tell us about larger shifts in thinking that were happening during this time?
- From the 1950s to the 1970s, the timeline records several instances of schools being renamed for example:
 - British Columbia’s Provincial Hospital was **renamed Woodlands School in 1950**
 - Saskatchewan Training School was **renamed Valley View Centre in 1973**
 - Alberta Provincial Training School was **renamed Michener Centre in 1977**
- What do you think motivated this re-naming? Does this process coincide with other events?

Questions

- Check your constructed timeline against the **Eugenics Archives interactive timeline**. How accurate was your constructed timeline? Did the order of anything surprise you?
- Were there events that were particularly difficult to place on the timeline? Why do you think that might have been the case? How did you decide where to put them?
- Are there events or publications on the interactive timeline that you are surprised to see included? Why do you think they might be included? Read the entry associated with each item—after reading this context, would you answer this question differently?
- Do you think there is anything missing from the interactive timeline? Are there other events not strictly related to the eugenics movement that you might add to this timeline because of the context they provide?
- Look at the items on the timeline that happened between the passage of Alberta’s *Sexual Sterilization Act* in 1928 and its repeal in 1972. Which events do you see on the timeline that might explain the shift in public opinion and beliefs that resulted in the repealing of the Act? Are there events that you think are missing?
- Were you surprised by how close the rise of the Nazi party is on the timeline to the passage of the *Sexual Sterilization Act* in



MODULE 3

Rejecting Eugenics

- As the film notes, while much of the world had ceased negative eugenic practices like sterilization after 1945, Alberta continued with these practices until 1972. Why do you think sterilization continued in Alberta even after it was abandoned in other places?
- What events happened globally, in Canada and Alberta, that might explain the shift in public opinion between 1928 and 1972, when the Act was repealed?
- David King says in the film that meeting eugenics survivor Ken Nelson “personalized” his conviction that the *Sexual Sterilization Act* was wrong. What do you think is meant by this? Do you have any similar feelings about the history of eugenics after watching this film?
- Read the Eugenics Archives entries on **Peter Lougheed** and **David King**. Contrast those entries with the entries for **Tommy Douglas** and the **Famous Five**. Do these people have anything in common? Given these similarities, are you surprised that one group supported sterilization legislation and the other group was responsible for repealing it? What history and shifts in public thinking might account for this?
- In 1999, then-Premier of Alberta Ralph Klein issued an apology to survivors of Alberta’s eugenics policy. What purpose(s) do you think an official apology serves in a situation like this? Do you think an official apology from a government or institution is different than an apology from an individual? Read the **Living Archives entry on Ralph Klein** and his apology - do you think Klein’s apology fulfills this purpose?
- Why do you think the government tried to use the **Notwithstanding Clause** to limit compensation for the victims of Alberta’s eugenics program? Do you think the concern was only financial, or was there more at stake? If you were a survivor, how do you think you would have viewed Bill 26? What would it have symbolized for you, and why?
- The *Sexual Sterilization Act* was on Alberta’s books for 44 years (almost half a century) with little public awareness until David King’s review of the legislation at the request of then-Premier Peter Lougheed. Given that history, did the public outcry at Bill 26 surprise you?
- What role do you think Leilani’s suit against the province played in educating people about the impact of Alberta’s sterilization program? Do you think that history would be viewed in the same way today if she hadn’t spoken up?

ACTIVITY writing an editorial

The Eugenics Archives website houses copies of **several editorials and articles** written by advocates of eugenics and/or sterilization. These writings provide fascinating insights into the beliefs and motivations of their authors, and dominant public opinion at the time.

Have each participant write a short editorial to a local newspaper as one of the following five people.

- A ‘suffragette’ writing in favour of sterilization of ‘mental defectives’ in 1920
- A psychiatrist writing in favour of Alberta’s *Sexual Sterilization Act* in 1927, while it is being debated in the legislature
- An advocate for eugenics in 1945, after the Nazis have lost power
- A human rights lawyer after the *Sexual Sterilization Act* is repealed in 1972

- An advocate for eugenics survivors in 1999, after Klein issues his apology to the victims of Alberta’s sterilization program

Discussion Questions

- When writing your letter, did you imagine any kind of personal identity for yourself? What kinds of factors—age, income, education level, occupation, location in Alberta, etc.—influenced that personal identity?
- When writing your letter, who did you imagine your audience to be? Looking back

on the words and ideas you chose to include, do you think your letter would have resonated with that audience?

- How did the time period you were writing in affect the ideas that were referenced in your letter, and the language you used? Did you appeal to popular sentiment or ideas?
- Did you use other sources on the Eugenics Archives website to complete your letter? What were they? How would your letter be different if you hadn’t used them?
- Do you think the ‘persona’ you imagined writing your letter would have the same stance on eugenics if they were transported to one of the other time periods listed? Why or why not? What would account for these changes?

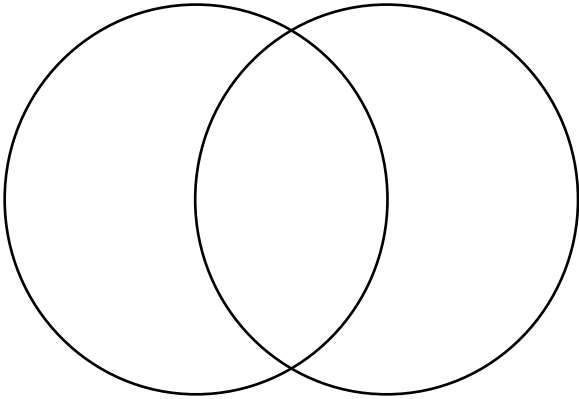


The graphic features three overlapping hexagons in shades of grey and black. The word 'MODULE' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the bottom left of the hexagons. A large, white, stylized number '4' is positioned to the right of 'MODULE'. To the right of the '4', the words 'Beyond Eugenics' are written in a black, serif font.

MODULE 4 Beyond Eugenics

- In the film, Jon Faulds describes going over a set of meeting minutes for the Eugenics Board and thinking that “this is how evil things happen.” What do you think is meant by this? What specifically about the minutes do you think prompted that reaction?
- How do you think we should remember people – particularly prominent people - who supported eugenic sterilization? Does context matter? Can we celebrate some contributions a person has made to history while still unequivocally condemning others?
- Think back to your discussion of the beliefs and ideas that contributed to the passing of the *Sexual Sterilization Act*. Do you think any of these ideas are still held today? What differences are there between the eugenic beliefs that have been abandoned and those that are still around?
- If people like Tommy Douglas and the members of the “Famous Five” were alive today, do you think they would still support eugenic practices? If not, what scientific knowledge and shifts in popular opinion might account for this change in opinion?
- The film focuses mainly on survivor narratives and how the legacy of eugenics in Alberta has harmed individuals. Do you think Alberta’s legacy of sterilization has also hurt our society as a whole? How?
- Do you think that the government is doing enough to make reparations and educate Albertans about the province’s history of eugenic sterilization? What responsibility does the province have to ensure this education happens, and what steps can they take to meet that responsibility?
- Eugenics is sometimes thought of as a form of “social engineering.” What does this phrase mean to you? Focusing on examples, are there good and bad forms of social engineering? [Hints: immunization, immigration control, prenatal testing].
- In the last section of the film, eugenics survivors speak about their fears of other eugenic practices arising in Alberta in the future. Often reproductive technologies are singled out as being eugenic or potentially eugenic in nature. What do you think of this? In what fields or areas do you think this danger is highest, and what ideas or social problems might motivate this?

ACTIVITY constructing a Venn Diagram



Although the film mostly focuses on negative eugenics—discouraging reproduction by ‘inferior’ groups—it also describes positive eugenics, which involves encouraging ‘superior’ people to reproduce. This activity involves using a Venn diagram and the Eugenics Archives website to help participants explore these two concepts and the connection between them. It can be done either individually by each participant or as a group.

Have participants read the Eugenics Archives entry on **‘Eugenics: Positive vs. Negative’**.

Construct a pair of overlapping circles (a Venn diagram) with ‘Negative Eugenics’ on one side and ‘Positive Eugenics’ on the other side.

Either individually or as a group, ask participants to brainstorm the words associated with eugenics and consider where each word should be placed on the diagram. (Words associated solely with either negative or positive eugenics should go on either of the respective sides of the diagram, while words that apply to both should go in the middle).

If the group needs help getting started, ask them to brainstorm words for each of these categories (or use the words brainstormed before the film):

- Events and dates
- People
- Places and countries
- Theories and facts
- Values, emotions, and stereotypes

Or, as a conversation starter, ask participants to consider the following key terms from the Archives entry:

- Reproduction
- Control
- Sperm banks
- Immigration
- Marriage
- Race
- Segregation
- Sterilization
- Euthanasia
- Pauperism
- Genetics

The Venn diagram(s) produced will likely have some words that fall into each category, and most likely also some that fall into the middle shared space. When the brainstorming is complete, examine the diagram that has been constructed or ask participants to reflect on the individual diagrams they have made.

Discussion Questions

- What kinds of words show up on each side, and in the shared space? Are there more ‘negative’ or ‘positive’ words on one side than the other? Are there commonalities between them?
- Are any of the words used in the diagrams new to you? Does the meaning of any of these new words surprise you?
- Do you see relationships between some of the words that are on each side? Did that influence where you placed them on the diagram?
- Did placing any of these words on the diagram help you think of other, related words? Did those new words go on the same side of the diagram, or the other side?

- Does this diagram help you to see the relationship between negative and positive eugenics in a different way, or does it reflect your existing understanding of these terms?
- Are there words that were difficult to place on the diagram? What caused this difficulty, and how did you decide where to place them?
- Do you think you would have put any of these words in different spots if you hadn't seen the film? Has the way you view any of these words changed? How and why do you think that is?
- Has completing this exercise changed how you feel about the possibility of future eugenics activities in Alberta?

ACTIVITY playing 'NEWGENICS'

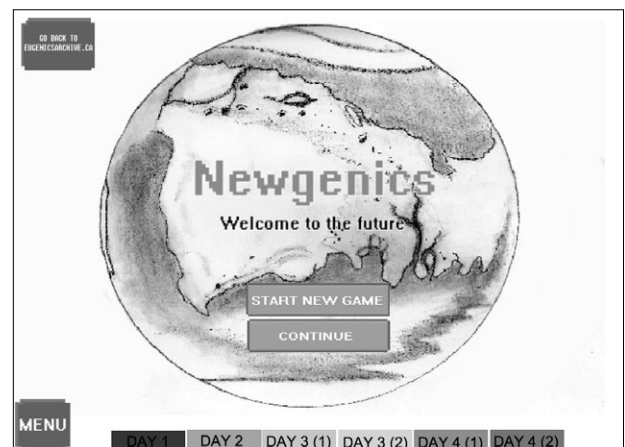
Newgenics is a short, dialogue-driven computer game developed as part of the Eugenics Archives project by Xavi Figueras and Justin Houle. It transports the player to the mining colony of Upori in 2115. Upori is under the regulation of the Department of Demographic Design (DDD).

The player will guide a citizen of Upori, Pip, through a period of DDD-mandated institutionalization; the decisions made will determine Pip's fate.

This suggested activity involves two playthroughs of the game, with discussion questions after each playthrough.

Playthrough One

Have each participant play through **Newgenics**. The game involves prompts for making decisions about what the playable character, Pip, will say and do.



Above is a screen shot from the free online videogame and learning simulation, Newgenics. Visit the link below to play.

During this first playthrough, encourage participants to make those decisions based on how they think they would react in this situation.

After playthrough is complete, ask participants to consider some of the following questions, alone or as a group.

- What factors and emotions influenced the responses you provided? Did you find yourself changing the kinds of decisions you made as the game progressed? Why?



Play the free Newgenics videogame online at www.eugenicsarchive.ca/game



Playthrough Two

Have each participant play through **Newgenics** a second time. During this playthrough, encourage participants to make decisions that they think give them the best chance of escaping the facility.

After playthrough is complete, consider the following questions.

- Did the game give you any clues as to why Pip and Gan are in the institution? What does this tell you about the society of Upori?
- Why do you think it was against the institution's rules to tell Gan your name? How would you feel if you couldn't use your own name? How would this affect your sense of identity?
- How did the story about Gan's wife make you feel? Does it make you feel differently about the idea of 'positive' eugenics?
- How did it feel for your character to have limited eyesight? Was it hard for you to complete the challenge and find all five locations? How did you feel when you did so?
- What was your reaction when Gan said that he couldn't work in Healing Arts because he didn't have the "breeding" for it?
- When given the chance to escape, did you decide to try to save Gan by finding a wheelchair, or not? What factors led to this decision? Would you make the same decision next time?
- What was your result after playing the game? Do you think that certain actions or decisions led to this result? If you played the game again, would you do things differently?
- During the second playthrough, did you 'win' the game and successfully prevent the DDD from interfering with your body? If not, do you think you made any decisions that led to this outcome?
- Were the decisions you made during this playthrough different than the ones you made the first time you played the game? How were they different?
- What social problems are the DDD's eugenics policies responding to? Is our society facing any of the same problems, and can you think of any eugenics measures (positive or negative) that we are taking to solve them?
- Why do you think the game is called "Newgenics"? Read the Eugenics Archives entry about **Newgenics**. Does this give you any new ideas about the title of the game?
- After playing the game, do you view any aspect of the *Surviving Eugenics* film differently? Do you feel differently about the survivors' stories now that you've played the game?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING:

Websites & BLOGS

The Eugenics Archives website houses a series of interactive tools to help users explore the ideas central to eugenics, and its history in Alberta and around the world. It includes a media library; interactive entries about events, people, and ideas; video testimonials from sterilization survivors and other Albertans affected by eugenic and 'newgenic' policies; and many other features.

www.eugenicsarchive.ca

Newgenics is a short computer game that transports the player to a fictional future world in which they play a character, Pip, affected by eugenic policies. The decisions the player makes will determine Pip's fate.

www.eugenicsarchive.ca/game

The Surviving Eugenics film website houses a trailer for the film, bios of the cast and crew, and details about screenings, including information on requesting a screening in your community.

www.eugenicsarchive.ca/film

Leilani Muir's official website and blog features Leilani's latest news and blog stories, as well as notes about her current projects.

www.leilanimuir.ca

The Centre for Eugenics and Society is a nonprofit organization working to explore and promote effective governance of human genetic and reproductive technologies and other emerging technologies. It features contributions from scientists, health professionals, civil society leaders and others.

www.geneticsandsociety.org

Books

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In 1996, Leilani Muir won a landmark legal case against the Canadian province of Alberta for wrongful sterilization and confinement at the Provincial Training School in Red Deer, an institution for "mental defectives". *Surviving Eugenics* traces the history and ongoing significance of eugenics in Canada. Anchored by survivor narratives from Leilani and four other eugenics survivors from Alberta, and drawing on expert testimony from those involved in the case, *Surviving Eugenics* provides a unique insiders' view of eugenic history while raising broader questions about disability and human variation in contemporary North American society.

"*Surviving Eugenics*... presents the human faces of a social movement's victims and trenchantly conveys the flawed thinking and politics that produced such horrendous consequences."

Daniel J. Kevles, Stanley Woodward Professor of History, Yale University
Author of *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*

"*Surviving Eugenics* leaves us breathless – breathless from the sheer force of so much dignity, so much humanity. But that is not all. If you are a defender of just causes, a principled human being, a citizen of honour and stature, this film is for you."

Catherine Frazee, Professor Emerita, Ryerson University
Co-Curator, *Out from Under: Disability, History And Things to Remember*



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