

## Sterilization

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Often people think of the German Nazi movement as the historical epitome of eliminating undesirables. But in fact, the Nazis actually based some of their decisions and methods on the **US eugenics sterilization program**. America went through a period of time from the 1900s through the 1970s where people who were different were separated from society and deemed unfit.

During this time, individuals who were labeled **deficient** -- poor, diseased, mentally deficient, members of minorities, promiscuous women, and those with physical disabilities including individuals who were deaf, were often placed in psychiatric institutions for life.



In many instances society actively sought to **breed out genetic traits** that were undesirable.

As a consequence of this **societal goal** and a US Supreme Court case **Buck v. Bell**, as many as *70,000 Americans were forcibly sterilized* during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this included many individuals who were **deaf**. As society (wrongly) believed that the cause of all deafness was hereditary.

<https://library.missouri.edu/exhibits/eugenics/sterilization.htm>

Johnson, R. H. (1918). The marriage of the deaf. *Jewish Deaf*, 5-6.; Bell, 1883/1969.

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