Assuring America's Place in the Sun: Ivey Foreman Lewis and the Teaching of Eugenics at the University of Virginia, 1915–1953

By Gregory Michael Dorr

In 1949 Charles W. Clark, a colonel in the Mississippi National Guard, confessed to his former biology professor, "The present pushing by the negro has me extremely worried. I cannot well remember the post–World War I period, but it seems to me that the negroes were pushing then; and that in dealing with its problem the South had articulate support from some first class people in other sections of the country—notably the author Lothrop Stoddard." Alarmed by African American civil rights militancy, Clark sought to discredit blacks, reporting that during World War II, he had seen "plenty of them [blacks], both in and out of combat" and, compared to white soldiers, blacks "were just what one would expect—niggers!" Convinced of the biological inequality of races, Clark complained that a recent news article had asserted "that all races are 'genetically equal,' " scoffing, "whatever that may mean." He viewed the article as a political reaction to the Holocaust and exclaimed, "Truly the back-swing from Mr. Hitler over to the opposite extreme is something to behold!" The suggestion that the races are biologically equal aroused in Clark fears that "the worst is yet to come."[1]

While Charles Clark's reaction may be seen as a confirmed racist's reflex response, closer examination of his letter suggests a more complex origin. Clark's letter hints at how higher education allowed elite

[1] Charles W. Clark to Ivey Lewis, March 11, 1949, "C" Folder, Box 10, Dean's Papers 5119 (Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville); hereinafter cited as Dean's Papers.

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southerners to reconcile their traditional southern identity—limned in terms of racial, class, and gender hierarchies—with their increasingly important identity as modern, progressive Americans.[2] Clark's references to Lothrop Stoddard, Hitler, and genetics harked back to his undergraduate training at the University of Virginia where he learned "scientific" white supremacy. At Virginia, Clark—like students before and after him—had studied the doctrines of eugenics, a science dealing with the improvement of hereditary qualities, and, specifically, with human racial purity.

For thirty-eight years, from 1915 until 1953, Virginia students studied eugenics with Clark's correspondent, Dr. Ivey Foreman Lewis. As Miller Professor of Biology and Dean of the University of Virginia, Lewis taught that heredity governed all aspects of life, from anatomical form to social organization. Throughout his career, Lewis never wavered in his advocacy of eugenics. While the bulk of scientific opinion changed, Lewis continued teaching heredity and writing about educational theory based upon principles developed in the 1910s.[3] Many of Lewis's devoted students adopted his racialist thinking, and some of them then shaped the opinions of white Virginians—and white southerners in general—about race and society. Term papers written by students in Lewis's classes and his subsequent correspondence with

[2] J. David Smith engages similar ideas in his book *The Eugenic Assault on America: Scenes in Red, White, and Black* (Fairfax, Va., 1993). Smith's emphasis that Virginia eugenicists sought to control the American Indian population fits well with this study; officials feared white/American Indian intermarriage because they believed that American Indians were already genetically tainted by previous intermarriage with blacks. Smith, however, claims that "[p]rejudice is a form of mental illness" and often a "shared mania" (*ibid.*, xiii). Such an explanation trivializes racism and exculpates racists; racism is taught, learned, and consciously passed on by those whose interest it serves. This paper argues that Ivey Lewis's career exemplifies this transmission, which was bound up with a self-conscious attempt to reconstruct an identity that was simultaneously white, southern, and modern. William A. Link explores these tensions throughout *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill, 1992). A most instructive interpretation of forging the modern southern identity, and its ultimate reconciliation with the modern American identity—both being predicated on whiteness—is Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York, 1998). Hale only obliquely considers how formal education and scientific theories shaped southern whiteness and eased the transition to modernity, preferring a cultural analysis of other phenomena, such as fiction, consumption, and spectacle lynchings. Nevertheless, the following analysis is broadly consonant with her major arguments. Paul M. Gaston explains the tensions between modernity and tradition in southern mythology—in some ways the root of southern identity formation—in *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York, 1970). Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia, 1972), notes that removing blacks from the public arena was the basis of all the rest of southern reform.

[3] Steven Selden discusses the links between education and eugenics in *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America* (New York and London, 1999), 39–105. Diane B. Paul and Hamisch G. Spencer discuss the durability of eugenic theories among scientists in "Did Eugenics Rest on an Elementary Mistake" in Diane B. Paul, *The Politics of Heredity: Essays on Eugenics, Biomedicine, and the Nature-Nurture Debate* (Albany, N.Y., 1998), 117–32.

them, especially from the years surrounding the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, preserve glimpses of how his students and associates accepted the eugenicist's lessons that race-mixing meant the destruction of civilization. Ivey Lewis's career is a case study revealing links among eugenic discussions about "race," scientifically justified white supremacy, and the later actions of educated whites who battled desegregation.[4]

Beginning in the Progressive Era, eugenics provided generations of educated, self-consciously modern Virginians with a new method of legitimating the South's traditional social order. Modern eugenics began in 1883, when Sir Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, coined the word to denote "the science of improving the stock."[5] Galton's British followers promoted "positive eugenics" by encouraging procreation among the best stock. American eugenicists emphasized race along with class, and then genetics and "negative eugenics." After three scientists—experimenting independently and simultaneously in plant hybridization—rediscovered Mendelian genetics around 1900, American eugenicists explained social mobility as a function of genetics.[6] In their eyes, the coincidence of "favorable" genes from otherwise "inferior" parents accounted for the careers of American self-made men *and* the existence of "superior strains" within races. Eugenicists assumed that success was a recessive hereditary factor; therefore, most people were doomed to mediocrity or failure. Occasionally, however, two mediocre people might produce a successful offspring. Since races were also ranked by heredity, only rarely

[4] Lewis was not the only southerner teaching eugenics; he had his mates in every southern state and virtually every southern university of this period. Lewis's Virginia context, his well-preserved papers, and his students' papers make his career particularly appropriate for study.

[5] Galton's first study relating genius and lineage is *Hereditary Genius: Its Laws and Consequences* (London, 1869). He defined *eugenics* in *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (London, 1883), 24–25. See Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*, (New York, 1985), 1–19. An excellent primer on eugenics is Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity, 1865 to the Present* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1995). See also Paul, *Politics of Heredity*; Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Genetics and American Society: A Historical Appraisal* (Baltimore and London, 1972); Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives* (Nashville, 1968); Mark H. Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1963); and Allan Chase's thoroughly researched, albeit thoroughly polemical, *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism* (Urbana, Chicago, and London, 1980).

[6] Gregor Mendel, a Catholic monk who experimented with pea plants, first published "Versuche über Pflanzenhybriden" in 1866 in the proceedings of the Natural Science Society in Brúnn, Moravia, seven years after the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. Mendel's work went completely unnoticed by nineteenth-century scientists and was published in English as *Experiments in Plant Hybridisation* in 1924. Ludmerer, *Genetics and American Society*, 38–39.

would the best of a low race equal the best of a high race. Although American eugenics maintained its own class dynamic, race remained a focus for American eugenical policy. British eugenicists' class bias reflected the stable class structure of British society. Americans emphasized race—a hierarchy that most people wanted to maintain—while they lessened the emphasis on class as a concession to the American democratic tradition.[7] American eugenicists extended Galton's association of "genius" and success even as they adopted his belief that other races were intellectually inferior to whites. Assuming intelligence to be the Mendelian trait that determined success, eugenicists applied intelligence tests as measures of underlying genetic worth. Thus, by definition, smart successful people (who were almost all white) had good genes, and ignorant failures had bad genes.

The marriage of Mendelian genetics and intelligence testing "proved" what scientists had long suspected: heredity produced qualitative differences between classes and races that transcended culture or environment.[8] As a result, American eugenicists accepted positive eugenics but also vigorously promoted negative eugenics—the elimination of "defective germ plasm" through sterilization, immigration restriction, institutional segregation, and bans on interracial marriage.[9]

Though Virginia's scientific racism had originated in Thomas Jefferson's 1785 *Notes on the State of Virginia*, eugenics was viewed,

[7] Kevles points out this distinction. See *In the Name of Eugenics*, 75–76. Thomas F. Gossett also identifies this dynamic in *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (2d ed.; New York and Oxford, 1997), 162–75 and Chap. 15. See Selden's discussion of "rational equalitarianism" in *Inheriting Shame*, 118–21.

[8] If intelligence was hereditary, and eugenicists believed that it was, then education was a mere aid to reaching one's inborn potential. As public schooling became nearly universal, eugenicists concluded that those who failed failed because of heredity, not lack of educational opportunity. This view was held by most psychologists of the period. The "scientific" differentiation of races ultimately rested on the analysis of intelligence quotient tests administered to African American and white inductees during World War I, and to Jewish immigrants in the early 1920s. Stephen Jay Gould develops the links among hereditary determinism, eugenics, and psychometry in *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981; 2d. ed. New York and London, 1996), Chap. 5. Nicole Hahn Rafter gathered the eugenic "family studies" that purported to demonstrate these phenomena in her edited work, *White Trash: The Eugenic Family Studies, 1877–1919* (Boston, 1988). Eugenically minded scientists conflated the "Nordic ideal"—claiming the intellectual superiority of people with northeastern European heritage—with Mendelian genetics. Harvard-educated biologist Charles B. Davenport pushed Mendelism to its extreme, and most other early American eugenicists followed his lead. John Higham discusses Mendelism's importance in establishing the racist dimension of American eugenics in *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (1955; 2d ed., New Brunswick, N.J., 1992), 150–52.

[9] The best expression of this negative eugenics is in Harry Hamilton Laughlin, "Report of the Committee to Study and to Report on the Best Practical Means of Cutting Off the Defective Germ-Plasm in the American Population," *Eugenics Record Office Bulletin,* Nos. 10a and 10b (Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y., 1914), 45–57 and 132–50.

in the early years of the twentieth century, as cutting-edge racial science—as opposed to outmoded theories based on craniometry and rudimentary comparative anatomy.[10] Eugenicists' race- and class-based explanation of the social order fed Americans' growing nativism and racism and echoed white southern rhetoric regarding racial purity. Simultaneously, eugenics eased the merging of Virginians' regional identity with a new overarching identity of so-called pure, 100 percent Americanism. Scholars at elite northern institutions emphasized whiteness and Anglo-Saxon heritage in defining the "American race."[11] This definition resonated with the traditional white southern identity. Southern eugenicists applauded their northern compatriots who argued for the preservation of this distinctly American race. Fears of miscegenation and the resulting offspring alarmed northerners and buttressed southern concerns about both African Americans and the eugenically tainted "shiftless, ignorant, worthless class of anti-social whites of the South."[12] Eugenicists characterized the American melting pot as "race suicide."[13] Subsequently, American eugenicists, North and South,

[10] The evolution of earlier forms of scientific racism into eugenics is covered in Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, 51–141. See also Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating Born Criminals* (Urbana and Chicago, 1997), 1–34. American scientists developed agricultural and zoological laboratories to identify genetic traits—providing a "blueprint" for future breeding. Charles B. Davenport established the Carnegie Station for Experimental Evolution (1904) and the Eugenics Record Office (1910). Ivey Lewis helped the University of Virginia join this field-laboratory vogue by establishing its Blandy Farm (1927) and Mountain Lake (1930) Biological Stations and employing eugenicist Orland E. White as professor in 1927. See the "Blandy Farm" Folders, Box 4, President's Papers, RG 2/1/2.472, subseries VI (Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia); hereinafter cited as President's Papers, three-digit suffix, subseries number.

[11] On increasing racism see C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (3d. ed., New York, 1974), Chap. 3; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 170–71; and Gossett, *Race*, 155–60. For a 1920s-era discussion of the "100% American" identity see Horace M. Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States: Studies in Group Psychology of the American People* (New York, 1924; 2d. ed., New Brunswick and London, 1998), Chap. 3 (quoted phrase on p. 119). Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Princeton Universities and the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan served as home institutions to many prominent eugenicists. See Eugenics Education Society, *First International Eugenics Congress: Scientific Papers and Appendices* (London, 1912).

[12] Harry Hamilton Laughlin, the superintendent of the Eugenics Record Office, characterized poor southern whites thus before the Circuit Court of Amherst County, Virginia, during the 1925 hearings of *Buck* v. *Bell*, the case that established the constitutionality of Virginia's eugenic sterilization law. Laughlin, quoted in Paul A. Lombardo, "Three Generations, No Imbeciles: New Light on *Buck* v. *Bell*," *New York University Law Review*, LX (April 1985), 51.

[13] E. A. Ross coined the phrase "race suicide" in "The Causes of Race Superiority," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (July 18, 1901). Two classic examples of eugenicists decrying the melting pot as race suicide are Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Melting Pot Mistake* (Boston, 1926); and Harry Hamilton Laughlin's report before Congress, *Analysis of America's Modern Melting Pot*, published in U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Analysis of America's Modern Melting Pot Hearings, 67 Cong., 3 Sess., 1923, p. 7. See also Paul Popenoe and Roswell Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York, 1926), Apprendix C, "The Melting Pot."

advanced notions of racial purity, using their theories about race mixing to shape public policy. Southern eugenicists drew analogies between racial segregation and northern measures like limiting immigration, institutionalizing mental patients, and passing restrictive marriage laws.

Confronting the tensions between Old South traditions and New South dislocations, eugenics mediated between Progressive liberalism and the self-consciously "backward" Agrarian reaction.[14] Eugenics provided a potential solution for nettlesome social problems—a way to dispense with poor white trash and the so-called Negro Question while ushering in modern liberal-industrial society in one motion. As a modern science, eugenics legitimized dominant social prejudices by justifying widely held beliefs on the basis of apparently objective, scientific observations.[15] The racism of eugenics reinforced the social hierarchy that elevated the elite, extolled sedate whites as fit, and considered troublesome whites, poor whites, and all others to be genetic defectives in need of control. The eugenicists' appeal to scientific expertise to achieve "social efficiency" mirrored both liberal and conservative reform movements during the Progressive Era.[16] Eugenic theories

[14] In 1930 the "Vanderbilt Agrarians," in the words of Paul M. Gaston, "projected their hostility to modern industrial America into a generalized picture of the Southern past which portrayed agrarianism as the decisive factor in the region's development." Gaston, *New South Creed*, 10. The Agrarians, like most southerners, remained wedded to the traditional racial order. For the Agrarians' manifesto see Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (New York and London, 1930).

[15] Edward A. Purcell Jr. identified an important corollary of the use of purportedly objective science to legitimize social beliefs. Scientists' "belief in the new objectivity opened the way for a practical role in society and possible ultimate realization of the methods of control, while at the same time suppressing any moral or social doubts about the actual consequences of their actions." Edward A. Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value* (Lexington, Ky., 1973), 26 (quotation) and 239–41.

[16] The rise of expert authority is treated in Magali Sarfatti Larson, "The Production of Expertise and the Constitution of Expert Power" and Thomas L. Haskell, "Professionalism versus Capitalism: R. H. Tawney, Emile Durkheim, and C. S. Peirce on the Disinterestedness of Professional Communities," in Haskell, ed., *The Authority of Experts*: *Studies in History and Theory* (Bloomington, Ind., 1984), 28–80, and 180–225. See also the essays in Ronald G. Walters, ed., *Scientific Authority and Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore and London, 1997). The search for social efficiency, similar to Frederick W. Taylor's scientific management, was a familiar concept in the technocratic culture of the 1910s and 1920s. Taylor invented the new specialty, the "efficiency expert," using time-and-motion studies to speed up production and increase output. In *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911; 4th ed., New York, 1967), he explicitly linked human efficiency to machine efficiency. Just as Taylor emphasized using science to make humans more efficient workers, eugenicists spotlighted using science to make humans inherently more efficient beings. Eugenicists went one step beyond Taylor in the quest for efficiency. Eugenics held appeal across the political spectrum, not just for conservatives as in this case. See Diane B. Paul, "Eugenics and the Left," in Paul, *Politics of Heredity*, 11–35. The "conservation" of America's "human capital" echoed the Progressive efforts of Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and Margaret Sanger, all advocates of eugenics. Gary Brechin,

reconciled many whites to invasive state intervention in defense of whiteness. Although eugenic legislation challenged traditions of local control, it sounded many of the major chords of southern society: white supremacy, paternalism, and the myth of a predatory, atavistic African American population. Many Americans believed that, through government action in support of eugenic policies, the nation's population would become racially and democratically homogenous.[17]

Progressive southerners working for the socioeconomic advancement of the South echoed all of these ideas. Virginia, a state with a history of control by "enlightened" elites, embraced both the Progressive and eugenics movements. Not coincidentally, the heyday of eugenics and its southern ascendance coincided with the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, a Virginia-born Progressive, and the South's resurgence in national politics.[18] Progressive state intervention projected the visage of a benevolent southern patriarchy.[19] Wilson's southern cabinet members took steps to ensure the rehabilitation of the South through federal programs. The United States Public Health Service (USPHS) reflected this effort, as northern and southern politicians and eugenicists extolled government intervention in the name of public health. In 1920 Wilson—at the behest of Secretary of the Treasury Carter Glass, a fellow Virginian—appointed Hugh Smith Cumming, a University of Virginia alumnus and eugenics supporter, to the office of Surgeon General. In 1932 Cumming, along with

"Conserving the Race: Natural Aristocracies, Eugenics, and the U.S. Conservation Movement," *Antipode*, XXVIII (Summer 1996), 236; and Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives*, 83. See also James W. Trent Jr., *Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1994), 135–37.

[17] These conclusions differ from Edward J. Larson's study of eugenics in *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* (Baltimore and London, 1995). Nevertheless, they tend to support Larson's regional distinctions. Unlike in the Deep South, eugenics found great support in Virginia and North Carolina, the Progressive upper South. Elites in these states readily embraced Progressive liberalism without adopting racial liberalism. While few whites, North or South, can be characterized as committed racial liberals—those favoring immediate equalization of all civil and social rights—during the first half of the twentieth century, southern liberalism had a decidedly conservative cast. See Virginius Dabney, *Liberalism in the South* (Chapel Hill, 1932), for an analysis of the conservative nature of southern liberalism.

[18] Wilson, too, was familiar with eugenics, having signed New Jersey's eugenic sterilization statute into law in 1911. Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Mind*, 173.

[19] As C. Vann Woodward noted, "Racism was conceived of by some as the very foundation of Southern progressivism." Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 91. D. W. Griffith used quotations from Woodrow Wilson's *A History of the American People* (5 vols.; New York and London, 1901) as intertitles in *Birth of a Nation*. Both Wilson's history and Griffith's movie portrayed government intervention during Reconstruction as a crime against the South. In this view, national healing could occur only with the disfranchisement and subjugation of African Americans. The correspondence in time of the movie, Wilson's presidency, and eugenics was not merely a coincidence.

Taliaferro Clark and Raymond A. Vonderlehr, who were also Virginia alumni and eugenicists, established and implemented the infamous Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Male Negro.[20] These three men had been taught by the University of Virginia's former chairman of the faculty and professor of medicine, Paul B. Barringer, who believed strongly in the hereditary inferiority of African Americans and established the precedent for eugenical thought at the university. Barringer's successor in the medical school, Professor of Anatomy and Histology Harvey Ernest Jordan, taught eugenics before and during Lewis's tenure. Jordan wrote extensively on eugenics, co-authoring the 1914 book, *War's Aftermath: A Preliminary Study of the Eugenics of War*, with David Starr Jordan (a distant cousin), president of Stanford University and a pre-eminent American eugenicist. Harvey Jordan and Lewis became fast friends and lived as neighbors on the university campus. Together, they advised President Edwin Anderson Alderman on the hiring of three more eugenicists: anatomist Robert Bennett Bean (1916), pediatrician Lawrence Thomas Royster (1921), and geneticist Orland E. White (1927).[21] Alderman had ties to the Aristogenic Association, a group of elite Americans who believed that

[20] These three men maintained close ties with both the national eugenics movement and their alma mater. While Lewis taught none of these men, they all studied under Lewis's fellow eugenicists at the University of Virginia's medical school. Moreover, Virginia became a "feeder school" for the USPHS. Many junior surgeons in the USPHS corps, the men who carried out the study for forty years, did take Lewis's course and apply its teaching. A forthcoming paper by the author, "Rearing Human Thoroughbreds: Eugenics, Medical Education, and Public Health," to be presented at the conference of the American Association for the History of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland, on May 21, 2000, examines this issue in detail. James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* (New York and London, 1981; 2d. ed., New York, and other cities, 1993), remains the benchmark study of the experiment.

[21] Faculty members at the University of Virginia often lived in the Pavillions surrounding Jefferson's lawn at the center of the "Academical Village" on the campus of the university. Jordan and Lewis were neighbors "on grounds" (in the parlance of the university), only a couple of doors apart for many years. Harvey Ernest Jordan and David Starr Jordan, *War's Aftermath: A Preliminary Study of the Eugenics of War* . . . (Boston and New York, 1914). Among other articles, Jordan wrote "Eugenics: Its Data, Scope, and Promise as Seen by the Anatomist" in Morton A. Aldrich, et al., *Eugenics: Twelve University Lectures* (New York, 1914), 107–38. The book was "arranged for in the belief that the most necessary step to be taken towards the end of awakening a eugenical conscience, and thus paving the way to an effective operation of public opinion and to wise legislation along eugenical lines, must be that of education" (p. v). For eugenics and college education see Steven Selden, "Education Policy and Biological Science: Genetics, Eugenics, and the College Textbook, c. 1908–1931," *Teachers College Record*, LXXXVII (Fall 1985), 35–51; and Selden, "Biological Determinism and the Normal School Curriculum: Helen Putnam and the NEA Committee on Racial Well-Being, 1910–1922," in William F. Pinar, ed., *Contemporary Curriculum Discourses* (Scottsdale, 1988), 50–65. For an account of Bean's flawed racist studies see Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, 109–14. Bean's son, William Bennett Bean, who became dean of the University of Iowa Medical School and one of the most famous internists in America, was taught by Ivey Lewis. The younger Bean's eugenical views will be discussed below. Royster and White wrote less frequently on eugenics, but both maintained membership in national eugenics organizations.

"[white] Race survival and advance depend much on leadership. . . . The study and understanding of the biological characteristics of leaders is therefore of importance."[22] The study of eugenics flourished in such congenial surroundings. Lewis organized the university eugenicists, and together they promoted the passage of Virginia's two eugenic laws of 1924.[23]

Between 1904 and his death in 1931, President Edwin Anderson Alderman and his confidant Ivey Foreman Lewis endeavored to modernize the University of Virginia while simultaneously conserving its distinctly southern heritage. Modernization was an ambitious undertaking, for Virginia stood—in the southern imagination if not always in fact—as the flagship university of the South.[24] Ivey Lewis joined the

[22] Quotation is from the Aristogenic Association, "Review of Fundamentals Leading to Aristogenic Record" (dated ca. 1930–31), in the folder cited at the end of the note. Founders of the Aristogenic Association include Lewellys Franklin Barker, a eugenicist at Johns Hopkins University, David Starr Jordan, Charles B. Davenport, director of the Carnegie Institution's Station for Experimental Evolution and of the Eugenics Record Office, both in Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, and Madison Grant, a prominent New York lawyer, socialite, and philanthropist. Correspondence between Alderman and members of the Aristogenic Association is in "A" Folder, Box 1, President's Papers, .491, subseries I.

[23] Lewis, Bean, and Jordan founded the university's chapter of the scientific honor society, Sigma Xi. Congress passed the eugenically motivated Immigration Restriction Act in 1924, the same year that Virginia enacted two pieces of eugenically motivated legislation—the Racial Integrity Act (forbidding miscegenational marriages) and a compulsory sterilization act (permitting sterilization of the feeble-minded). Lewis supported the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act (see note 48). While Lewis did not participate directly in the lobbying for the sterilization bill (probably because he viewed it as a medico-eugenic measure best handled by physicians), he supported the antimiscegenation bill through his association with its principle lobbyists, Earnest Sevier Cox, John Powell, Walter A. Plecker, and their organization, the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America. For Lewis's compliance in enforcing this law, see W. A. Plecker to Ivey Lewis, October 29, 1926, and Ivey Lewis to Plecker, November 9, 1926, "1926 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Ivey Foreman Lewis Collection, 5119a (Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia); hereinafter cited as Lewis Collection. Lewis's teaching supported the principles and practices of both bills. J. David Smith's *Eugenic Assualt on America* details the campaign for the Racial Integrity Act, but he misses Lewis's involvement (see note 72 below). Additionally, Lewis and Alderman's successor, President John Lloyd Newcomb, engaged in covert discussions with Harry H. Laughlin of the Eugenics Record Office (see note 61 below). On Virginia's eugenic acts see Paul A. Lombardo, "Miscegenation, Eugenics, and Racism: Historical Footnotes to *Loving* v. *Virginia*," *University of California, Davis Law Review*, XXI (1988), 421–52. On immigration and eugenics see Frances Janet Hassencahl, "Harry H. Laughlin, 'Expert Eugenics Agent' for the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1921 to 1931" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1970).

[24] Virginia's preeminence was so well established that when a southerner said someone attended "the university," listeners assumed the speaker referred to the University of Virginia. The university resisted change, integrating its graduate schools only when forced by Supreme Court order in 1950. Virginia was the last major state university to admit women and did so only under the threat of litigation, by federal court injunction, in 1970. For a specific treatment of Alderman's earlier Progressive impulses see Michael Dennis, "Reforming the 'Academical Village': Edwin A. Alderman and the University of Virginia, 1904–1915," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, CV (Winter 1997), 53–86; and Dennis, "Educating the 'Advancing' South: State Universities and Progressivism in the New South, 1887–1915" (Ph.D. dissertation,

faculty of the University of Virginia in 1915 when, he wrote, "the strong wind from Germany, first let loose by Johns Hopkins in 1876, blew through the ancient halls of American universities, and with the emphasis on research, transformed every graduate school in the country."[25] Lewis became one of Alderman's chief advisors. Lewis's guidance combined with the larger social currents in the New South—including institutional and social conservatism, religious liberalism, and educational Progressivism—to modernize the university. Such institutional reforms implied that university research would facilitate social change; ultimately, they merely reinforced the status quo by modernizing its basis.

Born in 1882 and reared in Raleigh, North Carolina, Ivey Lewis's forebears had strong southern roots, of which he was immensely proud. One of five children of an established doctor, Lewis grew up as the South was systematically disfranchising African Americans.[26] Although Jim Crow's grip did not absolutely preclude cross-racial interaction, it sought to manage and administer such contacts and thereby taught children about racial hierarchy.[27] More significantly, Lewis matured as class tensions rocked the southern white population. Battles over voting rights increased the strain among southern whites, fracturing racial solidarity that was often assumed by earlier white supremacists. At the same time, however, systematic racism became a *national* phenomenon. America's 1898 victory in the Spanish American War merged nationalism with nativism and racism.[28] These social currents shaped Lewis's personal development before he entered college.

Lewis enrolled at the University of North Carolina, receiving bachelor's and master's degrees in biology in 1902 and 1903 respectively. Captivated by biological research, Lewis went on to Johns Hopkins

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Queens University at Kingston, Canada, 1996). On the "Progressives' " transformation of American universities generally see Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965).

[25] Ivey F. Lewis, "Address to Alumni (April 22, 1948)," in "Speeches" Folder, Box 5, Lewis Collection.

[26] Lewis's father attended medical school at the University of Virginia before settling in North Carolina. Lewis's mother Cornelia Viola Battle was the granddaughter of Kemp Plummer Battle, a president of the University of North Carolina. The Lewis and Battle families have distinguished histories; Lewis's correspondence reveals his genealogical pride. See Boxes 1-5, Lewis Collection, passim; and Edwin Alderman to Ivey Lewis, January 13, 1928, "L" Folder, Box 2, President's Papers, .472, subseries VIII.

[27] Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York and Oxford, 1992), 132.

[28] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 170–71; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877–1913* ([Baton Rouge], 1951), 321–26, and 355–56; and Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Chaps. 2 and 3.

University, where he studied with William Keith Brooks, a famed cellular anatomist, and Herbert Spencer Jennings, a moderate advocate of eugenics. In 1908 Lewis completed his Ph.D. in biology with a concentration in botany. His star rose rapidly as he taught at Randolph Macon College for four years and moved to the University of Wisconsin in 1913. Churning out publications, Lewis occupied the Smithsonian Table at the Stazione Zoologica, a very prestigious research post in Naples, Italy, and then was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in 1914.[29]

In early 1914 Lewis approached President Alderman regarding an opening in the University of Virginia's biology department. During correspondence about the position, Lewis provided Alderman with advice that allowed the president both to modernize the biology department and to retain its endowment, the Miller Fund.[30] On the basis of this interaction, Alderman developed abiding respect for Lewis. "I am more and more convinced of his splendid fitness for our work," Alderman wrote Dean James M. Page.[31] Page's own research into Lewis's background corroborated the president's opinion. Samuel C. Hatcher, vice president of Randolph Macon College, wrote Page, "While with us, he [Lewis] made his department so interesting that our students were enthusiastic for classes under him. He is also a valuable asset to any faculty in that while he is alert and progressive . . . he does not project himself in an unpleasant way."[32] Lewis displayed the tact and diplomatic skill that would characterize the rest of his career and his promotion of eugenics. Moreover, Lewis's southern heritage made him an attractive candidate. "Lewis is a very fine man and being one of our own people, I think you would like him better than anybody whom you could get who is not one of us," averred Robert E.

[29] Ivey Lewis to Edwin Alderman, January 5, 1914, "Biology 1908–1914" Folder, Box 5, President's Papers, .472 subseries I; Jane Maienschein, *Transforming Traditions in American Biology, 1880–1915* (Baltimore and London, 1991), esp. 43–47; announcement of Lewis's AAAS fellowship induction in Ivey Lewis to Dean J. M. Page, January 12, 1914, *ibid.* Lewis's scientific stature grew throughout his career. In 1929 he was appointed to the National Research Council, chairing its division of biology and agriculture from 1933 to 1936. He became president of the American Society of Naturalists in 1939, of the American Biological Society in 1942, and of the Botanical Society of America in 1949. In 1950–1951 he was president of the biology section of the AAAS. All of these positions brought him into personal contact with major figures in the American eugenics movement.

[30] The deed for the Miller Fund, the trust that supported the school of biology, stipulated that the money be used to further experimental agriculture. Some trustees questioned using the fund to support academic biology. See collected letters in "Biology 1908–1914" Folder, President's Papers, .472, subseries I.

[31] Edwin Alderman to Dean J. M. Page, January 29, 1915, *ibid.*

[32] Samuel C. Hatcher to Dean J. M. Page, February 7, 1914, *ibid.*

Blackwell, president of Randolph Macon. Blackwell added, "he is a man of strong religious character, and was a leader in the Episcopal Church while here. I should like very much to have him back in the state." Alderman agreed, writing of Lewis in neo-eugenic terms, "He is a gentleman by birth and breeding, and a cultivated gentleman."[33] Lewis became the Miller Professor of Biology in September 1915.[34] Offering Lewis a hefty starting salary of $3,000 per year "to be increased . . . to the maximum sum paid our oldest professors [$3,500]," Alderman also dangled the department chairmanship, complete control over the curriculum, and exemption from summer school duties to allow Lewis to focus on research.[35] "I would not want you to come unless there would be opportunity for you to do research work," Alderman wrote. He continued, "There is nothing I welcome more than the thought of someone doing real research work." On February 20, Lewis assured Alderman that he would accept the position.[36]

With this Progressive modernization of its biology department, the University of Virginia entered the race toward national preeminence. Alderman and the Board of Visitors committed Virginia to becoming a modern research institution while maintaining the university's place in the vanguard of southern higher education. C. Vann Woodward described Alderman and his contemporaries as highly principled men whose vision "included no basic alteration of social, racial, and economic arrangements."[37] Alderman wanted to move the University of Virginia into the top tier of American universities, but he was not willing to compromise the university's southern heritage. With the hiring of Ivey Lewis, Alderman gained an ally in his quest.

Many other university presidents shared Alderman's desire to mold

[33] So impressed by Lewis, Alderman asked *him* his opinion of *other* candidates for the job. See Ivey Lewis to Dean J. M. Page, May 25, 1914, and Ivey Lewis to Dean J. M. Page, June 22, 1914, *ibid.* Quotations from Robert E. Blackwell to Dean J. M. Page, January 14, 1914, and Edwin Alderman to R. T. W. Duke, Secretary of the Miller Board, January 14, 1914, *ibid.*

[34] Ivey Lewis to Edwin Alderman, February 20, 1915, "Biology" Folder, Box 2, President's Papers, .472, subseries III.

[35] Edwin Alderman to Ivey Lewis, February 6, 1915, *ibid.*

[36] Ivey Lewis to Edwin Alderman, February 9, 1915, Edwin Alderman to Ivey Lewis, February 12, 1915, and Ivey Lewis to Edwin Alderman, February 20, 1915, *ibid.*

[37] Woodward, *Origins of the New Sout*h, 397. For an indication of the failure, over many years, of the university's leadership to alter its stand on the region's most pressing social issue, see a 1932 letter, asking Alderman if anyone at the university advocated racial amalgamation, which prompted immediate response from Acting-President Newcomb (Alderman had died a few months earlier), "you need have no fear . . . . No institution could be further from teaching that sort of doctrine than the University of Virginia." Dr. Lillian Crockett Lowder to Edwin Alderman, June 9, 1932; and John Lloyd Newcomb to Dr. Lillian Crockett Lowder, June 10, 1932, "L" Folder, Box 13, President's Papers, .491, subseries I.

their institutions into research centers. Indeed, the public increasingly recognized that an important relationship existed among universities, science, and society. As the Charlottesville *Daily Progress* reported, "Nothing is more evident than the fact that modern life . . . finds its basis in science . . . . The scholar versed in the great achievements of the past and possessing exact and extensive knowledge of modern science, can interpret modern life as no one else is able to do . . . ."[38] The *Daily Progress* expressed the emerging faith in the ability of university-trained experts to improve society. Alderman felt similarly: "The ultimate mission of the state university in America is to supply training" to experts, who would then study "the actual conditions of life in the state which the university exists to aid and strengthen."[39] Alderman's ideal perfectly fit the Progressive Era ethos of scientific positivism. Alderman and Lewis, however, vacillitated between actually applying expertise to effect social change and merely publicizing their intention to do so. Lewis and Alderman's responses to two issues—the controversy surrounding the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925 and the value of sociological studies of the race problem—reveal this dilemma.

Lewis and Alderman defended science against fundamentalist religion's attack on the theory of evolution in the Scopes trial, and Alderman's correspondence reveals his campaign to protect the university from challenges by creationists.[40] As early as 1922 Lewis responded to a Virginian who had asked about his position by affirming that the biology department accepted the Darwinian theory of evolution. For Lewis, science was a natural extension of God's goodwill toward humanity: science and religion were complementary, not antagonistic, modes of thought.[41] He believed that God allowed humans to discover natural laws in order to improve their condition on earth.

[38] In "The University of Virginia," Charlottesville *Daily Progress*, December 29, 1916, p. 18.

[39] *Ibid.* Lewis echoed Alderman, commenting that the biology department contributed to "the teaching profession of the Southern States. We hope to encourage the spirit of research and sound scholarship in the teachers of our colleges and secondary schools." Ivey F. Lewis, "The Last Ten Years in Biology at the University of Virginia." See paper and undated clipping, labeled "Chattanooga News," in "Articles on University" Folder, Box 3, President's Papers, .491, subseries I.

[40] Extensive correspondence documenting Alderman's position exists in "Evolution" Folder, Box 7, President's Papers, .472 subseries VII: 7.

[41] Ivey Lewis to V. B. Harris, esquire, November 2, 1922, "1922 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Lewis Collection. Lewis lectured to various churches on "Evolution and Religion" and "Science and Religion" both before and after the Scopes Trial. See W. H. Ruffin to Ivey Lewis, February 2, 1927, "1927 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Lewis Collection; and Ivey Lewis to Tom H. Garth, Westminster Presbyterian Church, October 1, 1947, "1947 Letters" Folder, *ibid.* See also generally, Boxes 1–37, Dean's Papers, passim.

Hereditary determinism, a natural law created by God and discovered by science, could be controlled by man through the science of eugenics. Eugenic control would result in a society of "fitter" individuals who would operate intelligently and efficiently, thereby easing the strain of survival. Such an efficient society would have the time and resources for cultivating morality through religion and education, making society more humane. A eugenically improved population would be better equipped to receive moral instruction, for there would be no "moral delinquents."[42] Lewis told students that in such a society humanity could then refine the "higher things in life," such as "courage, honor, a descent *[sic]* reserve, gentleness, magnanimity, pride in ideals."[43] This theme of moral improvement following eugenic advance informed all of Lewis's writing. Lewis's eugenics harmonized with a Protestant ethic of introspection, upright living, and service to one's community.[44] The address celebrating his twenty-five years of service to the university effectively captured Lewis's eugenic approach: "with scientific knowledge of the laws of life you have brought to your duties as Dean of the University a broad and strong capacity to deal with the human problems present in the lives of your students."[45] Lewis regarded the university as a microcosm of America, hence fit for eugenic aid.[46]

As scientists and social theorists debated whether heredity or envi-

[42] Lewis's views on the relation of science and religion paralleled those of his colleague and mentor, Edwin Grant Conklin. See Kathy Jane Cooke, "A Gospel of Social Evolution: Religion, Biology, and Education in the Thought of Edwin Grant Conklin" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1994), especially pp. 91–105. Unlike Lewis, Conklin was a racial liberal and moderate eugenicist. "Moral delinquent" was a term developed to describe the feeble-minded during the *Buck* v. *Bell* case. Lombardo, "Three Generations, No Imbeciles," 49 and 62.

[43] Lewis, "Address to New Students (September 3, 1940)," in "Speeches" Folder, Box 5, Lewis Collection (quotations). See also Ivey F. Lewis, "Ancient Wisdom and Modern Knowledge (May 5, 1935)," *ibid.*

[44] Lewis echoed eugenics popularizer Alfred E. Wiggam, whose *New Decalogue of Science* (New York, 1922) married Protestant Christianity and eugenics, proclaiming, "had Jesus been among us, he would have been president of the First Eugenics Congress" (p. 110). Lewis's role as a founder and then chairman of the university's Young Men's Christian Association reveals his commitment to hands-on attempts to help people realize their genetic potential. See "1929 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Lewis Collection. Lewis, who became senior warden of his church in 1931, also occupied seats on the board of St. Anne's School and the diocesan school board. His views about the relation of natural law to man influenced his Christian commitment to help through education. See Ivey F. Lewis, "Untitled Essay (undated)," and Ivey Lewis to Bishop W. R. Mason, March 24, 1949, loosely filed, Box 24, Dean's Papers; and Ivey F. Lewis, "Address before the American Association of University Women, Wytheville, VA (April 5, 1946)," in "Dean Lewis" Folder, Box 11, President's Papers .581; document hereinafter referred to as AAUW.

[45] "Address Commemorating Dean Lewis's 25th Anniversary," in "Articles and Addresses not by Ivey F. Lewis" Folder, Box 2, Lewis Collection.

[46] Lewis used intelligence and personality tests to weed out students who got bad grades or

ronment controlled human destiny, the so-called nature/nurture question, Lewis stood convinced of nature's ultimate power. While Lewis appreciated religion's "environmental" ability to improve society's morals, he remained deeply skeptical of sociology's proposed environmental interventions—settlement houses, slum clearance, and economic amelioration. Only sociologists who viewed society as the result of biological laws seemed correct to Lewis. He denied the objectivity of sociologists who believed that environmental conditions influenced social structure, dismissing such theorists with the epithet "sentimental." For Lewis, these thinkers simply could not face the cold, hard facts of biology. These views applied not only to class issues but also to considerations of race. Lewis's and Alderman's positions regarding the race problem reflected their biological, scientific, and, to their minds, objective understanding of sociology. Their Progressive "objectivity," however, did not entirely transcend their regional prejudices. In December 1915 Alderman wrote that "the right adjustment of relations between the white man and the colored man in American life, still remains perhaps our most complex and momentous public question." Although he felt that southerners had acted with "a great deal of instinctive wisdom," it was time that "patient, wise, scientific, just men should labor at the problem and seek to place it where it belongs among the great economic and sociological questions of the time." Alderman called for scientific study, not amelioration, of an intractable problem. His use of bloodless phrases like "the right adjustment" of race relations reveals his faith in control by experts. Rather than hoping for a solution, people "should be grateful for the fact that the negro has somehow gotten off the southerner's nerves and out of the northerner's imagination."[47] Although Alderman championed university reform, his studied deliberation regarding the race question protected the social status quo.

Similarly, Lewis's hereditarianism left him hostile toward environmental solutions to the race problem. As Lewis told University of Virginia students in a 1924 speech reported by the New York *Times*,

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behaved badly. For example see Charles M. Kauffman, Director of Personnel and Placement Office, to Ivey Lewis, May 31, 1948, "K" Folder, Box 6, Dean's Papers.

[47] Edwin Alderman, "Untitled Address to Commission (December 20, 1915)," Box 8, President's Papers, .472, subseries III. Many commentators have noted southern resistance to outside intervention in the solution of southern social problems. See particularly John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South* (New York, 1994), 301–16; Ayers, *Promise of the New South*, 419; Dewey W. Grantham, *The South in Modern America: A Region at Odds* (New York, 1994), 3; and Link, *Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 9.

"The one clear message that biological investigation has brought as its gift to the thought of the twentieth century is that the idea of environment molding something out of nothing is sheer nonsense." Lewis continued, "This disproved theory of the creative environment has been put forth in siren tones until the idea of the great American melting pot, into which one can put the refuse of three continents and draw out good, sound American citizens, has reached wide acceptance. It is simply and perilously false." Lewis, like Alderman, sought to remove racial issues from the arena of public debate, placing the race question within the purview of educated, scientific elites like himself; to do otherwise courted failure. "We [Americans] have undertaken the direction of human evolution," Lewis said. "At the present moment we are bungling the job." Decrying the notion of the melting pot as "simply and perilously false" from a biological standpoint, Lewis made the eugenical contention, "The purity of the white race in America [which] we regard as a basal necessity for the maintenance of the heritage which we have received," risked destruction.[48] Lewis staunchly maintained that heredity and racial purity, not environmental intervention, controlled human and social evolution.

Correspondence between Alderman and Lewis concerning qualifications for a professor of sociology reveals Lewis's bias and its effect on the university. Arguing against one nominee's appointment, Lewis opined, "The Social Sciences suffer in public estimation from dilettante-ism, and I think it would be a mistake to put in as full professor of sociology any man who has not been thoroughly trained in the best thought of his times in theory, principle and practice of his subject."[49] Lewis argued the skeptic's position: unsure of sociology's

[48] "Biologist Supports Curb on Immigrants," New York *Times*, April 6, 1924, p. 3E, c. 3–4. This piece appeared the same day the *Times* ran a story about the House consideration of the Immigration Restriction Act. "Immigration Bill Taken Up in House," *ibid.*, sec. 1, p. 10, c. 1. The *Times*' coverage of Lewis was reprinted in the *Virginia Teacher*, the leading professional magazine for Virginia educators. See, "Environment Cannot Mold Something out of Nothing, Says Biologist," *Virginia Teacher*, V (June 1924), 163–64. The address drew warm responses from people of both sections, as will be discussed below.

[49] Alderman accepted Lewis's arguments over those of Professor Wilson Gee, the chairman of the department of sociology. Ivey Lewis to Edwin Alderman, May 18, 1926; and Wilson Gee to Edwin Alderman, May 26, 1926, "Institute for Research in the Social Sciences" Folder, Box 12a, President's Papers, .472, subseries VII. Alderman followed Lewis's recommendation regarding faculty appointments in every instance found; in each case, the result preserved the university's southern identity. Alderman dismissed a candidate whom he favored for Dean of Women (at this time there were women in the nursing school and graduate programs) as a result of Lewis's appraisal: "She is a very attractive woman of great ability. I think she would find a good deal of adjusting of her point of view necessary, and if I were charged with any responsibility in this matter, I would look first for a Southern woman." Ivey Lewis to John Lloyd Newcomb, July 18, 1927, "L–Le" Folder, Box 7, President's Papers, .472, subseries IX; and

value, he wanted a professor with a solid empirical—and for Lewis that meant biological—background. Rather than condoning sociology's environmentalist posture, Lewis answered the call of the *Eugenical News* and joined the Virginia State Education Committee of the American Eugenics Society. This committee sought to educate Virginians about the hereditary basis of social structure.[50] Alderman ultimately concurred with Lewis and appointed Floyd N. House, a rigorously trained social scientist, to the professorship in sociology.[51]

Comparing Lewis's actions in the 1920s with the opinion he expressed in March 1948 vividly demonstrates the consistency of his beliefs. Responding to a eugenics-based query regarding race relations, Lewis stated:

> There is a lot of sap-headed thinking about it [race as it relates to heredity], mostly based on the silly notion that all men are brothers and therefore alike in their potentialities. Actually, there is no biological principle better established than that of inequality of races, and yet sociologists, especially the Jewish ones, are loud and effective in their denial of any racial differences, even saying there is no such thing as race. They deride and laugh to scorn such books as Madison Grant's "Passing of the Great Race."[52]

Lewis revered authors like Grant, Lothrop Stoddard, and Virginia's own Earnest Sevier Cox. These men were America's primary eugenical propagandists, sounding the racial alarm in provocative books entitled *White America*, *Teutonic Unity*, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*, and *Revolt Against Civilization*.[53] These

Edwin Alderman to Florence Lowther, Ph.D., July 18, 1927, "Women at the University" Folder, Box 29, President's Papers, .472, subseries VII.

[50] Lewis's name first appears on the rolls of the American Eugenics Society in 1925. The *Eugenical News*, "The Official Organ of The Eugenics Research Association, the Galton Society, and the American Eugenics Society," called for the creation of education committees in May 1926. The list of chapters created appeared in the October 1927 issue. *Eugenical News: Current Record of Race Hygiene*, XI (May 1926), 72; and *ibid.*, XII (October 1927), 138–39.

[51] House had been trained by Robert Park in the University of Chicago's sociology department and used statistical analysis in explaining social development. For more on House see Daryl Michael Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880–1996* (Chapel Hill, 1997), 59 and 220*n*7. House's personal papers at the university are found in Floyd Nelson House Papers, RG 21/77.851, Special Collections (Alderman Library).

[52] Ivey Lewis to John D. Martin Jr., esquire, March 6, 1948, "M" Folder, Box 7, Dean's Papers. Lewis was a virulent anti-Semite. He tracked and controlled the number of Jewish students admitted to the university. Though he extolled Jewish efforts to defend their own racial purity, he felt that Jews as a "race" remained inferior to "Nordic" whites. Ivey Lewis to John Lloyd Newcomb, January 31, 1939, "Dean Lewis" Folder, Box 5, President's Papers, .491, subseries III. His statements in favor of Jewish racial purity appear in "Biologist Supports Curb on Immigrants," cited above.

[53] Mark Haller described racist eugenicists as propagandists. Haller, *Eugenics*, 147. Cox's books, *White America* (Richmond, Va., 1923, 1925, 1937) and *Teutonic Unity: A Basis for Peace* (Richmond, Va., 1951), mimic Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (New York, 1920) and *Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the*

works became texts for Ivey Lewis's course and his personal ideological guides. Lewis displayed little tolerance for individuals or methodologies that denied what he considered self-evident scientific fact. Both his teaching and his ruminations about educational policy manifest this intolerance.

Lewis became an influential figure in Virginia education, rising to become the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the university and traveling throughout the state speaking to educators. Two main ideas characterize all of Lewis's writing on education. First, education should "make good and useful citizens." Second, the inherent, hereditary inequality of students limited educators' ability to achieve the first goal. Regarding education's constraints, Lewis wrote:

> It seems to me that the greatest discovery of the twentieth century is the establishment of the laws of heredity as they relate to human beings . . . . Not even the most round eyed believer in the doctrine of equality, even in the nineteenth century when the doctrine ran wild, could imagine that such things as skin color or eye color can be produced by training, but it is still a comparatively new idea that the laws of heredity hold also for mental traits and that human destiny is predetermined to a much greater extent than has been supposed by hereditary factors. The very best education can do is to cultivate and intensify the natural capacities.[54]

Lewis believed that students had an inborn potential, a capacity that education could not enlarge.[55] He advocated education for its socializing aspect—it integrated individuals into society at the level determined by their heredity. In light of these beliefs, Lewis concluded: "We must reword the bold statement to read that all men are created equal only in the sense that all have a right to equality of opportunity and equality before the law. Actually all men are created unequal in their hereditary equipment and potentialities, in their natures. Given identical training, the same food, the same home environment, the fact remains that people look different, act differently, and are different."[56]

Thus, it seemed essential to Lewis that education target a student's

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Under-Man (New York, 1922) and Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race or the Racial Basis of European History* (New York, 1916) in style and tone.

[54] Ivey F. Lewis, "AAUW," 1; and "Address before the Roanoke Teachers Association (December 11, 1937)," in "Speeches" Folder, Box 5, Lewis Collection, 7–8. See also Ivey Lewis to John Dale Russell, Director Division of Higher Education, U. S. Office of Education, January 14, 1948, "R" Folder, Box 8, Dean's Papers.

[55] Lewis scorned the Lamarckian theory that posited the inheritance of acquired traits and the increase of innate potential through training and environmental influence. See also Ivey Forman Lewis, "Biological Principles and National Policy: Address of Retiring Chairman of Section G [Lewis] American Association for the Advancement of Science (December, 1951)," p. 6, in "Speeches" Folder, Box 5, Lewis Collection.

[56] Ivey F. Lewis, "The High School Program in Relation to Success in College Work (February 8, 1946)," p. 18 in "Articles and Abstracts" Folder, Box 2, Lewis Collection.

innate potential as gauged by intelligence tests. Without such conscious direction of students, "Compulsory education laws force the offering of such a curriculum that all can, if not profit by it, at least endure it. This means that the level of achievement must be graded down to the lowest common denominator." Decades before anyone used the term, Lewis described the "dumbing down" of education and vigorously advocated "tracking"—placing students into rigid vocational, general, and college-preparatory programs based on psychometric measurements that purported to indicate inborn ability, affinity, and intelligence.[57] Applied racially, these tracks limited blacks to manual education. In his retirement address before the AAAS, "Biological Principles and National Policy," Lewis invoked Jefferson's ideal of a pyramidal educational system that reserved higher education for the elite and for a few "scholars raked from the rubbish." Jefferson, in Lewis's view, "accepted the fact that many could not or would not take an education beyond the 3 Rs, and proposed that . . . higher education be reserved for the aristoi who could profit by it. Strange doctrine for the apostle of democracy!" While Lewis advocated scientific reform of education and society, he posited changes that failed to challenge, and indeed actively reinforced, existing inequality.[58]

The three strands—educational Progressivism, religious liberalism, and social conservatism—that were wound together in eugenics created an ideological tether that anchored Ivey Lewis to contemporary social trends within Virginia and its state university. The conditions present in Virginia predisposed the state to accept eugenics. Virginia's experience differs from that which Edward J. Larson depicts for the Deep South in *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South.* The factors that Larson argues retarded eugenic development in the Deep South—religious fundamentalism, lack of higher education and of research in the biologic sciences, and low rates of literacy—applied less to Virginia.[59] Virginia's religious culture tended, as evidenced by

[57] *Ibid.*, 19 (quotation) and 3. Lewis also sat on the boards of the Miller School for Manual Labor and the Blue Ridge Industrial School, in addition to his involvement with parochial schooling. Lewis often used IQ tests as diagnostics in his capacity as dean of students. See for example Charles H. Kauffman, Director of Personnel and Placement Office to Ivey Lewis, February 1, 1950, "F" Folder, Box 15, Dean's Papers; and Kauffman to Ivey Lewis, May 31, 1948, "K" Folder, Box 6, Dean's Papers.

[58] Lewis, "Biological Principles and National Policy," 5.

[59] Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, Chap. 1. Moreover, Virginia and North Carolina rank second and third, respectively, after California, for the total number of people sterilized under eugenical statutes. Virginia and North Carolina sterilized the most people in the country between 1950 and 1972. Phillip R. Reilly, *The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States* (Baltimore and London, 1991), 94. For the most accurate compilation of sta-

the muted reaction to the Scopes trial, toward a more moderate strain; though deeply religious, the state was not rife with the organized fundamentalism evident further South. The University of Virginia, which historically stood atop the South's educational structure, modernized far earlier than institutions in the Deep South, which could claim only Tulane as a research university.[60] As a result of its status, the University of Virginia was an epicenter of eugenical thought, closely linked with the national eugenics movement and with the Virginia antimiscegenation movement and tied to the state mental health professionals who promoted eugenic sterilization.[61] And, coupling the lack of a strong populist impulse in Virginia's political culture with the large number of university graduates in the state assembly, elites schooled in eugenics had a distinct advantage in affecting social policy.[62] Thus, Virginia and its university provided

tistics on eugenic sterilizations see Jonas Robitscher, *Eugenic Sterilization* (Springfield, Mass., 1973).

[60] Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 40. Again, the presence of well-developed research universities in Virginia and North Carolina helps to explain why these states eagerly accepted eugenics.

[61] John Lloyd Newcomb and Lewis corresponded with Harry H. Laughlin, Earnest Sevier Cox, Dr. Walter A. Plecker (Registrar of Virginia's Bureau of Vital Statistics), and Colonel Wickliffe P. Draper, a prominent eugenicist. These men sought to make Virginia a leading state in eugenics. See H. H. Laughlin to JLN, February 18, 1936, "D" Folder, Box 9, President's Papers, .491, subseries II. Laughlin wrote, "I called on you last October about the desirability and possibility of work in eugenics by University of Virginia .... [Draper] is in position to give substantial financial support of work which he believes would definitely revive American racial ideals and would advance them substantially." Newcomb replied affirmatively. See John Lloyd Newcomb to H. H. Laughlin, February 18, 1936; and John Lloyd Newcomb to Wickliffe P. Draper, February 21, 1936, *ibid.* Professor Paul A. Lombardo provided me with copies of letters not appearing in university files, particularly, Wickliffe P. Draper to H. H. Laughlin, March 1, 1936, which describes Lewis's reaction: "Lewis especially seemed interested in my ideas and suggested that I meet with Messrs. Cox and Powell .... " Originals are in the H. H. Laughlin Papers (Pickler Library, Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville); copies in my possession. See also Lombardo, "Miscegenation, Eugenics, and Racism," 432–35; and Lisa Lindquist Dorr, "Arm in Arm: Gender, Eugenics, and Virginia's Racial Integrity Acts of the 1920s," *Journal of Women's History*, XI (Spring 1999), 143–66.

[62] For an account of Virginia's political culture during this period see Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Bird of Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va., and London, 1996). Many Virginia graduates populated the state General Assembly during this period. Alderman regularly conducted surveys of each new legislature to determine just how many University of Virginia graduates, college graduates, and non–college graduates sat in the assembly. See for example "Legislative Survey" in "Legislative Program, 1927–1930 Folder, Box 18, President's Papers, .472, Subseries VII. One such assemblyman, Lemuel Smith of Charlottesville, voted in favor of both Virginia's eugenic sterilization bill and the Racial Integrity Act. Thirty years later, in 1955, as a justice of Virginia's Supreme Court of Appeals, Smith voted to uphold the annulment of a "miscegeneous" marriage between a Chinese sailor and a white woman. See Gregory Michael Dorr, "Principled Expedience: Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and *Naim* v. *Naim*," *American Journal of Legal History*, XLII (June 1998), 1–41. Eugenicists teaching at the other state universities exposed many other assemblymen to eugenical theories.

fertile intellectual soil for the growth and propagation of eugenical seed planted by Lewis's teaching.

Lewis's course, Biology C1: Evolution and Heredity, like the man who taught it, attempted to link evolution, heredity, and eugenics together as a scientific method for social improvement. Its content is described in the university catalogue as "Evolution, the theory and its history; the principles of heredity and their application to human problems."[63] The content of the course is apparent from a few surviving lectures, two of Lewis's own notebooks—including his topical bibliography—as well as a student notebook containing lecture notes, some final exams, and twenty-seven student term papers.[64]

The course had a distinct sociological flavor, albeit a deterministic and not environmental sociology. Lewis emphasized reading, and which books and articles he considered important is evident from his topical bibliography and his notations in students' papers. The most frequently required texts for the course appear to have been Charles Darwin's 1859 *Origin of Species* and Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson's 1918 book, *Applied Eugenics*, although by 1947 Lewis had also been using Horatio H. Newman's *Evolution, Genetics and Eugenics*, first published in 1921.[65] Surveying the books that Lewis listed in his bibliography under the topics "Birth Control," "Birth Rates," "Color Problem," "Eugenics," "Immigration Laws," "Mentally Deficient Classes," "Negro," and "Population Problem" reveals a

[63] University of Virginia Record-Catalogue, 1919 (Charlottesville, Va., 1919), 108.

[64] Lewis used Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson's text *Applied Eugenics* (New York, 1918). Lewis agreed with Popenoe and Johnson that "The science of eugenics consists of a foundation of biology and a superstructure of sociology" (p. v). Lecture notes and the "Topical Bibliography" are in "Miscellaneous" Folder, Box 1, Dean's Papers; other lecture notes in "Examinations and Lectures" Folder, Box 3, Lewis Collection; Student Notebook: Jim Putnam, "BIO C1: Evolution, Genetics, Eugenics Notes from Lectures by Ivey Lewis," undated student notebook, Box 43, Dean's Papers; and "Final Exams," Box 42, Dean's Papers. The course title changed to "Biology 102: Heredity and Eugenics" in 1947, a moniker it maintained until 1952. The course became "Biology 101: Evolution" by 1953, but the final exam shows that Lewis still taught heredity and eugenics. The twenty-seven term papers are found in Term Papers, 3567, Special Collections (Alderman Library); hereinafter cited as TP with a box number.

[65] On the flyleaf of Alderman Library's copy of the 1922 edition of *Applied Eugenics*, neatly written in Lewis's hand, is "Miller School of Biology 1923." In the preface to the 1933 edition, the authors assert, "This revision of *Applied Eugenics* after fifteen years has not necessitated any significant change in the social philosophy, the science, or the technology of eugenics as presented in the first edition, 1918." Apparently Orland E. White, genetics professor and eugenicist, agreed, for he inscribed the flyleaf of his copy: "honest, clear judgment, lack of emotional exaggeration, fair, calm." See, Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York, 1933), copy in Science and Engineering Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. Concerning the Newman text, first published in Chicago in 1921, see Ivey Lewis to Miss Betty K. Rudman, University of Chicago Press, December 29, 1947, "R" Folder, Box 8, Dean's Papers.

preponderance of eugenical opinion. The few works that are not overtly eugenic tend to be neutral—in the sense that they emphasize heredity and environment as coequal determinants of human and social development. The only book listed there that might be considered anti-eugenic is W. E. B. Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), which appeared under the "Negro" heading—along with both Earnest S. Cox's and Madison Grant's volumes. In the bibliographies of the students' papers (and on some of the book lists in the 1953 final exams) Lewis placed a check mark next to certain books and articles. In every case, the checked entry was a eugenic or race-biased text. These works established race as both a biological category and "an explicit and eloquent expression of elitist attitudes." This deeply conservative, racist, and elitist attitude, tempered by a patronizing sense of noblesse oblige, colored Lewis's writings on education and his classroom lectures.[66]

The dogmatic character of Lewis's eugenical teaching rings out of one of his surviving lectures: "The two forces that mold the individual are heredity and environment. Both are essential but it has long been a question which is the more important . . . . In the 18th century the view was generally held that heredity played little part . . . . This thought was reflected by Jefferson when he said, 'All men are created equal.' . . . In the 20th century an abundance of experimental evidence proves that the large part ascribed to environment was mostly imaginary and that the capacity and natural bent of an individual are due to heredity."[67]

Lewis, referring to Thomas Jefferson, set up the humanistic, egalitarian reasoning of the Enlightenment for a fall.[68] Most American eugenicists agreed that Jefferson's statement was utopian and applied only in regard to man's equality before the law. In gauging the relative importance of heredity (nature) and environment (nurture) in forming the human being, mainline eugenicists like Lewis all emphasized nature. He stated later in the lecture, "Mentally, morally and physically the hand of heredity lies heavily on us all. We know now that, while education can bring out the best in the child, it cannot create ability or

[66] "Topical Bibliography"; and Haller, *Eugenics*, 150 (quotation). For examples of Lewis's approval, see NZF, "Race Mixture (June 1935)," and WCG, "A Plan of Eugenics (undated)," Box 2, TP. Of the twenty-seven term papers, only eight actually have grades indicated upon them.

[67] Ivy F. Lewis, "Untitled Lecture (Handwritten Ms)," p. 1, in "Examinations and Lectures" Folder, Box 3, Lewis Collection. The back of this document also has outlines for other lectures on it.

[68] Eugenicists repeatedly flayed Jefferson's statement that "all men are created equal" and the egalitarian, democratic ideal it expressed. See Popenoe and Johnson, *Applied Eugenics*, 75.

aptitude. In training young people therefore, parents must discover and develop those traits which a child inherits or naturally possesses and not attempt to force the growth of qualities which are not naturally present."[69] Believing left-handedness to be hereditary, Lewis cited stammering, psychoses of a severe nature, and inferiority complex as possible results of parental attempts to force a hereditarily left-handed child to use its right hand. Given Lewis's relentless hereditarian emphasis, it seems unlikely that he presented any countervailing, environmental arguments.[70]

Lewis regarded as "sentimentalists" those who viewed racial inequalities as the result of prejudice rather than biology. In a 1924 letter written to Earnest S. Cox upon the publication of *White America*, he lamented the "drag of the negro on our civilization" and criticized "the large class of the falsely sentimental . . . who see in him [the African American] one who by his cheap and willing service helps to relieve the daily burden of living." Lewis further condemned the "conspiracy of silence" that surrounded racial amalgamation, calling it "the greatest damage." Thanking Cox for "bringing home the truth to the minds of white people," he promised to bring the book to the attention of his students.[71] Lewis not only brought Cox's book to his students' attention but also had Cox address the class in 1924.[72]

The prevailing cultural atmosphere of segregation, racism, and nativism seems to have prepared students to accept Lewis's teaching. They expressed detailed opinions on race and amalgamation in their term papers, which reflect the conservative, elitist beliefs embodied in Lewis's writing on education and his teaching of eugenics. Considering the term papers alone, however, it is difficult to evaluate the degree to which the students actually held the expressed beliefs or merely dissembled, making an argument that they knew appealed to Lewis.

[69] Lewis, "Untitled Lecture," p. 11.

[70] Countervailing arguments propounded by the anthropologist Franz Boas (a Jew whom the anti-Semitic Lewis dismissed as sentimental), as well as other British and American scientists and lay people, existed almost from the beginning of the eugenics movement. See Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, Chaps. 8–10; and Selden, *Inheriting Shame*, Chap. 6.

[71] Ivey Lewis to Earnest Sevier Cox, February 26, 1924, "1924 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Lewis Collection. This letter appears as a blurb on the flyleaves of the book, along with testimonials from Madison Grant, Lothrop Stoddard, and John Powell.

[72] Ivey Lewis to Earnest Sevier Cox, April 25, 1924, Earnest Sevier Cox Papers (Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.). Lewis invited Cox to address the class on "the historical significance of the new Virginia law," the eugenic Racial Integrity Act for which Cox had lobbied. Lewis introduced Cox to other faculty eugenicists. Cox's papers preserve the correspondence between Cox and Lewis over a thirty-five-year period, also revealing Cox's close friendship with Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard, and his ties to the Eugenics Record Office.

One thing is certain: the papers' repetition of key eugenic themes, such as faith in Mendelian genetics, the scientific proof of "Nordic" superiority, the crisis faced by the white race, and the economic and social burden that inferior people placed on society all reflect Lewis's beliefs and teaching and help to provide a detailed picture of his course and its tone.

The twenty-seven term papers from Ivey Lewis's Biology C1 course cover the full spectrum of eugenics-related topics. From "Birth Control" to "Quality as a Biological Problem: Intelligence," the papers approach their subjects from a conventional eugenical standpoint. Only two papers waver in concluding that some form of eugenical reform was necessary.[73] The papers all accept that heredity, not environment, determines human potential. "Good environment will give good heredity a chance to express itself; but you cannot produce greatness from poor heredity."[74] The papers also contend that modern society, through medical intervention and humanitarian sentiment, succeeded in short-circuiting natural selection. As a result, "The superior strata of society are dying out while the lower increase causing a regression in stock which results in the downfall of civilization."[75]

A millennial tone characterizes all the papers, as if the students viewed mankind facing a choice between progress and catastrophe. Eugenics offered the solution, for "[t]he betterment of the individual [in genetic and socioeconomic terms] follows from the betterment of the group via eugenics. The eugenist has an *idealistic*, broader view of humanity than the doctor's individual, humanitarian view."[76] The papers reflect mainline eugenicists' arguments that only by placing concern for society over concern for the individual could America avoid race suicide.

In advancing the race suicide thesis, the papers reveal elitism and concern with issues of class, political economy, and race. The papers

[73] Of the two equivocal papers, only one remains ambivalent to the end. See SR, "The Population Problem—A Summary (May 29, 1930)," TP, Box 2; and LML, "The American Race Problem (undated)," TP, Box 1. SR's name, clearly of ethnic derivation, may indicate the grounds for his objection to Lewis's judgment of immigrants from southeastern Europe. Interestingly, this is one of two papers to score "Excellent, Excellent @ 98." Of the twenty-seven papers, six deal with miscegenation or the race problem, five with sterilization, four with the inheritance of intelligence and/or feeblemindedness, four with immigration, two with the heredity/environment question, two with birth control/birth rates, two with the population problem, and one each with militarism and human evolution.

[74] WD, "Heredity v. Environment as Portrayed by Identical Twins (undated)," pp. 5–6 (quotation), TP, Box 1. See also KHB, "Quality as a Biological Problem: Intelligence (undated)," p. 3, TP, Box 1; EFG, "Sterilization for Human Betterment (undated)," pp. 1–2, TP, Box 1.

[75] KHB, "Quality as a Biological Problem," pp. 1–2 and 4 (quotation).

[76] ESH, "Birth Control (undated)," p. 10 (emphasis in original), TP, Box 1.

defend the notion that hierarchy in society is biologically determined by heredity. According to the students, the best hereditary stock resided largely in the upper class, proving that success was an index of hereditary gift rather than environmental conditioning. Differential birth rates—more births in the lower than the upper class—presaged dire consequences. William Bennett Bean, whose father Robert Bennett Bean, a leading eugenicist, was on Virginia's medical faculty, argued, "Sterilization is not yet general enough to be really effective. The result is that the lower classes and more especially the positively undesirable elements of our society are increasing more rapidly than the so called upper class. This points definitely to race extinction."[77] Another student expressed the most chilling affirmation of eugenics found in any of these papers: "In Germany Hitler has decreed that about 400,000 persons be sterilized. . . . The law is a result of the German ideal of a sound mind and a sound body. The wide scope of the law may permit it to be used politically, but the eugenic results will outweigh any evil practice, if any."[78] Student papers, like the eugenical propagandists' tracts, masked cultural value judgments as scientific analyses of "objective" conditions. Lewis's lectures—and the texts he recommended—lent the imprimatur of scientific authority and value-neutrality to students' prejudices. Thus, the students' papers remained congruent with leading eugenic theories, Lewis's expressed opinions, and their own interest in strengthening the segregated, stratified South.

Perhaps these responses are not surprising. After all, as college students in an era when higher education was far from universal, these students probably identified themselves as elite—whether or not their

[77] William Bennett Bean, "Population (1930)," p. 26, TP, Box 1. Lewis rated Bean's paper "Excellent. Excellent. @ 98." The Beans lived next door to the Lewises and remained close family friends. Bean's father published numerous racist studies in physical anthropology. See Chase, *Legacy of Malthus*, 179–80.

[78] HB, "Eugenical Sterilization (May 20, 1934)," p. 15, TP, Box 15. Another paper discussed the Nazi law, asserting "we can but believe that such a program [of mass sterilization of the "unfit"], carefully and conscientiously carried out in this nation, free from politics and false assumptions, would result in a few hundred years in a healthier and happier America." PH, "Sterilization and Society (June 1935)," p. 21, TP, Box 1. H. H. Laughlin and other eugenicists were impressed with Nazi racial programs. See Lombardo, "Three Generations, No Imbeciles," (p. 31*n*6, and, p. 50*n*108); and Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, (p. 347*n*21). Only two papers seem to acknowledge the questionable nature of equating economic success with desirable hereditary selection. ESH, "Birth Control," 14; and, LML, "American Race Problem," 16–17. Both equivocate, then affirm the proposition. While Lewis did not directly lobby for Virginia's 1924 sterilization law, he clearly favored sterilization as a method for controlling the unfit. Lewis generally kept politics at arm's length, afraid that direct involvement would tarnish his status as a "disinterested and objective" scientist.

families' economic background qualified them as such—and found it more comforting to believe their social position resulted from superior genetic make-up rather than social prejudice and class control. Such a teleology provided these students with a scapegoat for social problems, particularly evident in the papers that were written during the Great Depression. Four papers strongly maintained that the economy did not fail because of reckless speculation by the worthy upper class. Rather, the economic order toppled as a result of the destabilizing effect of a massive influx of inferior European workers combined with the disproportionate procreation of indigenous lower classes and feebleminded.[79] All of the papers concerning eugenic sterilization noted its economic benefits: sterilization reduced the number of unfit under state care, thereby allowing the safe return to society of economically productive, sterilized individuals. With the source of the unfit effectively destroyed, the larger community no longer bore the economic burden of institutionalizing any but the most severely retarded and insane. However, the students contended, without eugenics society would indeed be dragged down by the "under-man," and the under-man was increasingly of swarthy complexion and feeble mind.[80] Thus, the students' perceptions of the race problem reinforced their fears of class differences and feeblemindedness. While most scholars characterize eugenics as suffering from a class bias, race remained the primary concern in America and the South, and class issues formed a significant undercurrent.

Negrophobia and a strong undercurrent of racism spurred students' facile application of eugenic theory to racial issues and the "Negro Problem." Within the category of race, some of the papers dealt primarily with the different white "races."[81] This assumption reflected

[79] IB, "The Immigration Question (undated)," pp. 12–13, TP, Box 1; ROC, "Immigration from Europe (undated)" pp. 1–2, 5–6, and 12–14, TP, Box 1; ARF, "The Immigration Problem (undated)," pp. 5–7, TP, Box 2; and JP, "Immigration Statistics (undated)," pp. 10–12, TP, Box 2. Although these papers are undated, they refer directly to the Depression, and their authors graduated in 1935, 1936, 1934, and 1930 respectively. McLane Tilton, *Directory of the Living Alumni of the University of Virginia, 1931* (Charlottesville, Va., 1931); and Alumni Association of the University of Virginia, *Alumni Directory 1981* (White Plains, N.Y., 1981). Two of these students became physicians; one became a nurse. One wonders how eugenics influenced their professional practice.

[80] Stoddard, *Revolt Against Civilization*. Stoddard coined the term "under-man" to describe eugenically unfit individuals who became socialist leaders or fell prey to radical appeals.

[81] Mark Haller comments, "Having established the importance of heredity in general, racists could then proceed to describe, in impressionistic fashion, the major characteristics of particular races .... Even the word race, as some acknowledged, was often used to refer to national, language, or religious instead of biological groups." Haller, *Eugenics*, 146. Student papers reflect the eugenicists' loose conception of race.

both Lewis's and the authors' preoccupation with sex across the various "color lines." "The fear of Negro assimilation—bringing with it a distracting force from the standpoint of intelligence—is dreadful enough," wrote one student, but, "the prospect of recombination of poor qualities resulting from immigrant intermarriage . . . is just as bad."[82] Assimilation with inferiors—of whatever color—promised dysgenic consequences for the race. Black assimilation, however, posed the worst possibility of all. Judging from the six papers dealing with the so-called Negro Problem, these students perceived it as being "of immense importance to the future of the United States."[83] One student agreed that "gradual amalgamation" was a "great American problem" and that racial mixture "certainly injures or destroys the more specialized qualities of the white race."[84] To establish black inferiority, many students invoked traditional shibboleths. Focusing on perceived African American "laziness," another student wrote, "the negro does not have a place in the sun [a metaphor for being among the favored races] because he has always sought the shade, ostensibly, I presume to rest there."[85] Another paper used a time-honored formulation to exaggerate black inferiority and simultaneously reinforce white superiority. "The civilization of the Negro has always been possible only because of the white. The better the white civilization, the more the

[82] ARF, "Immigration Problem," 12.

[83] Bean, "Population," 5. Context could increase the attention students focused on racial problems. Reacting to the sensational Scottsboro, Alabama, rape trials, one student wrote, "At this time when the Scottsboro trial [nine black men accused of raping two white women] . . . [is] so before the public, a discussion of the problem is particularly appropriate." RNW, "The Negro Question (undated)," p. 1, TP, Box 2. The Virginia students deviated from Edward J. Larson's description of their Deep South neighbors. Larson avers that his subjects did not see eugenics as a panacea for the race problem, assuming that cultural racism and antimiscegenation laws operated so well that "Deep Southerners" did not fear black-white race mixing. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 2, 23, 93. Eugenicists led the push for Virginia's antimiscegenation law, the Racial Integrity Act of 1924. The continued agitation for more stringent enforcement of the act, as well as students' preoccupation with the issue in their papers, displays Virginians' unease regarding compliance. See Lindquist Dorr, "Arm in Arm"; and Richard B. Sherman, "The Last Stand: The Fight for Racial Integrity in Virginia in the 1920s," *Journal of Southern History*, LIV (February 1988), 69–92. Larson notes that the paucity of resources in the Deep South limited sterilization to the white institutional population, excepting South Carolina's sterilization of African American women. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science*, 4–17, and 155. Virginians, however, sterilized African Americans in segregated institutions. Erin Himstedt, "Not for Their Own Good: African American Mental Health and Eugenic Sterilization Programs in Virginia" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1995). Phillip R. Reilly states that sterilization rates at African American institutions in Virginia equaled rates at the various white institutions. Reilly, *Surgical Solution*, 138.

[84] NZF, "Race Mixture," 1. He offered a two-part answer: laws against racial intermarriage and the application of eugenic practices to the black population.

[85] RNW, "Negro Question," 8 (quotation); and LPR, "The Race Problem in America (undated)," p. 4, TP, Box 2.

Negro would be benefited. Racial integrity is, therefore, not only of the greatest importance to the caucasian but also to the Negro."[86] This student thus characterized blacks as at worst parasites, at best symbiotic partners to a social organism dependent upon the eugenic purity of the white race. Miscegenation would harm the prospects of both groups.

A number of students decided that genocide was the best solution for racial problems, especially those involving African Americans. "Sentimentalist" social interventions artificially prolonged the lives of the unfit, particularly blacks. Opposition to miscegenation and the failure of natural selection to eliminate African Americans encapsulated white Virginia's eugenic fears.[87] Therefore, William Bean eschewed repatriation as "totally impractical," while total segregation, although "practical in the South," seemed "impossible as a nation-wide policy." So, Bean argued for the "wide dissemination of birth control knowledge" among African Americans.[88] Implicit in the advocacy of birth control was a eugenically motivated attempt to heighten dysgenic pressure on the African American population itself, thereby eliminating the threat to white racial purity through extinction. A number of students made this contention explicitly. "If the negro is given knowledge of contraception and access to contraceptive devices, this combined with his high death rate and present declining birth rate, aided by strict racial integrity laws as now in Virginia will cause his extinction in a comparatively short time and then insure a white America and her place in the world."[89] Whether or not factual information backed these assertions regarding birth and death rates is immaterial. What is important is the students' application of eugenics as a panacea for interracial tensions—a "final solution" that promoted inequality and segregation as precursors to extinction.

[86] TBH, "The Negro Problem in the U. S. (undated)," p. 11, TP, Box 1.

[87] The papers disagree about the relative fecundity of "pure" and "mulatto" African Americans. Some papers argue in favor of the nineteenth-century notion of "reversions," which held that mulattos became increasingly less fertile until their progeny emerged sterile. Other papers contend that miscegenation itself raised African Americans' fertility, while some papers assert the inherent fertility of all African Americans. The continued existence of this debate demonstrates that the stance one took was largely determined by cultural outlook rather than scientific facts. Haller, *Eugenics*, 147–50.

[88] Bean, "Population," pp. 21–22.

[89] TBH, "Negro Problem," pp. 21–22. A number of papers recommend disseminating birth control among African Americans as a way to hasten their demise. The dissemination of birth control was illegal until after the 1936 decision in *United States* v. *One Package* was affirmed in 1938. After 1938 women could *legally* receive birth control from a doctor only if pregnancy placed their health at risk. David J. Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of* Roe *v.* Wade (New York and other cities, 1994), 39–48.

The chimerical quest for racial purity encouraged undisciplined theorizing that ignored boundaries between skeptical science and biased opinion. Students extended hereditary determinism into the murky realm of public policy through eugenics. Lewis's eugenic message had three main strengths that drew students to its policy-making potential. First, eugenics gained popularity and remained remarkably coherent and consistent over time; between 1914 and 1928 the number of colleges teaching eugenics skyrocketed from 44 to 376, with an estimated course enrollment of almost 20,000 students.[90] Second, eugenics maintained flexibility in its response to social conditions at various times. During periods of crisis—World War I, the Great Depression, and in the South during periods of civil rights militancy—eugenics offered stability in the form of various supposedly scientifically based reforms. The social order did not need to be changed; instead, people had to accept that heredity determined the social structure and use eugenics to improve the quality of individuals and society. Social improvement would necessarily follow. Any reorganization of social structure was destined to fail, for it neglected the iron rule of natural law. Finally, the major strength of eugenics stemmed from the claims that it permitted its adherents to make, regardless of their politics. Conservative eugenicists laid claim to the same legitimating apparatus that liberal social analysts, North and South, had used to advance their programs: modern, Progressive, scientific expertise. By claiming to be more objective and less sentimental and by decrying failed environmental interventions, eugenicists attempted to elevate their scientific programs above those of sociologists, cultural anthropologists, social workers, and others who upheld the efficacy of environment over heredity.

It should be noted that, for a time, eugenics expressed state-of-the-art scientific thinking.[91] Eugenicists rushed ahead because, in the words of historian Joseph F. Kett, "pseudo-science is often the matrix of science. Pseudo-science, in other words, is an attempt to seek too many scientific laws too quickly—not sub-science but super-science."[92] It is not surprising that the eugenicists' aggressive attempts

[90] Selden, "Educational Policy and the Biological Sciences," 42.

[91] Anti-eugenic theory did not gain widespread attention until geneticist Herman J. Muller repudiated mainline eugenical beliefs at the 1932 Third International Congress of Eugenics in New York. For the ambivalence of many scientists see Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 117–21. See also Robert N. Proctor, "Eugenics Among the Social Sciences: Hereditarian Thought in Germany and the United States," in JoAnne Brown and David K. van Keuren, eds., *The Estate of Social Knowledge* (Baltimore and London, 1991), 175–208.

[92] Joseph F. Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession: The Role of Institutions, 1780–1860* (New Haven and London, 1968), 179.

to discern the hereditarian basis of society turned conservative in the South. Reinforcing the racial status quo and eliding the boundary between science and prejudice allowed southern eugenicists to justify and amplify racism. Eugenics also allowed educated white elites to avoid the choice between equally unpalatable racial liberalism and backward, antimodern thinking epitomized by the traditionalist Vanderbilt Agrarians. As a result, Ivey Lewis—a man who thought of himself as essentially southern and quintessentially modern—acted upon his eugenical beliefs in his educational administration and theorizing. His teaching acquired a dimension beyond mere complicity in the maintenance of an unjust cultural system of racial segregation. The extent to which individuals believed and acted, over the course of many years, upon the precepts taught in Lewis's class indicates the impact of eugenics on the larger society.

It is difficult to quantify the direct effect that Lewis had upon southern thinking and belief. His most immediate effect was on the thousands of students whom he taught over thirty-eight years, students who considered him a father figure, a fine teacher, and an authority on matters biological and social. An examination of the number of Lewis's students, the vocations they chose, and their correspondence with their former teacher begins to delineate his influence. Beyond his effect on students, Lewis's role as an influential scientist and educator brought him before diverse audiences—fellow scientists, university associations, alumni, teachers' associations, and even the newspaper-reading public. Evidence remains of his transregional influence. In evaluating this evidence, one becomes aware of the wide currency that eugenic ideas held for many educated Americans throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The facility with which these individuals deployed eugenic rationales to gain political and social ends allows historians to gauge the pervasive ideological power of this racialist thinking.

During Lewis's tenure, the biology department at the University of Virginia consistently produced more majors than virtually any other department in the college of arts and sciences. As Lewis noted in 1921, Biology 1 and Biology C1 "are elected by our students in considerable numbers. The enrollment in these courses this year is about 185."[93] Four years later, Lewis noted that enrollment "continues to grow at an

[93] Ivey Lewis to Trustees of Miller Fund, June 18, 1921, "Miller Professor 1915–1925" Folder, Box A8–18D, Blandy Experimental Farm Papers, RG 6/9/2.831, Special Collections (Alderman Library); hereinafter BEF Papers, page number (if applicable).

embarrassing rate" with the classes logging 273 students, though "340 students would have registered for biology if room had been sufficient to take them."[94] As a report to the President's Committee on Research boasted in 1952, the year before Lewis retired, "Biology has from fifty to eighty undergraduate majors each year. This is the largest number found in any school in the College of Arts and Sciences with the exception of economics." The report continued, "In the last twenty years 89 M.A. or M.S. and 49 Ph.D. degrees have been awarded. During the last year 692 students were enrolled in [biology] courses." All majors took Lewis's eugenics course, as well as all graduate students. Moreover, the 210 investigators who had spent the summer at Virginia's Mountain Lake Biological Station since it opened in 1930 also encountered Lewis, his beliefs, and teaching.[95] It is estimated that more than 900 students passed through Biology C1 alone during Lewis's thirty-eight-year career.

A 1928 letter reveals the strong effect Lewis's course had upon his students. Describing Biology C1 as "a wonderful course," the student noted, "it transcends anything I have ever had or expect to have." The student even attached a characteristically millennial aspect to his praise: "The hope of the University of Virginia . . . and going further the salvation of religion" depended upon the "open minded" instruction embodied in Lewis's eugenics course.[96] Virginius Dabney, one of the South's leading "liberals," considered Lewis "one of my much admired and greatly loved teachers." While Dabney was not as virulent a racist as Lewis, he championed segregation as rational management of race relations.[97] Even a racial moderate like Dabney may have had his views influenced by Lewis's eugenics. Lewis succeeded in creating a sense of the logical relationship between science, religion, and the social order.

[94] Ivey Lewis to Judge R. T. W. Duke, June 12, 1925, BEF Papers, *ibid.*

[95] "Report of the Miller School of Biology to the President's Committee on Research," January 11, 1952, p. 1, "M–1947" Folder, Box A8–18F, BEF Papers.

[96] R. R. Beasely to Ivey Lewis, (?) 1928, "1928 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Lewis Collection.

[97] Virginius Dabney to Ivey Lewis, May 10, 1948, "D" Folder, Box 6, Dean's Papers. Dabney's racial scruples are revealed in his book, *Liberalism in the South*. For similar letters speaking in high praise of Biology C1 and Lewis as a teacher, see Joseph W. Chorlton to Ivey Lewis, June 6, 1950, "C" Folder, Box 14, Dean's Papers; Reverend William H. Laird to Ivey Lewis, September 20, 1947, "L" Folder, Box 7, *ibid.*; Dietrich von Schwerdtner to IFL, January 12, 1950, "V" Folder, Box 18, *ibid.*; and Robert B. McCormack to Ivey Lewis, (?) 1942, "Mc" Folder, Box 8, Correspondence of Dean of Students (1929–1944), RG 6/2/3299, Special Collections (Alderman Library); hereinafter cited as CDS 29-44. Four boxes of this collection, representing correspondence from 1929 through 1940, have been misplaced within Special Collections and were unavailable to the author.

Charles W. Clark was another student convinced by Lewis's lessons. Clark wrote Lewis a number of letters to which Lewis apparently replied (copies of the replies are not in Lewis's files). Clark's first letter, quoted above, deserves more complete consideration. After extolling the racial theories of Lothrop Stoddard and excoriating the service record of blacks in World War II, Clark wrote:

> In some recent article either *Time* or *Newsweek* stated that all races are "genetically equal," whatever that may mean. This is, of course, flying right in the face of experience—not to mention facts known to every cattle breeder. Truly the back-swing from Mr. Hitler over to the opposite extreme is something to behold! And I know of no one to combat this foolishness except the scientist—the biologist and the psychologist, aided by the publicity man and the statistician.
>
> We are fighting with our backs to the wall and I fear that the worst is yet to come. . . . I do not pretend that the South has been wise in handling its problem . . . . But I still think we can handle it better without direction from Washington or advice from Albany, NY.[98]

Clark's letter displays an interesting blend of southern regionalism, racism, and eugenics. In a letter written five years later, Clark revealed more of his belief system, emphasizing the elevated racial consciousness of the eugenics true believer.

Writing almost nine months after the landmark *Brown* decision, Clark began, "This is partly a eugenic report, at which I hope you will be pleased." He described his family of five daughters, noting, "Oddly enough when there were only four, their coloration was in exact Mendelian proportion; one blond and three little pseudo-Italians." Clark then described his wife's heritage, remarking specifically that she is of "Irish ancestry (Protestant!), with Scottish, English, Swedish, and Polish blood." After sanitizing her eastern-European blood by claiming that "one of her D.A.R. ancestors was a Polish Colonel, one of Koscuisko's staff," Clark affirmed her superior genes by certifying her intellect, "She has a master's degree from Emory, and I consider her very intelligent." Clark's description and his need to absolve his mate of a hereditary taint reveal the operation of eugenical considerations in the way he represented his family to Lewis.[99]

Clark then returned to his racist diatribe. After stating that he was a farmer in the Mississippi Delta, Clark remarked that he was moving away from cotton production because "The latter simply requires too

[98] Charles W. Clark to Ivey Lewis, March 11, 1949, "C" Folder, Box 10, Dean's Papers. Clark's first paragraph indicates that this letter is a response to an earlier letter from Lewis. See also John D. Martin Jr. to Ivey Lewis, January 16, 1948, "M" Folder, Box 7, *ibid.*

[99] Charles W. Clark to Ivey Lewis, December 29, 1954, "1954 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Lewis Collection. The nationalist justification of his wife's eastern European blood is reminiscent of an earlier generation's rhetoric. See Lindquist Dorr, "Arm in Arm," 151–52.

much nigger, and he is one gentleman of whom I am thoroughly sick and tired. I intend to write you more on this subject later. For the present, I am . . . shifting to white labor. Ten thousand dollar machines are simply not trusted to a chimpanzee!" Clark used his eugenic, racist sensibilities to navigate his changing relation to the land, reaffirming his identity as a modern southerner. Abandoning black labor and cotton for white-operated machinery and crop diversification was a repudiation of the Agrarian impulse and an acceptance of modernity, all riding on his eugenically legitimated, racist valuation of blacks. With his estimation of African Americans in mind, Clark closed the letter saying, "After I hear from you, I intend to write you at length about a certain Supreme Court decision and its possible results. Also I shall invite all the helpful suggestions you can give," presumably toward fighting desegregation.[100] Maintaining racial segregation was of primary importance to Lewis, and he wrote in 1948, "In my opinion it would be a major calamity to try to force racial equality, and any informed citizens who love their country must realize that the color line must be maintained in spite of hell and high water."[101] Lewis promoted segregation with characteristic tact—through his letters, a few well-placed articles, and congratulatory remarks to others who opposed the civil rights movement. Throughout his career, people from the North and South approached Lewis for assistance in this matter.

Following the New York *Times*' coverage of his 1924 speech, "What Biology Says to the Man of Today," Ivey Lewis received a flattering letter from William W. Gregg, a lawyer in Elmira, New York. Gregg applauded Lewis's speech and announced that he was attempting, through his own agitation, "to make effective the segregation of the races in this country." Though "Segregation in the North at least is becoming increasingly difficult" because of the number of racially mixed "mulattoes and near whites," Gregg felt that "some new and definite policy was imperative unless the races are ultimately to amalgamate." Lewis's advocacy of immigration restriction and anti-miscegenation laws appealed to Gregg's need to defend the white race. "In view of the very general interest now displayed regarding the proposed immigration law," Gregg wrote, "it would seem as if the time were ripe to advocate some definitive policy regarding our negro population." For Gregg, attempting "to preserve the race standards in this country" against inferior whites from southeastern Europe would

[100] Charles W. Clark to Ivey Lewis, December 29, 1954, p. 2.
[101] Ivey Lewis to John D. Martin Jr., March 6, 1948, "M" Folder, Box 7, Dean's Papers.

"largely fail if ten and a half millions of negroes now here are ultimately to be absorbed into our white population, as is the declared purpose of the 'new' mulatto."[102] Lewis's speech, like similar appeals by other eugenicists, formed another filament bonding northern and southern white elites in the face of perceived racial peril and black agency.[103]

In a 1955 letter to Lewis, J. Segar Gravatt, a lawyer in Blackstone, Virginia, wrote, "I feel that we need to assemble and get before the people the biological opinion which points up the evil consequences of integration of the races." Apologizing for "imposing" on Lewis for help in this matter, Gravatt closed promising to "find a convenient opportunity to have a personal talk with you about the integration problem generally."[104] In 1958 Lewis was still organizing segregationist resistance. The Reverend G. MacLaren Brydon reaffirmed Lewis's beliefs, "hop[ing] and pray[ing] that we will win our contention in the long run and be able to keep our separate schools."[105] To Lewis, desegregation challenged not merely his culture, but also his scientific belief that society ordered itself along lines delineated by natural law operating through heredity. Desegregation challenged the operation of these laws and by extension it challenged Lewis's view of God.

In his professional swan song, performed in 1951 on a national stage at the annual convention of the AAAS, Lewis incited a tremendous controversy. His final address as vice president of the AAAS and president of its botany section, entitled "Biological Principles and National Policy," hammered eugenical themes, outraged listeners, and caused the AAAS to break precedent and refuse to publish his speech

[102] William W. Gregg to Ivey Lewis, April 7, 1924, "1924 Letters" Folder, Box 1, *ibid.*

[103] Lewis's reputation as a eugenicist extended beyond his classroom in other ways. Lewis assisted Dr. Walter A. Plecker, Virginia's Registrar of Vital Statistics, from 1912 to 1946, in enforcing the Racial Integrity Act. See this interaction as cited in note 23. Lewis also aided Cox and Senator Theodore G. Bilbo in promoting their 1939 "Negro Repatriation Bill" in Congress. Ivey Lewis to Earnest Sevier Cox, May 20, 1939, Cox Papers. On a similar note, see Earnest Sevier Cox to Ivey Lewis, July 2, 1949, "C" Folder, Box 14, Dean's Papers. In this letter, Cox asks for Lewis's endorsement of Senate Bill 1880, "which proposes to pay the expense of Negroes desirous of migrating to Liberia." Cox states, "In my opinion, there is no one in Virginia who would favor the ideals embodied in the bill more so than you, and no one whose character and influence would be more likely to favorably impress the committee." See also Michael W. Fitzgerald, "'We Have Found a Moses': Theodore Bilbo, Black Nationalism, and the Greater Liberia Bill of 1939," *Journal of Southern History*, LXIII (May 1997), 293–320.

[104] J. Segar Gravett, esquire to Ivey Lewis, October 3, 1955, "1955 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Dean's Papers.

[105] In 1958–1959 Lewis ignited a firestorm within the "University Church," St. Paul's Episcopal, when he—as both vestryman and church warden—lashed out publicly against integration within the church. The Reverend G. MacLaren Brydon, D.D., to Ivey Lewis, September 6, 1958, "1958 Letters" Folder, Box 1, Dean's Papers.

in its journal, *Science*. Lewis argued that "[i]n general those who contribute least to the general welfare have the largest families," rehashing the race suicide argument of old. "Selection of the worst rather than the best as parents of the next generation simply flies in the face of biological law and will surely bring deterioration."[106] Avowing in private that his intent was "to try to deflate the rosy but unrealistic ideas of the social welfare enthusiasts," Lewis knew that he "caused quite a lot of disturbance among the council" of the AAAS.[107] Letters of support, many of which were racist and anti-Semitic, flooded in to Lewis. James A. Tignor wrote that "in this day of indecision, emotional instability and general unreliability, the German and his kindred races alone seem still to be dependable, honest, reliable, and willing to work." Agreeing with Lewis that the "modern trends of government and officialdom" undercut natural law and presaged degeneration, Tignor noted ominously, "The Gestapo was only the revolt of the [fit] people and I can well visualize it, if things keep on this way, as preferable. Enough is enough! Keep up the fight."[108] Lewis thanked one supporter and remarked, "there are some very powerful organizations that regard my views as heretical." By 1951 Lewis's brand of eugenics was no longer credible among the majority of scientists represented by the AAAS, even though many members of that body—and the public who otherwise followed its lead—still agreed with Lewis.[109]

In the final estimate, perhaps the most chilling legacy of Lewis and many other eugenicists was their effect on health care. Many of the students who took courses in eugenics went on to become physicians. Of the twenty-seven student term papers surviving from Lewis's classes, nine belonged to students who went on to become doctors, one belonged to a woman in the nursing school who became a practicing

[106] Lewis, "Biological Principles and National Policy," 4. The speech argued that national policy in welfare, education, marriage, and even the provision of food all undercut biological law and threatened American civilization.

[107] Ivey Lewis to Harcourt Parrish, esquire, July 1, 1952, "R" File, Box 27, Dean's Papers (letter apparently misfiled). See also Ivey Lewis to Harcourt Parrish, May 5, 1952, "1952 Letters" Folder, *ibid.*

[108] James A. Tignor to Ivey Lewis, January 5, 1952, "T" Folder, Box 29, Dean's Papers. See also A. W. Wetsel to Ivey Lewis, January 4, 1952, "W" Folder, *ibid.*

[109] Ivey Lewis to Clyde G. Harris, December 29, 1951, "H" Folder, Box 26, Dean's Papers. Alden A. Porter protested the decision not to publish Lewis's paper in Porter to Dr. Howard A. Meyerhoff, Chairman, AAAS Editorial Board, April 8, 1952, "R" Folder, Box 27, Dean's Papers (letter apparently misfiled).

nurse, and one belonged to a man who became a plant geneticist.[110] Beyond the sterilization of institutional patients under eugenics laws, there was a long history of forced sterilization of unwed mothers and welfare recipients, particularly in the South. Fanny Lou Hamer, the champion of black representation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, claimed to have undergone a "Mississippi appendectomy," as African American women termed these forced sterilizations.[111] Many of the accounts regarding such activities have links to eugenics.[112] While it is impossible to know the precise number of University-of-Virginia-trained physicians who performed these operations, it is certain that Virginia alumni performed many of Virginia's compulsory sterilizations between 1927 and 1972.[113] And, as previously mentioned, three Virginia graduates, backed by others taught by Lewis, founded and implemented the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.

[110] Alumni directories and correspondence indicate the professions of former students. Lewis may well have taught an even larger proportion of future physicians than is indicated by the number of term papers; his annual reports frequently note the overcrowding of biology courses with pre-medical students. See "Miller Professor of Biology Reports," in "Miller Professor 1915–1925" Folder, Box A8–18D, BEF Papers.

[111] Coerced sterilizations and those performed without patient consent became known as "Mississippi appendectomies" because physicians frequently misrepresented the operation as an appendectomy and not sterilization to avoid the patient's objections. Chase, *Legacy of Malthus*, 18. Hamer recalled her own sterilization and alleged those of other poor black women in "Mississippi 'Black Home': A Sweet and Bitter Bluesong," *New York Times Magazine*, October 11, 1970, p. 80 (quotation).

[112] Such abuses first became well known in 1973 "when it was learned that two Alabama children, Mary Alice and Minnie Relf [who also happened to be black] as well as two South Carolina women—all receiving federal assistance—were coerced into consenting to sterilizations." The resulting lawsuit, *Relf* v. *Weinberger*, 372 F. Supp. 1196 (D.D.C., 1974), forced the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to devise policies "to protect persons legally capable of consenting from being intimidated or coerced into sterilizations." The Health Research Group, a subsidiary of Ralph Nader's watchdog group Public Citizen, spearheaded the assault on this form of abuse. See Health Research Group, "Health Research Group Study on Surgical Sterilization: Present Abuses and Proposed Regulations (October 29, 1973)"; and Health Research Group, "Sterilization Without Consent: Teaching Hospital Violations of HEW Regulations (January 21, 1975)," 4 (quotations) (copies in author's possession); Chase, *Legacy of Malthus*, 15–17; and, Reilly, *Surgical Solution*, 150–52.

[113] Surgical residents from the University of Virginia Medical School and the university hospital performed many of these operations. In 1948 the university hospital and Western State Hospital, a state-supported hospital for the indigent located in Staunton, created a slush fund with the fees that the state hospital paid to residents for sterilizations. At the end of the years 1948, 1949, and 1950, this fund was split evenly among all members of the surgical staff. Thus, physicians had a pecuniary, as well as a eugenic, interest in these operations. Edwin P. Lehman, M.D., to Dr. Henry B. Mulholland, February 25, 1948; and Executive Committee Minutes, March 11, 1948, Hospital Executive Directors Office Papers (Wilhelm Moll Rare Book and Manuscript Room, Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville).

Throughout his career, Lewis's influence was national in scope, although strongest in the South. This regional diversity reveals the appeal of eugenics and its capacity to forge an ideational bond between northerners and southerners. Eugenical ideology helped, for a time, to bolster the notion of the South's regional distinctiveness as a land of explicit segregation, which was justified, at least by some, on eugenic grounds. At the same time, however, eugenic ideology narrowed the gap between North and South, making the South, in the words of Grace Elizabeth Hale, "no longer distinct in its regional racial order, no better and no worse than the rest of an often racist and often segregated American union." Eugenics forged another ideological link chaining American identity to whiteness.[114]

Mark H. Haller wrote that Sir Francis Galton "preach[ed] . . . that man's character and capacities were primarily shaped by heredity . . . . In time this became for him a new ethic and a new religion." Galton once said, "An enthusiasm to improve the race is so noble in its aim . . . that it might well give rise to the sense of a religious obligation."[115] Ivey Lewis shared Galton's belief in the power of eugenics to improve mankind. As a biologist, Lewis appreciated eugenics' "logical" progression from the observation of human differences, to the systematization of differences as expressions of innate biology, to the formulation of policy based on biology.[116] As a liberal Episcopalian,

[114] Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 294. Philosopher Charles W. Mills reveals the operation of an implicit "racial contract" within the social contract theory of liberal western societies. The result is a society ultimately founded, in part, on racial subordination. In many ways, the efforts of Lewis and other eugenicists sought to reveal and sustain the terms of the racial contract by justifying them on the grounds of scientific natural law. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1997).

[115] Haller, *Eugenics*, 10; and Galton as quoted in Haller, 17. Haller further notes, in a passage reminiscent of Lewis's rhetoric, that "[e]ugenicists . . . defended the compatibility of religion and eugenics" (p. 83).

[116] Lewis also aided others interested in eugenics. He corresponded with Dr. E. S. C. Handy, who called his research area "Genethnics," a thinly veiled eugenics program, the name of which was an amalgam of "genetics" and "ethnics." Lewis wrote, "While I am not a specialist in the field of Genethnics, I am greatly interested in the possibilities it offers for a better understanding of human genetics and therefore a more intelligent approach to the utilization of modern science for people. So much is done for cattle and corn . . . that it seems to me extraordinary that there has been such neglect of the principles of genetics in dealing with human institutions and problems. I respect your [Genethnics] scientific approach and am enthusiastic as to the possible good that may come from it." Ivey Lewis to Dr. E. S. C. Handy, President, Genethnics, June 26, 1951, "H" Folder, Box 21, Dean's Papers. Lewis and Orland White assisted Handy in establishing Genethnics, even helping him obtain a room in Alderman Library. See E. S. C. Handy to Ivey Lewis, December 26, 1941, and Ivey Lewis to Handy, October 16, 1941, "H" Folder, 1941 Box, Correspondence of Dean of Students (1929–1944).

Lewis did not find his religious beliefs challenged by the Darwinian principles upon which eugenics was based. Eugenicists generally, and Lewis particularly, relied on "pre-Darwinian concepts of economy in nature, the great chain of being theory, and teleology, in crafting a theory that matched religious and naturalistic views."[117] Thus, Lewis conflated his cultural biases and scientific convictions, and he did so in a distinctly southern fashion while dean of the South's most esteemed research university. In many ways, his influence shaped his institution and transcended its boundaries.

In 1952, a year before he retired, Ivey Foreman Lewis considered acquiring for the university artifacts that had belonged to Gregor Mendel. Lewis wrote, "The interest in Mendel is, of course, widespread. As the founder of modern genetics, he takes his place with Darwin in the history of Science. It is a rare opportunity for the University of Virginia to become a sort of shrine for the geneticist."[118] Juxtaposing the religious imagery of a shrine and the southern traditionalism of the University of Virginia with modern images of higher education, science, Darwinian evolution, and genetics, Lewis underscored the tensions straining twentieth-century southern identity: the competing desires both to be modern and to maintain traditional, southern culture, which was often presumed to be antithetical to modernity. Averring the wide appeal of genetics, Lewis placed Virginia's interest in the contemporary mainstream and thereby freed it of "backward" regional parochialism. Yet, for Lewis, Mendel's artifacts represented the theories of eugenics and racial improvement, ideas that naturalized racial and class hierarchies based on Mendelian genetics. Although Lewis failed to acquire the relics, his attempt to obtain them expressed his ideal. He wanted to enshrine Mendel atop Virginia's ivory tower. Rhetorically he anchored the state university to the ninety-year-old Mendelian conception of biological destiny, not to more recent advances in genetics. Thus, Lewis's wish to commemorate Mendel cut against the notion of the university as a locus for the steady, modern, progressive advance of knowledge. Lewis taught eugenics and used the parlance of science to buttress traditional southern beliefs about the

[117] Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives*, 4.

[118] Ivey Lewis to Mrs. Bertha Wailes, March 4, 1952, "W" Folder, Box 29, Dean's Papers. Lewis retired the following fall, after reaching the then mandatory retirement age of seventy.

relative social positions of whites and blacks, rich and poor, men and women.

Given the symbiotic nature of culture and science during the Progressive Era, it is not surprising that the hereditary patterns observed by eugenicists conformed precisely to their biases regarding class, race, and culture. Context, of course, shaped these individuals and their approach to social problems. Their efforts defined both scientific method and the relationship of science to society. However, the durability of eugenic beliefs and their ability to unite whites through racism are surprising. When Carleton Putnam expounded white supremacy in his 1961 book, *Race and Reason: A Yankee View*, he relied on eugenic arguments by Lothrop Stoddard, Madison Grant, Earnest Cox, and Ivey Lewis. In 1994 Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray revisited this well-trod ground in *The Bell Curve*.[119]

Ivey Lewis's true belief resulted from the dialectic between culture and eugenics. Scientists and their students believed that what they observed—stratification of society by class, gender, and, most important, race—developed from the unmediated operation of natural law. This attitude helps explain the reluctance of some eugenicists to repudiate their positions when faced with equally scientific refutation. Scientific revolutions actually occur gradually, more a changing of the guard than the flipping of a switch.[120] Eugenicists' absolute certainty that they were objective increased their staying power. This same dynamic characterizes present scientific culture: scientists tend to dismiss the possibility of repeating the mistakes of early eugenicists because contemporary science is somehow "more objective"—and hence implicitly more moral—than the "primitive" science of the past. Present-day scientists teach their students based on their belief in the validity of their observations—which they, like Ivey Lewis, assert develop from value-neutral, objective investigations. Thus, today's geneticists teach about genes connected to alcoholism, breast cancer, sexual orientation, and aggression—in a culture that is concerned with substance abuse, epidemiology, morality, and violence. Contemporary

[119] Carleton Putnam, *Race and Reason: A Yankee View* (Washington, 1961); and Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York, 1994).

[120] For the pace of scientific change see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1962).

genetic researchers, although more circumspect than the media, which often misrepresent their findings, still risk the errors made by Lewis. Understanding the relationships among Lewis, his science, his teaching, and the segregated culture in which he lived clarifies contemporary evaluations of science and its role in formulating public policy. Such an understanding may prevent the same sort of errors that insinuated racist beliefs into the educational and social structures of the United States in the first half of the twentieth century.