

Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada, 1880–1940, by Ian Robert Dowbiggin. Cornell Studies in the History of Psychiatry. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997. xvi, 245 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$37.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY STEVEN J. BUCKLIN, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

The twists and turns of the eugenics movement and its supporters and detractors come into focus as a result of Ian Dowbiggin's efforts in *Keeping America Sane*. Dowbiggin dissects the role psychiatrists and their professional organizations played in the rise and fall of "negative eugenics": the sterilization of individuals who were deemed socially and economically undesirable.

His thesis is that occupational lines influenced a psychiatrist's response to the eugenics movement: public health psychiatrists tended to support eugenics, while those in private practice or in private hospitals, although initially attracted to eugenics, quickly attacked its negative application. Through examination of private papers, pertinent secondary literature, and institutional, provincial, and state records, Dowbiggin provides a comparative analysis of influential psychiatrists whose professional ties bridged the two cultures, revealing insights into the evolution of the eugenics movement along the way.

Public health psychiatrists, best represented in Dowbiggin's work by G. Alder Blumer, faced crowded institutions and reduced budgets as the result of late nineteenth-century efforts to house the chronically ill, the aged, and the infirm in what had been asylums for those with a potential for cure. Eugenics offered a remedy to public pressure to reduce health care costs associated with the mentally ill, for society could sterilize undesirables now and prevent the execution or institutionalization of defective progeny later.

Blumer experienced an epiphany about eugenics when he moved from a public to a private hospital. There he had to consider the implications of sterilizing patients for undesirable characteristics who came from wealthy families who were potential donors. Subsequently, he reinvented his relationship to eugenics. Although Dowbiggin asserts that when it came to eugenics, "there were precious few heroes among psychiatrists [but] few certifiable villains," Blumer's conversion does not change one's mind about villainy.

The actions of public health officials who implemented negative eugenics in Iowa under the Iowa State Board of Eugenics (1929–1974)—whose members included the director of the University of Iowa Psychiatric Hospital and the directors of the state mental health facilities—corroborate part of Dowbiggin's thesis. During the 1930s,

the board's debates did not focus on the benefits of sterilization for the individual but on the need to reduce welfare costs.

Dowbiggin's failure to note the Iowa connection to eugenics is his most glaring omission. In discussing Harry Hamilton Laughlin's career and his influence on the eugenics movement, Dowbiggin tells the reader only that Laughlin was a high school biology teacher from Missouri with questionable credentials (78-79). In fact, Laughlin was from Oskaloosa, Iowa, studied and taught at Iowa State College in 1907, and earned his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1917.

This oversight aside, Dowbiggin's work should provoke Iowans to examine their state's long affair with eugenics. The records of the Iowa Board of Eugenics, as well as the records of the Iowa Psychiatric Association and its members, await thorough scholarly investigation.

The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity? edited by John H. M. Laslett. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. xi, 576 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$65.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY STEVEN L. SEWELL, OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY

Was the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) a model of industrial solidarity? That is the question posed by John Laslett. A collection of twenty-two essays attempts to answer that question. Laslett argues in the introduction that the answer is no, but that the UMWA came "as near to being such a model as any other American trade union ever has done, or perhaps is ever likely to" (25).

The text is divided into five sections, each containing several essays. Part one addresses the UMWA during its heyday, 1890-1960. Part two examines the workplace and related health issues. Part three looks at the role strikes, minorities, and women activists have played in the UMWA and its activities. Part four contains a series of articles comparing the UMWA to trade unionism in South Wales, Scotland, and Nova Scotia. Part five focuses on developments that have affected the UMWA since 1960.

Several of the essays analyze not only the development of the UMWA as one of the largest and most powerful trade unions in the United States, but also the evolution of the ideal of worker solidarity for which the UMWA is legendary. Several essays show that while the rank and file was frequently militant, ready to confront capital at every opportunity, the leadership more often than not took a different approach in their relations with capital. The essays on John

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