

THE **Eugenics** CRUSADE

2 x 60 HD



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A hybrid derived from the Greek words meaning “well” and “born,” the term *eugenics* was coined in 1883 by Sir Francis Galton, a British cousin to Charles Darwin, to name a new “science” through which human beings might take charge of their own evolution. *The Eugenics Crusade* tells the story of the unlikely—and largely unknown—movement that turned the fledgling scientific theory of heredity into a powerful instrument of social control. Perhaps more surprising still, American eugenics was neither the work of fanatics, nor the product of fringe science. The goal of the movement was simple and, to its disciples, laudable: to eradicate social ills by limiting the number of those considered to be genetically “unfit”—a group that would expand to include many immigrant groups, the poor, Jews, the mentally and physically disabled, and the “morally delinquent.” At its peak in the 1920s, the movement was in every way mainstream, packaged as a progressive quest for “healthy babies.” Its doctrines were not only popular and practiced, but codified by laws that severely restricted immigration and ultimately led to the institutionalization and sterilization of tens of thousands of American citizens. Populated by figures both celebrated and obscure, *The Eugenics Crusade* is an often revelatory portrait of an America at once strange and eerily familiar.

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CREDITS

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