

# The Ambiguous Terrain: Articulation of Disability in the Municipal Administration of New York City in the Early Twentieth Century

(曖昧な境域：20世紀初頭のニューヨーク市政  
における障害概念の構築)

Yoshiya Makita\*

**SUMMARY IN JAPANESE:** 本稿は20世紀初頭ニューヨーク市の社会福祉政策における障害概念の構築過程とその帰結を、市営簡易宿泊所の組織改編とランダルス島児童施設における知的障害者の収容実態を事例として考察するものである。1914-1915年、ニューヨーク市行政は周期的な経済不況とそれに伴う失業問題に対処するなかで、市営簡易宿泊所の組織改編を実施した。市公共慈善局は簡易宿泊所に滞在する貧困者を、「雇用可能な者たち (the employable)」と「雇用不可能な者たち (the unemployable)」とに分類し、前者を有用な労働者として市営職業紹介所等を通じて産業労働に復帰させるとともに、後者を労働能力を有さない者として公共慈善施設へと収容する政策を立案した。身体的健全性 (able-bodiedness) という基準によるこの貧困者の分類・分配の過程で、障害 (disability) は労働遂行能力の欠如 (inability to labor) として規定されたのである。ランダルス島児童施設に収容された知的障害者たちは、しかしながらこうした行政による障害の概念規定から逸脱していた。「精神薄弱者 (“the feeble-minded”)」と総称された者たちの多くは知的障害の判定を受ける一方で労働可能な身体的健全性を有していた。また優生学と結びついた知的障害の医学的分類の進展は、同時にその副産物として医学的に明確な判定を下し得ない「境界事例」を生み出した。その結果、公共慈善施設はこれらの障害と健全の狭間にある者たちの一時的滞留の場としての機能を担うこととなったのである。

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\* 牧田 義也 Graduate Student in Ph.D. Program, Department of History, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston University, Boston, U.S.A. and Graduate School of Social Sciences, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, Japan.

## I. Introduction

In 1916, John Burton, formerly a resident of West 121st Street in Manhattan, spent most of his days in a bed at Metropolitan Hospital in New York City. On March 30, Burton entered the hospital with a diagnosis of tuberculosis in his hip. Fortunately, the physician in charge decided that an operation was not necessary in his case. Burton steadily regained his strength, and in August the physician assured that he would soon be ready for discharge. His former employer promised Burton a position which would pay his board, clothing, and possibly five dollars a month upon discharge. For all his prospects in the future, however, Burton found himself still lying in a bed at the hospital ward when the summer passed and even after the first snow powdered the ground of Blackwell's Island. Osteal tuberculosis had changed him into a different social existence. Now he was barely able to get about even with the aid of a crutch. Even if discharged, unless someone came to his support, Burton seemed likely to become a public charge on the city again. The physician told Burton that he could become self-dependent again provided he had a brace and that it would be possible even to continue the kind of work offered by his former employer with the help of a brace. However, the hospital budget had no room to provide Burton with a brace, causing his prolonged stay at the ward.

At this point, the Social Service Committee of Metropolitan Hospital decided to refer John Burton to outside private charity organizations for assistance with a hip brace, and the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (AICP) jumped into the case. Unusual was the approach the AICP took to solve the problem. Instead of urging its Joint Application Bureau to collect charitable donations for a brace as it had regularly done, the AICP demanded the necessary funds from the City Department of Public Charities. It was the duty of public hospitals like Metropolitan to provide such supplies as a brace, explained Bailey B. Burritt, general director of the AICP, and in case the public hospital did not have enough funds, then the City should secure them. Burritt insisted that "the provision of the wherewithal to get about" be as essential a part of hospital treatment as the provision of food, nursing, and medical attention, and "a failure to recognize this on the part of the Department means that the case is not adequately treated, from the medical or any other point of view." In reply to this demand, John A. Kingsbury, Commissioner of Public Charities, made an additional appropriation of \$2,300 for surgical supplies, conceding that "the Depart-

ment ought to be doing this sort of thing and that a brace for a case of this kind is as essential as a suit of clothes.”<sup>1</sup>

The John Burton case reveals the ambiguous status of people with disabilities within the city’s public welfare program. John Burton was currently disabled but not necessarily permanently. He was now dependent on public relief, but could be again self-dependent with the aid of some device. Underlying the agreement between the AICP director and the Commissioner of Public Charities was a sense of “public” responsibility for the rehabilitation of the disabled poor. In the early twentieth century, municipal officials of New York City developed an administrative system of public charitable institutions. City workers tried to rehabilitate those deemed potentially self-dependent at public charitable institutions and reinstate them into the industrial workforce. But who could be rehabilitated and who could not? The difficulty in measuring the possibility of rehabilitating those on the “borderline” between the able-bodied and the disabled presented city officials with certain problems in elaborating the welfare program. Departing from many of the previous scholarly discussions on disability history which centered on incontrovertible impairments such as blindness and deafness, this paper inquires into the way in which public charitable institutions in New York City actually functioned for those who stood on the edge between the able-bodied and the disabled, and thus examines the process of social construction of disabilities in the Progressive Era.<sup>2</sup>

The public welfare program of New York City resonated with the major tenet of the nationwide social insurance movement launched by the American Association for Labor Legislation (AALL) which led the social policy agenda in progressive reform efforts.<sup>3</sup> The ideological basis of this movement was the bifurcation of the welfare program into social insurance and public assistance. Social insurance implied an “entitlement” to public social benefits, while public assistance was means-tested relief traditionally thought of as “charity,” which brought fewer social benefits and carried the stigma of the “unworthy” poor. Large-scale unemployment caused by cyclical economic depressions and the increasing frequency of industrial accidents in this period revealed that ordinary working people often fell into poverty due to no fault of their own, thus undermining the traditional perception of poverty as caused by moral defects in the character of the poor themselves. Advocates of the movement intended the social insurance program to be a bulwark for industrial workers against the taint of charity. David Moss argues that from this stratification of the welfare program

emerged the “security state,” which prioritized the social security of white male workers and redistributed social benefits disproportionately.<sup>4</sup> The social insurance movement led by the AALL never attained much success in national legislation in this period. Yet, the AALL exerted vast influence on the city’s welfare program at a crucial point.

In practice, the ideological bifurcation of the welfare program generated for charity officials the task of classifying the applicants for public relief into two categories. Within the public welfare system of New York City, municipal officials at public charitable institutions assumed this task of categorization of the poor. The question is how municipal officials classified the poor into those automatically entitled to social benefits and those allotted to charitable care. In the early twentieth century, the criterion of this classification was the ability to conduct labor. The principle of industrial citizenship which Amy Fairchild points out in her analysis of the Federal immigration regulations in this period also permeated social welfare policy. The principal obligation to be entitled to public social benefits was to join the industrial workforce.<sup>5</sup> Municipal officials in New York City classified applicants for public relief on the ground of their physical and mental ability to conduct labor. Based on medical examinations, officials assessed the able-bodiedness of applicants, classified them into the “employable” and the “unemployable” categories, and sent those deemed able to conduct labor to public institutions with no taint of charity, while committing those unable to join the workforce to charitable institutions.

The disabled poor who stood on the edge between the able-bodied and the disabled, however, deviated from this dichotomic scheme of categorization. The possibility of rehabilitating those diagnosed as a “borderline case” undermined the static concept of able-bodiedness.<sup>6</sup> They were currently “unemployable” but would perhaps be made “employable.” This ambiguity left ample room for the disabled poor to utilize public institutions for their own end. The ways in which public charitable institutions actually functioned for the poor in the early twentieth century have remained relatively unknown, compared with the vast accumulation of historiography on the institutional development of poorhouses in the nineteenth century. David Wagner has recently revealed that the poor in the early twentieth century often used poorhouses as their safety-net in a rapidly industrializing society, as a place where they could obtain shelter, food, and medical care in times of unemployment, illness, and permanent debility, thus undermining social control functions initially intended.<sup>7</sup> While in theory municipal officials at

these public institutions sought to categorize applicants on the grounds of physical and mental ability and reorganize the industrial workforce by excluding those found disabled, these institutions also functioned in practice as a place where people with disabilities could claim temporal relief.

In this paper, I first analyze the reorganization of the administrative system of public relief in New York City and the bifurcation of the welfare program in the early twentieth century. The focal point of my analysis is the Municipal Lodging House, which city officials reorganized into a “clearing house” in order to categorize the poor in the midst of the serious economic depression of 1914-1915. Then, through an analysis of mentally retarded children committed at the Randall’s Island institutions in the city, I examine the actual functions of public charitable institutions for people with disabilities. The welfare program of New York City was far-reaching in scope, covering not only adult workers but also children. In an era when reformers gradually curtailed the economic activities of children through a series of child labor legislations, city officials regarded mentally retarded children as the least employable group in the population, committing poor children with mental retardation to public institutions for charitable assistance. The institutionalization of mentally retarded children sharply exemplifies both the theory and practice of charitable assistance to the disabled poor. Public charitable institutions were the practical sites where progressive social thoughts crystallized into enforcement, and from which emerged disability policy, a terrain still ambiguous in the early twentieth century.

## **II. Municipal Lodging House: “Clearing House” of the Homeless**

In the winter of 1913-1914, New York City faced a serious problem of unemployment caused by an economic depression. Streets in Manhattan were filled with the unemployed in search of jobs. Anarchists and the Wobblies held boisterous demonstrations for the unemployed at Union Square and elsewhere. Harry Hopkins, an investigator of the AICP, estimated that over 300,000 people were unemployed in the city.<sup>8</sup> To discuss possible measures to ameliorate this serious situation, on February 27-28 the AALL held the National Conference on Unemployment in New York City, with representatives from 59 cities and 25 States. Although representatives disagreed on the severity of the present depression, all concurred in one thing: irregularity of employment was not unusual in the

United States.<sup>9</sup> At the turn of the century, reformers and public officials gradually came to recognize the existence of involuntary unemployment due to cyclical depressions and seasonal layoffs.<sup>10</sup> They saw widespread unemployment caused mainly by this irregularity of employment as a structural problem of industrial society. As Mary Van Kleeck of the Charity Organization Society (COS) stated, “it is conditions and not causes which should be studied in individual cases” of the unemployed, and “industrial conditions may be plainly a factor.”<sup>11</sup>

While defining unemployment as a problem of industry, the AALL members at the same time constructed an ideological distinction between the “employable” and the “unemployable” among those out of work. The aged, the infirm, or the criminal were in fact not the unemployed, for they were ousted, or had willfully withdrawn themselves, from the ranks of workers. The AALL officers thus advocated the separation in policymaking of these unemployables from the employable unemployed who were both able and willing to work. The AALL officers instructed that “[f]or the employable the need is constructive work—regularized business, efficient labor exchanges, and adequate unemployment insurance. The care of the unemployable is the task of the relief agency, the hospital and the reformatory.”<sup>12</sup> When Mayor John Purroy Mitchel organized the Mayor’s Committee on Unemployment of New York City on December 2, 1914, the Committee adopted this separation of the unemployable as the basis of their policymaking. The unemployable, or “those who are unable to perform regular labor, whether because of sickness, old age, or some physical handicap, and those who have drifted into becoming tramps or loafers,” should be excluded from “a constructive policy” for the employable.<sup>13</sup> But how in practice did public officials differentiate the employable from the unemployable? In 1914, municipal officials of New York City designated the Municipal Lodging House as a site for this task of categorization.

The Municipal Lodging House was established in March 1896, when municipal officials put in use an old barge as a lodging place for the homeless. The initial purpose of this institution was to supplant the old practice of accommodating the homeless at police stations, and officials gradually expanded the size of the Municipal Lodging House. In December of that year, officials moved it to a rented building on 398 First Avenue with accommodations for 317 homeless men and women. On September 22, 1904, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment authorized the expenditure to enlarge the structure of the Municipal Lodging House, and on February 15, 1909, it reopened at 432 to 438 East 25th Street with

normal accommodations for 1,064. Facing the unemployment problem in the winter of 1913-1914 which made many jobless men and women also homeless, municipal officials further enlarged the institution by utilizing the Recreation Pier at the foot of East 24th Street as an annex, bringing the total accommodation capacity in the two buildings to 2,700.<sup>14</sup>

With the growing demand for night shelter for the homeless unemployed in 1914, municipal officials set about reorganizing the Municipal Lodging House. The reorganization was in line with the AALL's policy advocacy of the separation of the unemployable. In March, Commissioner Kingsbury appointed William Alberti Whiting as general director to conduct a preliminary investigation into the background histories of applicants to the Municipal Lodging House. Whiting described the primary purpose of this investigation as determining "upon what basis a practical service could be rendered to such [homeless] men, to the end that the worthy among them may be enabled to rehabilitate themselves, and all others wisely and appropriately provided for."<sup>15</sup> The investigation consisted of social and medical examinations of 2,000 applicants of that month. Fifteen social examiners conducted interviews with the applicants and fifteen physicians made physical examinations.<sup>16</sup>

The results of this investigation showed that while the majority belonged to employable workers, a certain portion of the applicants fell into the unemployable category. The social examination revealed that the bulk of the applicants were middle-aged men who were temporarily unemployed. Of 1,426 men who answered the inquiry regarding the period of unemployment, the majority of the applicants (57.6%) had been unemployed for one to six months, and 496 (34.8%) had been so for less than a month. The number of those who were out of work for more than six months was only 102 (7.1%). Also, 1,304 out of 1,467 (88.9%) were aged from 21 to 60. Whereas social examiners disclosed the actual conditions of unemployment, physicians measured the ability of the applicants to perform labor. Through the medical examination, physicians estimated that 1,774 out of the 2,000 applicants were physically able-bodied to conduct labor, while the remaining 226 were deemed unable to work, or unemployable. Among the unemployable, physicians diagnosed 80 applicants as "temporarily disabled," and 146 as "permanently disabled." Physicians specified tuberculosis, senility, nephritis, heart disease, acute pleurisy, and blindness as the major causes of their disability. Robert Bertrand Brown, special investigator for the AALL, concluded that the results of this investigation indicated that "a substantial proportion of

the men who apply at the Municipal Lodging House are unemployable—men whose unenviable lot it is to be the less fit in the struggle for survival.”<sup>17</sup>

Based on these observations, William Whiting made recommendations to transform the Municipal Lodging House into an institution at which municipal officials could classify applicants into the employable majority and a certain remnant of the unemployable by measuring their able-bodiedness to conduct labor, and provide them with separate treatments.<sup>18</sup> But Whiting and others encountered a serious obstacle in the process of change. Before Kingsbury assumed his duties as Commissioner of Public Charities in January 1914, the management of the Municipal Lodging House had been long under the influence of the Tammany machine of the Democratic Party. Ex-Deputy Commissioner Frank J. Goodwin, a Tammany leader of the seventh Assembly District, had utilized the institution to patronize voters in his district by providing posts and accommodations, while thefts and other misconduct among lodgers and staff were all-pervasive under the superintendency of William C. Yorke. When Kingsbury discharged Superintendent Yorke and appointed Whiting as Acting-Superintendent, Whiting and his supporters faced the animosity of old Tammany folks. Immediately after Whiting took up the superintendency on the morning of April 26, a fire started in the basement of the Municipal Lodging House, and other threats and assaults followed.<sup>19</sup>

As late as December 1914, under the pressure of massive unemployment anticipated in the coming winter, municipal officials finally established the Advisory Social Service Committee to reorganize the Municipal Lodging House. John B. Andrews, secretary of the AALL, chaired the committee, and realized the AALL’s idea of the separation of the unemployable in a substantive reorganization of the institution.<sup>20</sup> The pivot of this reform was the creation of the Social Service Department and the Industrial Department. Whereas the Social Service Department was designed to undertake the classification and proper dispositions of applicants, the Industrial Department was to assess their actual ability to perform labor. Under the new system, applicants to the Municipal Lodging House were directed by city workers to a registration procedure after having a meal, in which city officials investigated each applicant’s social background such as name, address, nationality, length of time in New York City and State. After bathing, applicants also underwent a medical examination by a physician. Based on the information thus obtained, from 7:30 the next morning social workers at the Social Service Department conducted daily social examina-



tions by interviewing applicants, and classified them into the employable and the unemployable categories. The purpose of the Industrial Department was to complement the classification of the Social Service Department by means of a work test. The Industrial Department allotted jobs to applicants who had spent a night at the Municipal Lodging House, testing their actual ability to conduct labor. Officials intended the work test to provide “every man a chance to work for all he gets, and thereby prove that he is in the employable class.”<sup>21</sup>

The Advisory Committee set this classification procedure as the basis for redesigning the Municipal Lodging House as a “clearing house for the homeless,” where municipal officials separated the employable from the unemployable and directed them to different institutions which would meet their individual needs. The Advisory Committee thought that the needs of the employable were not the same as those of the unemployable. Robert Brown contended that “[t]he employable man without a job needs to be directed toward a job without a man—a job [to] which he is fitted. The unemployable man needs either to be treated for the causes of his dependency, to be protected from the competition of the more fit, or to receive both such treatment and protection.”<sup>22</sup> Under this “clearing house” plan, municipal officials designed the Public Employment Bureau to take a complimentary role for the reintegration of the employable unemployed into the industrial workforce. On April 28, 1914, the Board of Aldermen of New York City passed an ordinance establishing the Public Employment Bureau as a division of the Department of Licenses. The Bureau formally began its work of employment exchange at the corner of Lafayette and Leonard Streets on November 4, under the direction of Walter Lincoln Sears, former superintendent of the State Free Employment Office in Boston.<sup>23</sup> Sears defined the task of the institution as rescuing the employable unemployed from the taint of charity, insisting “that the problem of ‘employing the unemployed’ and of ‘relieving distress’ and ‘treating pauperism’ had better be, so far as possible, kept absolutely distinct. . . . It would be very unwise to oblige the laboring men and women out of work to submit [to] the ordeal of the usual charity application.”<sup>24</sup>

By connecting a jobless man with a manless job at the Public Employment Bureau, officials intended to reintegrate the employable into the labor force, and thus to secure “the right to work” of the employable. City workers of the Municipal Lodging House sent persons who seemed employable to the Public Employment Bureau, whereas they committed the unemployable to charitable institutions. During the first quarter of 1915, the Social Service Department

directed a number of able-bodied lodgers to the Public Employment Bureau, and placed 1,477 homeless persons in paid positions. At the same time, officials sent 809 aged persons to the city homes for the aged and infirm, and referred 178 homeless persons to private charitable agencies. Some 156 lodgers were sent to Bellevue Hospital for emergency treatment, and 49 either to Bellevue or to the Clearing House for Mental Defectives for mental examination.<sup>25</sup>

In 1914-1915, the Municipal Lodging House thus changed its function from a temporary shelter for the homeless to a central clearing house to classify and distribute the city's homeless population. The experiment at the Municipal Lodging House reflected the ideological bifurcation of the social welfare program led nationally by the AALL. By differentiating treatments for the employable from charitable assistance for the unemployable, municipal officials enlarged the functions of the Department of Public Charities beyond charitable relief, and embarked on the new policy agenda of social insurance. As William Whiting pointed out, "the Dept. of Public Charities under the present administration *was not contemplating a limitation of its [sic] work to charity*, but was taking advantage of its [sic] close contact with the homeless, to provide ways and means by which they could be given temporary lifts back to independence" (emphasis added).<sup>26</sup> This expansion of the administrative system of public welfare also implied a reconceptualization of the "worthy" poor. Unlike many of the charity officials in the nineteenth century who had evaluated the poor in their moral character, municipal officials in the early twentieth century measured the worthiness of the poor by their able-bodiedness to perform labor through a medical examination and work test.

Within this new perspective, the disabilities of the unemployable were defined as inability to conduct labor, the opposite of the able-bodiedness of the employable.

### **III. The Disabled Poor: Back and Forth across "the Hill to the Poorhouse"**

While officials at the Municipal Lodging House directed many of the employable unemployed to the Public Employment Bureau, they committed the unemployable to other public institutions for charitable assistance. At the turn of the century, municipal officials gradually narrowed the scope of these public chari-

table institutions by dropping their correctional functions. On December 31, 1895, the Department of Public Charities and Correction was reorganized into two separate departments, and correctional institutions such as penitentiaries, workhouses, and prisons came under the jurisdiction of the newly established Department of Correction. Within the administrative system of the Department of Public Charities, public charitable institutions on Blackwell's Island, Randall's Island, and Staten Island became the three major sites for commitment of the debilitated poor in the city. On January 14, 1903, Homer Folks, Commissioner of Public Charities at that time, ordered changes in names of public charitable institutions to eliminate the public image of these institutions as sites of correction. The Almshouse on Blackwell's Island was renamed the New York City Home for the Aged and Infirm, and the Richmond Poorhouse and Poor Farm on Staten Island changed its title to the New York City Farm Colony. By the same order, the Randall's Island Asylums and Schools and Infants' Hospital were reorganized into the New York City Children's Hospitals and Schools.<sup>27</sup>

This section examines the actual functions of public charitable institutions for the disabled poor through an analysis of the mentally retarded committed at the Randall's Island institutions. I hereafter use the word "feeble-minded" without quotation marks, for it brought specific social, moral, and biological connotations different from those now attached to "people with mental retardation." While doctors sought for a way to rehabilitate the physically disabled, the majority of the medical profession gradually came to reach an agreement on the incurability of mental retardation by the first decade of the twentieth century, and many doctors and asylum superintendents advocated permanent incarceration of the mentally retarded for custodial care at institutions.<sup>28</sup> The mentally retarded were deemed unemployable in society at large and unable to become self-dependent without the ability to reason. Mentally retarded children, especially feeble-minded girls, seemed least employable among them in the early twentieth century when reformers advocated the family-wage ideal in which they assigned the breadwinning role exclusively to male adults.<sup>29</sup> The focus on this least employable cohort of the disabled poor at the charitable institutions uncovers both practical and unintended consequences of the medical classification of public-welfare recipients based on their ability to work.

The public charitable institutions on Randall's Island began as a branch of the city almshouse in 1846 when the commissioner of almshouse procured the island to alleviate the overcrowding of children at the almshouse.<sup>30</sup> In the early twenti-

eth century, the Randall's Island institutions came to assume the dual functions of temporary hospital care for physically disabled children and long-term incarceration of the mentally disabled. On December 27, 1902, Commissioner Folks reorganized the Randall's Island institutions into four divisions under the same superintendent. The Infants' Hospital for infants under two years of age and the Children's Hospital for children aged two years or over provided medical care to the physically disabled. Doctors at these hospitals set themselves to rehabilitate children with skin and eye diseases, paralysis, or other physical debilities, and thus to reintegrate these physically disabled children into community life. For example, H. S., a boy aged thirteen, had never been to school owing to severe scalp trouble when he was admitted to the Children's Hospital in 1905. Doctors and teachers at the hospital and its day school provided a series of treatments on his fingers, and H. S. was made ready to enter a fifth-year class at the public school when discharged in 1907.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast, the School for the Feeble-Minded for children with mental retardation of teachable grade and the Custodial Asylum for mentally retarded children of unteachable grade were to function as semi-permanent colonies of the mentally retarded.<sup>32</sup> At the Industrial School on Randall's Island, physically disabled children received vocational training to prepare themselves for industrial life after discharge, while mentally retarded children had the same training to join the workforce *within* the institutions.<sup>33</sup> Mary C. Dunphy, Superintendent of the Children's Hospitals and Schools, insisted that the feeble-minded "be segregated permanently from society." The feeble-minded should be kept under careful supervision at institutions for life, for they could not survive the economic competition with skilled workers in the labor market, and the danger and temptations on the streets would nullify the moral training at institutions. Dunphy asserted that permanent segregation was "the first condition in making the training of defectives of effective value to society."<sup>34</sup>

At the turn of the century, superintendents of public charitable institutions for the mentally retarded shifted their emphasis from special education for community life after discharge to permanent institutionalization of the mentally retarded under custodial care. With the rise of the eugenics movement, superintendents gradually turned to the diagnosis of feeble-mindedness as an incurable hereditary impairment.<sup>35</sup> Superintendents along with eugenicists came to perceive the mentally retarded, especially feeble-minded girls among them, as a menace to society, alleging that "mental defectives" would easily degrade themselves into

the rank of criminals without moral instruction at institutions, and feeble-minded girls would reproduce defectives of their kind often as prostitutes on the street. Charles Davenport, one of the leading advocates of the eugenics movement, made the point clear in a letter to Marion R. Taber, assistant secretary of the New York City Visiting Committee, who investigated institutional care for the feeble-minded at the Randall's Island institutions. According to Davenport, "among the Morons there are many girls who are without control of their sex passions, of their desire for the property of others, or of control in other directions," and "some of the children will have similar strong sexual and wayward tendencies, incapable of control."<sup>36</sup> Within this eugenicist perspective, permanent segregation of the feeble-minded at institutions appeared as an effective and necessary means to prevent crimes and further increase of "mental defectives."

The actual conditions of the Randall's Island institutions, however, did not correspond to this ideal of permanent institutionalization of the mentally retarded. The capacity of the School for the Feeble-Minded was overtaxed by the continuing flow of new applicants in the early twentieth century, and Superintendent Dunphy had to discharge a certain number of inmates for institutional management every year.<sup>37</sup> From 1904 to 1908, nearly 220 out of about 600 inmates were discharged on average every year, and from 1911 to 1914, about 370 out of more than 1,000 were discharged on yearly average.<sup>38</sup> Although some of the feeble-minded were merely transferred to other institutions such as the State Custodial Asylum for Feeble-Minded Women in Newark, more than a few of them were discharged to their own family in the city.

On the decision to discharge to their own family or relatives, family members of the feeble-minded could find room for negotiation with officials at the institutions. Bertha Fries, a girl aged thirteen who lived in Brooklyn, was committed to the Randall's Island institutions on November 12, 1912. The principal of her public school sent a complaint that Bertha had not attended school to the Brooklyn Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (BSPCC), and based on a report from her neighbor who witnessed that "Bertha was considered to be an immoral girl by the adults and children in the vicinity," the BSPCC committed Bertha to the institutions. The BSPCC saw Bertha's "immoral" behavior as evidence of her feeble-mindedness. Her family at first gave consent to the commitment under the impression that Bertha could get a special education at the institutions, but after knowing that Bertha was put "right in with prostitutes" there, her mother made several applications for the release of Bertha. Although Arthur W. Towne, Super-

intendent of the BSPCC, expressed his opposition to the discharge, the family never abandoned their hope. In September 1913, Mrs. Florence Fries, Bertha's sister-in-law, renewed the application, and on October 1, 1913, Superintendent Dunphy finally approved the discharge of Bertha Fries.<sup>39</sup>

The Bertha Fries case exemplifies active involvement of family members in the process of the decision on discharge, but some families were reluctant about discharge of their children. Hattie Mendlinger, a "girl" aged twenty-two, was committed to the Randall's Island institutions on August 25, 1912. The first mental examination indicated that her mentality was fair, but doctors eventually pronounced a diagnosis of "mental deficiency." When Mary A. Hopkins, an investigator of the New York City Visiting Committee, came to interview Regina Mendlinger, the single mother of Hattie, the mother mistakenly thought that Hopkins intended to discharge Hattie from the institutions, and told her that it was impossible for her to take care of Hattie at home. Regina was working as a domestic servant, and it seemed economically difficult for her to sustain the family only by her earnings.<sup>40</sup> Institutionalization of feeble-minded children was often a means of economic survival for families in utter poverty.

Poor families often sent their children to the Randall's Island institutions to alleviate their economic burdens, and accordingly "alleged feeble-minded children" whose mental deficiency was doubtful flooded the institutions. To examine and reclassify all children admitted to the institutions, on October 21, 1902, Commissioner Folks organized the Special Committee on the Feeble-Minded Persons, consisting of the president of the Medical Board, the attending neurologist, and the superintendent. The Committee examined every month "a large number of the children on the Island, who have been sent there by parents, often without good cause, and the result of their labors has shown that a number of these children are not feeble-minded." In 1904, the Committee still found that 45% of 311 children admitted had to be reclassified.<sup>41</sup>

To preclude "normal" children from the School for the Feeble-Minded, the Medical Board of the Children's Hospitals and Schools developed a diagnostic procedure before admission. In the 1910s, before being admitted to the Randall's Island institutions, children "supposed and known to be mentally defective" underwent a medical pre-examination under the direction of Dr. Max G. Schlapp at the Clearing House for Mental Defectives of the Post Graduate Hospital.<sup>42</sup> Schlapp examined applicants to the Clearing House by means of the Binet-Simon Scale of intelligence test invented by French psychologist Alfred Binet and his

colleagues, which had been by this time translated and revised by Henry H. Goddard in the United States to measure the “mental age” of the feeble-minded.<sup>43</sup> Goddard, a leading psychologist directing a research laboratory at the Vineland Training School for Feeble-Minded Children in New Jersey, advocated the reclassification of the feeble-minded based on the intelligence test. Utilizing the term “feeble-minded” as an umbrella category, Goddard classified all the mentally retarded into three basic sub-categories of idiots, imbeciles, and morons. “Idiots” implicated those whose mental age was determined by the Binet test to be under two years old with little expectation of further development, “imbeciles” three to seven years old, and “morons” eight to twelve years old. Goddard further subdivided each category into low, middle, and high grades, and deemed those whose mental age was over twelve years old as “normal” persons.<sup>44</sup> In 1915, the New York State Commission to Investigate Provision for the Mentally Deficient reported that among the applicants to the Clearing House were found 386 idiots, 836 imbeciles, and 490 morons.<sup>45</sup> After their admission to the Randall’s Island institutions, the resident physician reexamined new inmates to reconfirm their exact mental status, and doctors and teachers were to prescribe the specialized care for these different categories during the period of observation.<sup>46</sup>

The Medical Board aimed to medicalize the care for the feeble-minded on the grounds of “scientific” diagnosis and categorization, but they soon faced the fact that medicalization of the care for the feeble-minded generated a number of “borderline cases” as its byproduct which undermined the very notion of able-bodiedness. The case history of Frances Norton illustrates the ambiguous status of people categorized as borderline cases. Frances Norton was subject to mental examination at the Neurological Institute on July 18, 1910. At that time, Dr. Collins at the institute diagnosed her as a high grade imbecile. After the examination, Norton secured a position in domestic service in New Brighton, but was soon brushed off by her employer who could not tolerate Norton’s “shiftlessness, laziness and obstinacy.” Norton stayed for a while at Metropolitan Hospital on Blackwell’s Island, but on August 6, 1912, Dr. Schultz transferred her to a convalescent home on the grounds that he could not consider her as feeble-minded. The diagnosis on her mental state, however, backtracked again. On September 6 of that year, Dr. Karpes of Bellevue Hospital diagnosed her as an imbecile, but a few days later Dr. Schulz again insisted that Norton was “not feeble-minded, but a wayward girl.” On October 18, Dr. Frederick W. Ellis at the Neurological Institute insisted that as Norton “has a considerable degree of ability

to work under direction it is more fair to her to classify her as feeble-minded and incapable of self-direction in the more important matters of life," thus categorizing Norton as "a borderline institutional case." Both her father and mother were dead, and public charitable institutions became a temporary home for Norton. On August 25, 1913, Norton was transferred to the Randall's Island institutions from the City Hospital on Blackwell's Island, although Dr. Bacon of the hospital stated that Norton "seemed to be very bright." On January 9, 1914, however, an investigator of the New York City Visiting Committee found Norton again at the City Hospital.<sup>47</sup>

The existence of "borderline cases" like Frances Norton who might be mentally retarded but possessed the ability to conduct labor blurred the medical distinction between the able-bodied and the disabled. Doctors thought Norton to be incapable of "self-direction," but she was physically able-bodied. Norton could work if directed, and in many instances common laborers did not need self-direction for their unskilled jobs. A. C. Rogers, secretary of the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-Minded, characterized "Borderland Cases" as "backward and delinquent children" who had mild or partial deficiencies in their mental capability but who still retained the ability to earn wages in society at large. "[A]ll those cases of abnormal children which [doctors] do not properly classify with the typical feeble-minded" provoked "the most doubt as to eligibility to a school for the feeble-minded, or advisability, and in some cases, possibility of retention in such institution."<sup>48</sup> In a sense, this ambiguity of status could be applied to many of the feeble-minded at the Randall's Island institutions. At the Industrial School, the feeble-minded joined the institutional workforce, and their labor in fact sustained the management of the institutions.<sup>49</sup> Theoretically, Goddard's revision of the Binet test was intended to eliminate the nomenclatural ambiguity over mental retardation by judging one's "normalcy" solely on the numerical basis of the single measurement scale of "mental age," artificially reducing all the "abnormal" into three sub-categories of feeble-mindedness. But at practical sites of institutional management in which municipal officials set the inability to conduct labor as a criterion of charitable assistance, the feeble-minded, except severely retarded people usually categorized as "idiots," remained in an ambiguous existence. The feeble-minded were mentally disabled but physically able-bodied, and this ambiguity in their status allowed mentally retarded children to move in and out of the institutions.



#### IV. Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, municipal officials in New York City redefined the meaning of disability through the reorganization of public charitable institutions. As the experiment of categorizing the out-of-work homeless at the Municipal Lodging House exemplifies, in the face of mounting pressure from the serious unemployment problems in 1914-1915, officials attempted to classify the city's homeless population into the employable and the unemployable classes. Within this new scheme of social policy in which municipal officials measured the employability of the poor by their able-bodiedness to conduct labor, the disability of the unemployable was determined by their inability to work. In the course of the bifurcation of the welfare program, municipal officials designated public charitable institutions for "charity" assistance to the unemployable. But as the analysis of the Children's Hospitals and Schools on Randall's Island indicates, public charitable institutions also functioned as places where the disabled poor could receive temporal relief. Doctors attempted to rehabilitate physically disabled children, and the Industrial School offered them vocational training for the preparation of industrial life after discharge. Although the superintendent and other officials sought for the permanent institutionalization of the mentally retarded under the influence of eugenicist thoughts, as the case histories of the girls diagnosed as feeble-minded reveal, mentally retarded children went in and out of the institutions, and their family members utilized public assistance to their children to alleviate the economic burdens on their households. The feeble-minded diagnosed as "borderline cases" easily crossed the line back and forth between the able-bodied and the disabled, thus disturbing the administration of the city's welfare program. Ironically, inarticulacy about these "borderline cases" was generated through the process of administrative articulation of disability as inability to labor buttressed by medicalization of feeble-mindedness.

As recent institutionalists' discussions on social policy point out, the U.S. welfare system has been complemented by provisions not accounted for under the public welfare program, including private social benefits.<sup>50</sup> In New York City, numerous private charitable organizations had drawn public funds, complementing, and in fact setting the basis of, the city's welfare system since the nineteenth century.<sup>51</sup> In the Progressive Era when reformers and social scientists began to emphasize the state's role in social and economic relations, however, public charitable institutions emerged as the major site of state regulation on the lives of

the poor.<sup>52</sup> When the progressive reformers put their social thoughts into practice at public charitable institutions, the notion of disability came to play a crucial role in their administration. Disability mattered—not only as a criterion for officials to classify the poor, but as a means for the disabled poor and their family members to appropriate the public welfare program through its conceptual ambiguity.

## Notes

- 1 Bailey B. Burritt to John A. Kingsbury, 23 September, 27, 29 November, 12, 16 December 1916; memorandum from Kingsbury to Henry C. Wright, First Deputy Commissioner, 29 November 1916; quotation from Burritt to Kingsbury, 24 November 1916; Kingsbury to Burritt, 13 December 1916, in order. John Adams Kingsbury Papers, the Library of Congress, Box 1:9. Folder 10: Metropolitan Hospital, 1914-1917, n.d.
- 2 In this paper, I use the term “disability” to mean social restrictions imposed on people with physical and mental impairment. For a social model of disability, see Michael Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement: A Sociological Approach* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990); *Understanding Disability: From Theory to Practice* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996). For disability policy in the United States, see Edward D. Berkowitz, *Disability Policy: America’s Programs for the Handicapped* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), especially 2-7. See also Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, “Introduction: Disability History: From the Margins to the Mainstream,” in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Longmore and Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 22. For the rehabilitation movement in the early twentieth century, see Brad Byrom, “A Pupil and a Patient: Hospital Schools in Progressive America,” in *New Disability History*, 133-56.
- 3 Roy Lubove, *The Struggle for Social Security, 1900-1935* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968); See also Hace Sorel Tishler, *Self-Reliance and Social Security, 1870-1917* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1971); Edward Berkowitz and Kim McQuaid, *Creating the Welfare State: the Political Economy of Twentieth-Century Reform*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1988); John Dennis Chasse, “The American Association for Labor Legislation: An Episode in Institutional Policy Analysis,” *Journal of Economic Issues* 25, no. 3 (September 1991): 799-828.
- 4 Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), ix-x. Linda Gordon argues that this stratification of the welfare system in fact stabilized inequality along gender and race lines by reducing women and African-Americans to the category of public assistance. Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare 1890-1935* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); “Social Insurance and Public Assistance: The Influence of Gender in Welfare Thought in the United States, 1890-1935,” *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 1 (February 1992): 19-54. See also Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equality: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-century America* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mary Poole, *The Segregated Origins*

- of *Social Security: African Americans and the Welfare State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006). For the changing conception of poverty, Robert H. Bremner, *From the Depth: the Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 1956) is still useful. David A. Moss, *Socializing Security: Progressive Era Economists and the Origins of American Social Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 4.
- 5 Amy L. Fairchild, *Science at the Borders: Immigrant Medical Inspection and the Shaping of the Modern Industrial Labor Force* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 2003). See also Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the "Immigrant Menace"* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Douglas C. Bayton, "Defectives in the Land: Disability and American Immigration Policy, 1882-1924," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Spring 2005, 31-44. The term industrial citizenship was first coined by T. H. Marshall. T. H. Marshall and Tom Bottomore, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1992 [1950]), 25-27.
- 6 The concept of able-bodiedness also intertwined with those of race and gender. Policymakers often perceived immigrants, African-Americans, and women as physically and mentally not able-bodied enough to be competent citizens. See Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," in *New Disability History*, 33-57; Natalia Molina, "Medicalizing the Mexican: Immigration, Race, and Disability in the Early-Twentieth-Century United States," *Radical History Review* 94 (Winter 2006): 22-37; *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006).
- 7 For institutional development of public institutions, see David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1971); *Conscience and Convenience: The Asylum and its Alternatives in Progressive America* (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1980). For social control over the poor, see Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971); Paul S. Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992). Linda Gordon, "Family Violence, Feminism, and Social Control," *Feminist Studies* 12, no. 3 (Autumn 1986): 452-78, points out social control in practice was not unilateral imposition but interactive negotiation between social workers and poor women in turn-of-the-century Boston. For public charitable institutions as a safety-net for the poor, see Katz, *Poverty and Policy in American History* (New York: Academic Press, 1983); David Wagner, *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).
- 8 Leah Hannah Feder, *Unemployment Relief in Periods of Depression: A Study of Measures Adopted in Certain American Cities, 1857 through 1922* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1936). For the protest movements for the unemployed by the Industrial Workers of the World and the anarchists of the Ferrer School, see Philip S. Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World*, History of the Labor Movement in the United States, vol. 4 (New York: International Publishers, 1965); Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). For the estimated number of the unemployed in New York City in the winter of 1913-1914, see *Congressional Record*, 63rd Cong., Sess. II, House (3 February 1914), vol. LI, 2832.

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- 9 "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," Proceedings First National Conference on Unemployment, *American Labor Legislation Review* 4, no. 2 (May 1914): 209-54.
- 10 For the "discovery" of involuntary unemployment, see Paul T. Ringenbach, *Tramps and Reformers 1873-1916: The Discovery of Unemployment in New York* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973). For seasonality of employment, see Stanley Engerman and Claudia Goldin, "Seasonality in Nineteenth-Century Labor Markets," *American Economic Development in Historical Perspective*, ed. Thomas Weiss and Donald Schaefer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 99-126.
- 11 Mary Van Kleeck to John B. Andrews, 6 January 1915. American Association for Labor Legislation Records, 1905-1943 (hereafter cited as AALL Records), Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Cornell University Library, Series I:B, Correspondence, 1910-1915.
- 12 "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," 218; "Separation of Unemployable and Unemployed," *American Labor Legislation Review* 5, no. 3 (November 1915): 534-39.
- 13 New York City Mayor's Committee on Unemployment, *Report of the Mayor's Committee on Unemployment* (New York: C.S.Nathan, 1916), 44.
- 14 "The Department of Public Charities of the City of New York: A Statement of Facts," a pamphlet published by the City Club of New York in May, 1908, 43-44; William Alberti Whiting, "What the City of New York Provides for the Homeless," a pamphlet published in 1915; Robert Bertrand Brown, "The Men We Lodge: A Report to the Hon. John A. Kingsbury, Commissioner of Public Charities, City of New York, by the Advisory Social Service Committee of the Municipal Lodging House," *American Labor Legislation Review* 5, no. 3 (November 1915): 616; press release to the city editors by the Department of Public Charities, 17 January 1914. Kingsbury Papers. Box I:10. Folder 3: Municipal Lodging House, 1910-1917, n.d., 2/2.
- 15 William Alberti Whiting, "Summary of the Report of William Alberti Whiting of the Investigation of the Homeless Unemployed Which Was Held at the Municipal Lodging House in March 1914." New York City Hall Library, Vertical File: N.Y.C. Homeless Shelter, 1.
- 16 Experts from both public and private sectors took part in the investigation. Charles K. Blatchly, Superintendent of the Joint Application Bureau of the COS and the AICP, supervised social examinations, while Dr. James Alexander Miller of the Bellevue Hospital oversaw physical examinations. Dr. Max G. Schlapp and other psychiatrists of the Clearing House for Mental Defectives also conducted mental examinations of suspected applicants. See Brown, "The Men We Lodge," 601; Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report of the Department of Public Charities of the City of New York for 1914*, 142.
- 17 Brown, "The Men We Lodge," 604-13.
- 18 Whiting, "Summary of the Report," 3-5; Tentative Program of Future Procedure for the Municipal Lodging House. Kingsbury Papers, Box I:10. Folder 3.
- 19 Whiting to Paul U. Kellogg, 8 December 1914; testimony given by Richard Walsh as to the conditions at the Municipal Lodging House during the time Frank J. Goodwin was Deputy Commissioner; testimony of Raymond Culler; testimony of John Earley; report of Operator Simons; statement of Chief City Magistrate on the people of the State of New York, complainant, against William C. Yorke and others. Kingsbury Papers, Box I:10. Folder 3, Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1914*, 142-43.

- 20 Brown, "The Men We Lodge," 600; Burritt to Andrews, 7, 13 January 1915. AALL Records, Series I:B.
- 21 Brown, "The Men We Lodge," 617, 620; Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1914*, 72-76, 143-44; Andrews to W. Frank Persons, 8 January 1915; Persons to M. de G. Trenholm, 12 January 1915; Persons to Andrews, 14 January 1915, AALL Records, Series I:B. Quotation from Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1914*, 143. Prior to 1915, the 1886 law restricted an applicant from staying at the Municipal Lodging House more than three nights a month. To enhance the effectiveness of the new system, the Advisory Committee repealed this restriction clause on 14 April 1915. Abolishment of the lodgment restriction was one of the demands the Socialist Party of New York City made amidst serious unemployment in the winter of 1914. See Brown, "The Men We Lodge," 617; Minute of Executive Committee, Unemployment Conference, 21 January 1914; Unemployment Conference, 7 February 1914, the Socialist Party New York Letter Books, 1907-1914, Tamiment 056.5, New York University, Box 6:10, Unemployment Conference, 21 January 1914-22 February 1914.
- 22 Brown, "The Men We Lodge," 626, quotation from 615.
- 23 Department of Licenses, City of New York, *Report for the Year 1916*, 56, 60.
- 24 Walter Lincoln Sears, "Unemployment: Its Cause and Cure," pamphlet published in 3 February 1915. For the history of public employment offices in the United States, see J. E. Conner, *Free Public Employment Offices in the United States*, U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor*, no. 68 (Washington D.C., 1907); *Proceedings of the American Association of Public Employment Offices*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics*, no. 192 (Washington D.C., 1916); John G. Henderson, Jr., *Public Employment Offices in the United States*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics*, no. 241 (Washington D.C., 1918). See also Shelby M. Harrison and others, *Public Employment Offices: Their Purpose, Structure and Methods* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1924); Udo Sautter, "North American Government Labor Agencies Before World War One: A Cure for Unemployment?" *Labor History* 24, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 366-93.
- 25 Brown, "The Men We Lodge," 620.
- 26 Whiting to Kingsbury, 24 April 1914, Kingsbury Papers, Box I:10, Folder 3.
- 27 "The Department of Public Charities of the City of New York," 6-7, 45-46.
- 28 For the history of mental retardation, see James W. Trent, Jr., *Inventing the Feeble Minded: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Philip M. Ferguson, *Abandoned to Their Fate: Social Policy and Practice toward Severely Retarded People in America, 1820-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); Steven Noll, *Feeble-Minded in Our Midst: Institutions for the Mentally Retarded in the South, 1900-1940* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating Born Criminals* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Steven Noll and James W. Trent, Jr., eds., *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

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- 29 The family-wage ideal, which assigned women to domestic roles and children to the role of the protected, permeated social legislations such as child labor legislation, extension of the public school system, and mothers' pensions. For a recent study on the family wage system in *theory and practice*, see S. J. Kleinberg, *Widows and Orphans First: the Family Economy and Social Welfare Policy, 1880-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
- 30 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1912*, 143.
- 31 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1902*, 32-33; *Annual Report for 1906*, 296-97.
- 32 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1902*, 32-33; *Annual Report for 1911*, 139.
- 33 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1906*, 298; *Annual Report for 1912*, 147-49; *Annual Report for 1913*, 207-08.
- 34 Mary C. Dunphy, "Modern Ideals of Education Applied to the Training of Mental Defectives," a paper read at the Thirty-Fifth National Conference of Charities and Correction (New York: Martin B. Brown Company, 1908), 9.
- 35 Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Minded*, 131-83.
- 36 Charles Davenport to Marion R. Taber, 13 March 1914. Kingsbury Papers, Box I:8, Folder 1: Children's Hospital and School, Randall's Island, Case Histories, 1913-1914, n.d.
- 37 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1913*, 206.
- 38 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1904*, 332; *Annual Report for 1905*, 211; *Annual Report for 1906*, 305; *Annual Report for 1907*, 379; *Annual Report for 1908*, 395; *Annual Report for 1911*, 124; *Annual Report for 1912*, 139; *Annual Report for 1913*, 200; *Annual Report for 1914*, 137.
- 39 "Study of certain feeble-minded, immoral girls grouped at Randall's Island-1913-1914"; Arthur W. Towne to Angus P. Thorne, 1 October 1913; Quotation from Memo re Bertha Friese [*sic*]; case record of Bertha Fries, 21 January 1914, in order. Kingsbury Papers, Box I:8, Folder 1.
- 40 Case record of Hattie Meudlinger [*sic*], n.d.; "Cards of girls now at City Hospital." Kingsbury Papers, Box I:8, Folder 1.
- 41 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1902*, 33, quotation from 209; *Annual Report for 1904*, 335-36.
- 42 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1912*, 14; *Annual Report for 1913*, 206; *Annual Report for 1915*, 157. Quotation from *Report of an Investigation of the Municipal Civil Service Commission and of the Administration of the Civil Service Law and Rules in the City of New York* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1915), 134.
- 43 Leta S. Hollingworth, "Differential Action upon the Sexes of Forces Which Tend to Segregate the Feeble-minded," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology* 17 (1922): 38; Leila Zenderland, *Measuring Minds: Henry Herbert Goddard and the Origins of American Intelligence Testing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 233-34.
- 44 "Report of Committee on Classification of Feeble-Minded," *Journal of Psycho-Asthenics* 15, nos. 1-2 (September and December 1910): 61-67; Henry H. Goddard, "Suggestions for a Prognostical Classification of Mental Defectives," *Journal of Psycho-Asthenics* 14, nos. 1-4 (September and December 1909; March and June 1910): 48-54; "Four Hundred Feeble-Minded Children Classi-

- fied by the Binet Method.” *Journal of Psycho-Asthenics* 15, nos. 1-2 (September and December 1910): 17-30. As to the categories of the mentally retarded, see also Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Minded*, 162; Noll, *Feeble-Minded in Our Midst*, 3.
- 45 *Report of the State Commission to Investigate Provision for the Mentally Deficient*, Senate Document of the State of New York, 138th session, 19:42 (1915), 358.
- 46 Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1913*, 206.
- 47 Case record of Frances Norton, 2 February 1914; “Cards of girls now at City Hospital.” Kingsbury Papers, Box I:8, Folder 1.
- 48 A. C. Rogers, “Borderland Cases,” *Journal of Psycho-Asthenics* 11, nos. 1-4 (September and December 1906; March and June 1907): 19-24, quotation from 19.
- 49 See, for example, Department of Public Charities, *Annual Report for 1912*, 147-48, 150-54. At the Industrial School, the inmate-labor force was divided into shoe-making, basket-making, tailoring, carpentry work, broom and brush-making, rug-making, embroidery and fancy work, and tin-smithing departments. Outputs from each department substantially helped the financial betterment of the Randall’s Island institutions.
- 50 Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1992), 63-151; Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Skocpol points out that pensions for the Civil War veterans in the North actually functioned as a “precocious social spending” at the turn of the century, and Hacker argues the share of the U.S. economy to social welfare spending was not small compared with the European welfare state, if including private social benefits programs.
- 51 Maureen Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of New York’s Welfare System, 1830-1920* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Anna R. Igra, *Wives Without Husbands: Marriage, Desertion, & Welfare in New York, 1900-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
- 52 John Louis Recchiuti, *Civic Engagement: Social Science and Progressive-Era Reform in New York City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1998).