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English 1101

Dear audience,

As we all know America is not a saint, we have many dark roots. For one the eugenics time period, eugenics is a movement that strived to improve the genetic makeup of humanity. Many people were sterilized one person was Carrie Buck. Carrie Elizabeth Buck was the plaintiff in the United States Supreme Court case Buck v. Bell, after being ordered to undergo sterilization for being "feeble-minded". After researching this case and reading letters that were handwritten by Ms. Buck herself, I can say that eugenics is not a humane thing to do and no one should have to go through what Carrie Buck had experienced. The court case itself was filled with many flaws and injustices.

I was able to find out a lot of background information on Carrie. For example, Carrie's mother was unable to support her, so she placed Carrie who was only 4 years old in foster care. Carrie lived with a couple Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Dobbs who she did labor for. She was also given the opportunity to attend school through the sixth grade which was quite common during this time period. After graduating from school, she continued to live with Dobbses and work in their home. In the early 1920s, Mrs. Dobbs' nephew entered the household, to help with farm labor. However,

in 1923 Buck who was only 16 was raped by the nephew, while his aunt and uncle were away from home.



**Carrie Buck -Google images**

Carrie Buck gave birth to her daughter Vivian Buck on March 28, 1924. A few months later, Carrie was admitted to the Lynchburg Colony. Where Virginia passed a law permitting instinctive sterilization of those marked as “feebleminded.” under the new law with the permission of Albert Priddy, who was the superintendent of the colony Carrie Buck was sterilized. Carrie Buck had no choice in the manner. Priddy and other eugenicists were in charge. This was very shocking to read because the victim of the assault is getting punished instead of the attacker.

CONTINUED NOTES

Name Carrie Buck

No 1622

7-31-27 In usual health.  
Mental condition unchanged.  
H. H. H. H.

Oct. 19, 1927: Patient sterilized this morning under authority of Act of Assembly of 1926 providing for the sterilization of mental defectives, and as ordered by the Board of Directors of this institution. She went to the operating room at 9:30 and returned to her bed at 10:30, re-covered promptly from the anaesthesia with no untoward after effects anticipated. One inch was removed from each Fallopian tube, the tubes ligated and the ends cauterized by carbolic acid followed by alcohol, and the edges of the broad ligaments ~~were~~ brought together with continuous suture. Abdominal wound was united with layer sutures and the approximation of closure was good. This is the first case operated on under the sterilization law, and the case was carried through the courts of the State and the United States Supreme Court to test the constitutionality of the Virginia act, and an appeal before the Supreme Court for a rehearing recently having been denied.

Nov. 23, 1927: Patient has had an uneventful recovery. No infection. Is allowed up today.

Nov. 12, 1927: Patient today furloughed to Mrs. M. M. Coleman, of Beltspring, Va.

Jan. 1, 1929: This patient was in good health when she left the institution in Feb., 1928. She was then paroled to Mrs. A. E. Newberry, Blount, Va. She has since adjusted well from reports. She is discharged today as improved. When she went away her incision had healed completely and there was no hernia or other complication incident to the operation.

**The image above are notes describing Carrie Buck's surgery**

In April of 1927, the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court. By then, Albert Priddy was dead. So, his former assistant, Dr. Bell, the case changed from Buck v. Priddy to the Supreme Court as Buck v. Bell. The jury saw only the records from the initial trial and the appeals court. Based primarily on what they read in the court transcripts, they voted 8-1 to confirm the sterilization of Carrie Buck.



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Priddy-

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