a difference in the way the developmentalist thinks about children. The research agenda of the future belongs to the historians, the editors of the volume agree, but the vocabulary will come from the developmentalists. Together, working "at the disciplinary boundaries" and shunning the positivism of a narrowly scientific paradigm of child development, they believe they can construct a better version of the past and present of childhood. The six "child studies" (for as hybrids these cases will need a new label) are meant to be read as a "first report from the field," according to the editors (p. 3), and when taken as such they provide both historians and developmentalists with much food for thought. Neither field should ignore the challenges represented by *Children in Time and Place*.

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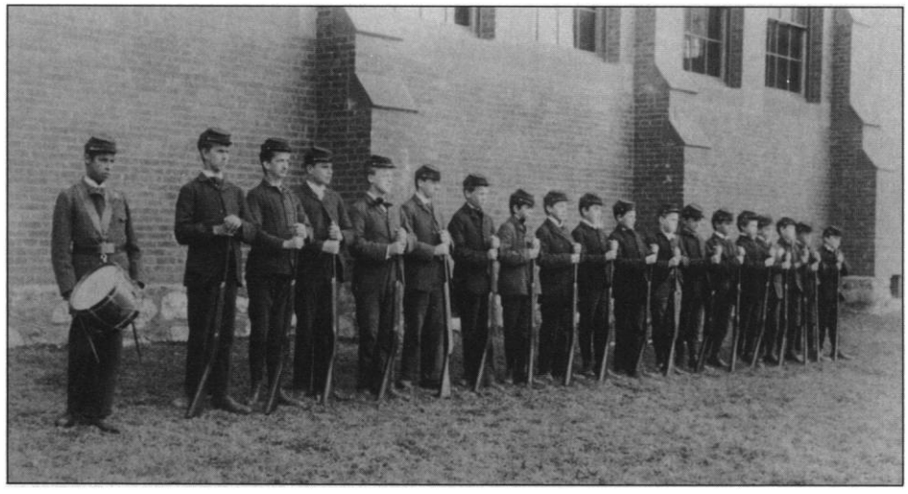
Help and Containment

Inventing the Feeble Mind. A History of Mental Retardation in the United States. JAMES W. TRENT, JR. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994. xii, 356 pp. + plates. $30 or £25. Medicine and Society, 6.

James Trent opens his history with the familiar nursery rhyme, dating from the late 18th century, about "Simple Simon" who, once he found he could not buy a pie, went a-fishing for a whale in his mother's pail. This good-natured, if condescending, view of the feeble-minded, he claims, expressed post-revolutionary Americans' sympathetic, even romantic, view of feeble-minded individuals. During the 19th century, this view changed dramatically and for the worse. Along with the building of specialized institutions intended to help and contain dependent men and women came a reconceptualization (or, to use Trent's stronger term, "invention") of idiots (among others) as exemplars of a general type (in this case, frightening defectives) rather than as individuals.

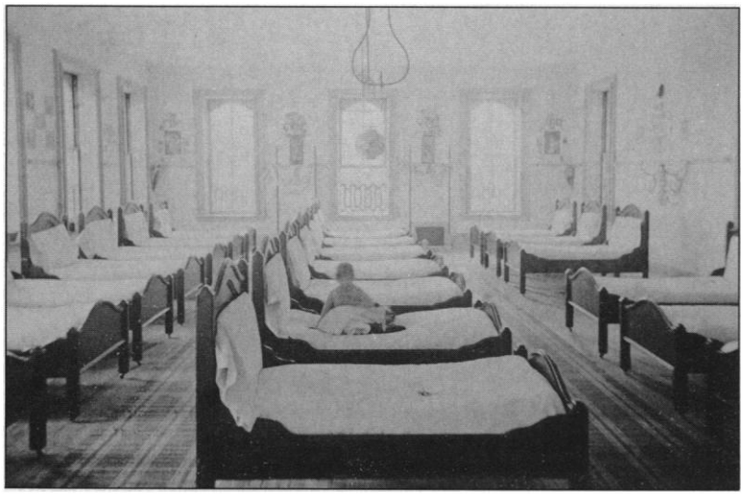
To many historians, this story is a familiar one, first told by David Rothman in *The Discovery of the Asylum* (1971). Trent acknowledges his debt to Rothman, as well as to Erving Goffman, whose *Asylums* (1961) offered a powerful analysis of how deviance is socially constructed. Trent divides social scientists who study the history of social control into two schools: those who, like himself and Rothman, take a "conflict and revisionist approach" and those who, like Gerald Grob and myself, embrace a "consensus-based new humanitarianism," according to which the motives of medical and social reformers' are viewed as well-intentioned or mixed, albeit flawed (pp. 279–280).

Trent is right to suggest there has been a long debate over these issues, but that debate is fast losing freshness and energy. Many scholars, including Trent, are turning to new questions. They are exploring the larger socioeconomic contexts within which institutions of social control, usually state or local, operate. They also are expanding the casts of their sociomedical dramas, forcing doctors and lawyers to share center stage with patients, families, and a host of "lesser" professionals. Sometimes the results are a bit cacophonous, but such works have an emotional intensity not often found in standard institutional and political histories.



"Military drills, inmates at the Massachusetts School for the Feeble-Minded, ca. 1890." [From *Inventing the Feeble Mind*]

Unfortunately, some of these new voices can be heard only faintly, even by the most intent of listeners. Scholars recreate the histories of ordinary Americans with difficulty; those of us interested in men and women who spent most of their lives in large, isolated institutions face a daunting challenge. Often we can but glimpse their experiences, embedded in the notes of those who cared for them and in family letters. Trent responds to this challenge in imaginative ways, mining exposés, re-viewing over 100 years of photographs of institutionalized men and women, reading parents' letters, and looking through the archives of advocacy groups.



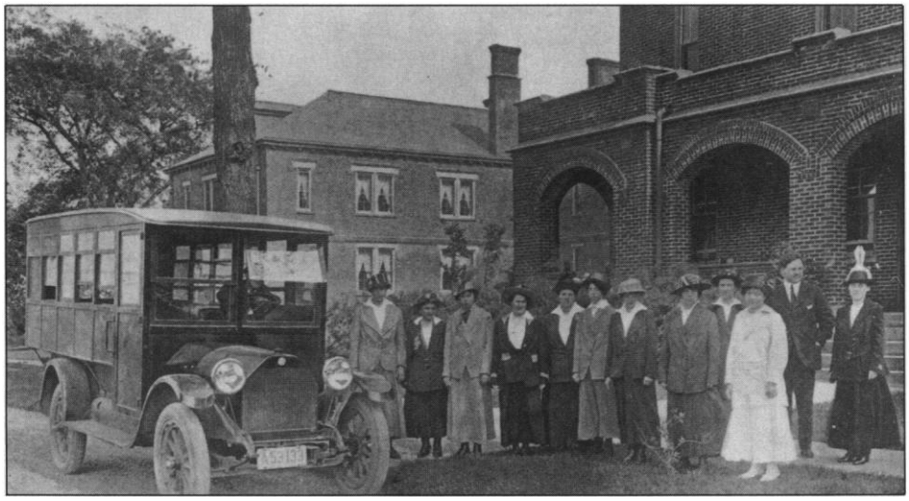
"Bedroom of the Illinois Asylum for Feeble-Minded Children, ca. 1880." [From *Inventing the Feeble Mind*; courtesy of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Lovejoy Library, Beverley Farm Records]

Readers not interested in such historiographical and methodological issues still can learn a great deal from this book. Trent interweaves the intellectual history of attitudes toward the mentally retarded (from 19th-century views of idiocy as hereditary pathology and the feeble-minded as social burdens through the turn-of-the century construction of "the menace of the imbecile" to the "normalization" paradigm of Wolf Wolfensberger and others in the 1970s) with the social history of treatments, especially institutional. Particularly original

"*Weaving*, 1932. A photography taken at Letchworth Village, New York, by Margaret Bourke-White." [From *Inventing the Feeble Mind*; courtesy of Syracuse University Library, Margaret Bourke-White Papers]

here is his reappraisal of the "failures" of educational programs for the mentally retarded. Most often, he argues, the fault lay not with the schools but with general economic conditions. For example, innovative programs of parole and discharge, like those run by Charles Bernstein at the Rome (New York) State School in the 1920s and 1930s, worked very well while the economy was strong. However, when the Great Depression hit, opportunities for placing even skilled workers disappeared. With a reduced budget and a new federally mandated eight-hour work day. Bernstein did not have enough attendants to staff his shifts. Reluctantly, he turned to the "higher grade moron boys and girls," for whom he previously had found community work and whom he ultimately discharged. This retention trend accelerated during the labor shortages of World War II. As a result, Trent notes wryly, by the time C. Bernstein died in 1942, "the champion of parole and community placement had become the head of one of the largest institutions in the country" (p. 220).

Perhaps the most original part of Trent's work is his analysis of postwar events. He begins with a comparison of three sets of images of New York State's Letchworth Village. In 1932, Margaret Bourke-White photographed obviously posed, attractive young patients, none of whom showed the "stigmata of degeneration" so prominent in earlier photographs. In Arnold Genthe's pictures, produced five years later, the patients at work look very different—"peasant-like, rooted in a community . . . they were not likely to leave." Finally, in the late 1940s, Irving Haberman published in a New York City daily paper a shocking series of images of despair and horror on Letchworth's back wards. Reprinted in Albert Deutsch's *Shame of the Cities* (1948), these became part of an emerging perspective that eventually contributed to the closing of such institutions. Trent then moves to a fascinating discussion of the influential "parent-confessional genre," which included such enormously popular books as Pearl Buck's *The Child Who Never Grew* (1950), John P. Frank's *My Son's Story* (1952), and Dale Evans Rogers's *Angel Unaware* (1953).



"Domestic workers with Charles Bernstein at the Rome State School in New York, ca. 1925." [From *Inventing the Feeble Mind* and James C. Riggs, *Hello Doctor: A Brief Biography of Charles Bernstein* (1936)]

Trent's conclusion is grim. Though the populations of the state psychiatric hospitals peaked in 1955, those of state schools continued to grow through the late 1960s. During the Reagan and Bush years, the closing of large institutions accelerated, but federal monies for community-based services at best remained constant, and many retarded adults continued (and continue) to live in residential facilities rather than in the community. "By restricting the gaze to the person with 'it' [mental retardation]," he concludes, "issues of the maldistribution of resources, status, and power so prominent in the history of the lives of most mentally retarded . . . people" remain unsolved (p. 274).

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A Health Care Campaign

Bargaining for Life. A Social History of Tuberculosis, 1876–1938. BARBARA BATES. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1992. xii, 435 pp., illus. $45.95 or £43.95; paper, $19.95 or £18.95.

This important and engrossing book by physician-historian Barbara Bates is a state-of-the-art example of the mature social history of medicine. It is a story of the sick, their families, and their healers, set in the social and cultural context of urban America. Against the background of the significant decline in tuberculosis rates in Philadelphia from 324 per 100,000 in the 1870s to 54 per 100,000 by the 1930s, Bates shows how anti-tuberculosis activists convinced both physicians and the public to support tuberculosis institutions, through such methods as the Christmas Seal Campaign and films like the *The White Terror*. Sanatoriums seemed to promise effective control over the spread of tuberculosis by educating and isolating patients and offering them hope. But although this plan seemed "so clear, so logical" (p. 261), it underestimated the difficulty of changing patients' behavior, the loneliness of living in isolated mountain cabins, and the pervasive social and economic factors that underlay the persistence of the disease.

The book's central figure is Lawrence F. Flick, a Philadelphia physician who himself had tuberculosis and who became one of the country's leaders in the anti-tuberculosis movement. In the 1890s Flick helped to establish the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, and also a local society that paid for hospitalization of "poor consumptives" in Philadelphia as well as in White Haven, a sanatorium in eastern