



COURSE
VIDEO

THE BRUE FAMILY
LEARNING CENTER



Secret History of Institutions and Institutionalization in America, 1880–1960

An Online Conversation Course

*Perspective from
Alex Green,
Writer, Scholar, and
Lecturer*



American Ancestors®
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



Demystifying the Search for Disabled Ancestors



Seeing Disabled Ancestors in History

- One of the most humanizing things we can see in our family history.
- You had ancestors with disabilities and you'll never know it
- Not only do conceptions change, terms change.
- Locating and interpreting records can be challenging.



A Bit About Me

- Faculty of the Harvard Kennedy School
- Visiting Fellow at the Project on Disability at Harvard Law School
- Visiting Scholar at the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy at Brandeis University
- The Work...

The New York Times

OPINION
DISABILITY

It's Time for a National Museum of Disability

Without a home, many crucial chapters in American history could be lost.

Sept. 5, 2018



By **Elianna Gerut, Sarah Levin, Daniel Rabinovitz, Gabe Rosen and Ben Schwartz**

The authors are 12th graders at Gann Academy in Waltham, Mass.

Disability records

- Types of individual institutional records:
 - How to locate them.
 - How to interpret their meaning.
- Related records:
 - How to locate them.
 - How to use them to understand the context of your ancestor's life.
- How to understand these documents when interpreting the story of your ancestor's life.
- **A Quick Disclaimer About Language*



A Brief Overview of Institutions

- Almshouses/Poor Houses
- Orphanages
- Hospitals
- Asylums/State Hospitals
- Soldiers' Homes
- Institutional Schools
 - For people with physically disabilities
 - For the blind
 - For the deaf and hard of hearing
 - For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities



What Types of Records Exist and Where Can You Find Them?

- **Federal Records (Including National Archives and Records Administration)**
 - Census
 - Indigenous Institutions
 - Military Institutions, including Soldiers' Homes
- **State Archives**
 - Institutional Records
 - State Agencies, Departments, and Regulatory Boards
 - Legislative Documents and Court Records
- **State Vital Records**
 - Birth Certificates
 - Death Certificates
 - Marriage and Divorce Records
- **County, City, and Town Records**
 - Vital Records
 - County Almshouses (Poor Houses)
 - Financial Statements
- **Nonprofit and University Collections**
 - American Ancestors, State and Local Historical Societies
 - Medical Archives
 - Institutional Archives

Roadblocks and Why

- Restrictions
- Misplaced fears
- Misinterpretations of vital records
- An ugly feedback loop: How to know what you don't know?
- Truth and reconciliation commission in California
- State Commission in Massachusetts



Office of Governor
GAVIN NEWSOM

Home

About

Newsroom

Appoin

California Launches Program to Compensate Survivors of State-Sponsored Sterilization

Published: Dec 31, 2021

New law creates Forced or Involuntary Sterilization Compensation Program

SACRAMENTO — Continuing the state's leadership to redress historical injustices, Governor Gavin Newsom today announced the launch of California's new program to compensate survivors of state-sponsored sterilization, created as part of the 2021-22 state budget package.

Starting Jan. 1, 2022, survivors of state-sponsored sterilization can apply for compensation through California's new Voluntary Sterilization Compensation Program, which is being administered by the California Victim Compensation and Control Board (VCB).



STATE DEVELOPMENT

COLORADO STATE INSANE ASYLUM.

OFFICERS:

BOARD OF LUNACY COMMISSIONERS.

GRANT, PRESIDENT.....DENVER, COLO.

.....CENTRAL CITY, COLO.

AIN, SECRETARY..... PUEBLO, COLO.

Words Matter

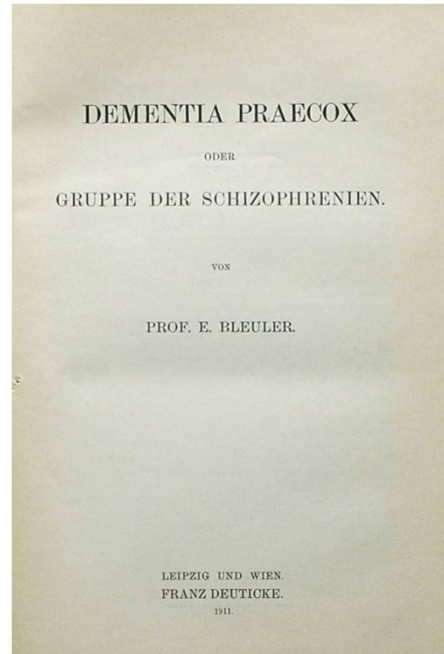
Institutional Names

DISPENSARIES.—These charities, practical observation, are also with be formed of their value, when it is sta are reported more than eighty thousand by the physicians and surgeons in attendan tions the diseases are arranged into distinct ea eases of the head, chest, abdomen, extremities, diseases, etc. Over forty thousand have been Eclectic Medical Dispensary of New York by our



Words Matter: Hurtful, Dated, and Bizarre

MORONS.—Those whose mental development is above that of an imbecile, but does not exceed that of a normal child of about twelve years.



Dipsomania

[Article](#) [Talk](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Not to be confused with polydipsia.

Dipsomania is a historical term describing a medical condition involving an uncontrollable craving for alcohol or drugs.^[1] In the 19th century, the term dipsomania was used to refer to a variety of alcohol-related problems, most of which are known today as [alcohol use disorder](#). Dipsomania is occasionally still used to describe a particular condition of periodic, compulsive bouts of alcohol intake. The idea of dipsomania is important for its historical role in promoting a [disease theory of chronic drunkenness](#). The word comes from Greek *dipso* (Greek: "δίψα"= thirst) and *mania*.

It is mentioned in the [WHO ICD-10 classification](#) as an alternative description for Alcohol Dependence Syndrome, episodic use F10.26.

Words Matter: “At School”

OCCUPATION, TRADE, OR PROFESSION of each person TEN YEARS of age and over.	
OCCUPATION.	Months not employed.
19	20
<i>at school</i>	
<i>at school</i>	
<i>at school</i>	
<i>at school</i>	

Words Matter: Inmate, Patient, Student

Rose	Inmate	W	F	Jan	1864
Adelle	Inmate	W	F	Jan	1861
Clemon	Inmate	W	F	Feb	1876
Prisca	Inmate	W	F	Mar	1863
Catherine	Inmate	W	F	—	1840
Isabella	Inmate	W	F	Feb	1866
George	Inmate	W	M	Mar	1900

Josephine	Servant	W	F	Jan	1864	0	0
Patrick	Patient	W	F	Jan	1864	0	0
Ann	Patient	W	F	Jan	1864	0	0
Anthony	Servant	W	F	Jan	1864	0	0
Harriet	Servant	W	F	Jan	1864	0	0

Words Matter: Names & Vital Records

Worcester Lee Harris (P-176)

18	187	274	Harris, Worcester L.	Son
			Maude	Wife - H
		275	Galbraith, Annie	Head



REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)

SERIAL NUMBER 2278	1. NAME (Print) WISTER LEE HARRIS	ORDER NUMBER 10791-A
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 690 SHAWMUT AVE (APT 7) NORBURY SUPERIOR MASS		
3. MAILING ADDRESS SAME		
4. TELEPHONE	5. AGE IN YEARS 42	6. PLACE OF BIRTH ATHENS GEORGIA
DATE OF BIRTH 9-22-97		

Words Matter: Names Continued

Birth Date
February 10, 1887

Death Date
May 5, 1953

Historian(s)
Ari Sapers-Sydney and Alex
Green


[Learn About Our Process](#)

Riley “Aureline” Cross C-30

Riley “Aureline” Cross was born on February 10, 1887, in Worcester, Mass., to Edward Cross of New York and Bridget Cross (nee Doyle), an immigrant from Ireland. Edward and Bridget married in Worcester, Mass, in 1875. Edward worked as a baker. It was a second marriage for Edward, whose first wife Mary had died of smallpox in 1873, after just a year and a half of marriage. Edward and Mary had a daughter, Sarah, who was then raised by Edward and Bridget.

Edward and Bridget continued to live in Worcester, where he worked as a painter for a period before returning to baking. Around 1876, they had a daughter, Lizzie, followed two





Proof: Disabled or Not Disabled?



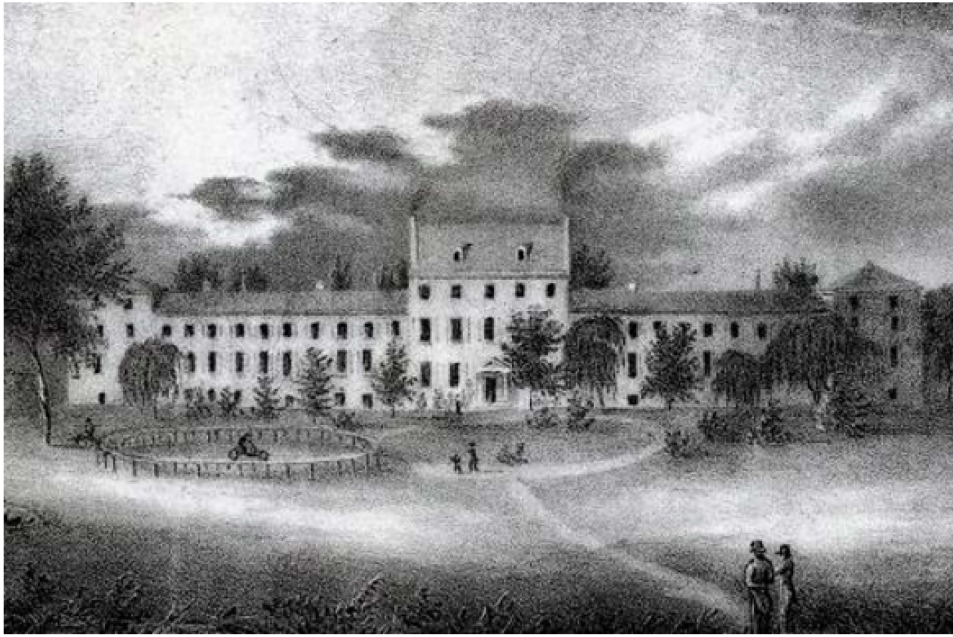
Rules for Records

- Contradictions of Access & Variations by State
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Next of Kin
- Lawyering Up



Hot button issues

- Segregating disability records
- Yes or no thinking rather than records management
- Digital revolution



**See you Monday, March 20
for the 6:00-7:30 p.m. (ET)
live discussion featuring
panelists Lindsay Fulton,
Pam Fessler, and Alex Green**

The Secret History of Institutions and Institutionalization, 1880–1960