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Genetics and the Origins of Behavior The Rockefeller Foundation

Maine, Gregg expressed his opinion that: Clarence C. Little, then director of the Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, so Gregg thought) to admit the importance of genetics. In a 1945 letter to share this conviction. Doctors and educators were particularly reluctant (or differences in human behavior. Unfortunately, the public did not appear to Medical Sciences, was sure that nature contributes more than nurture to Alan Gregg, director of the Rockefeller Foundation's Division of

methods, and there might be a realization that man has as much to gain teaching methods wasted on material that cannot profit from such be such an incredible and insufferable amount of effort spent in present would actually increase the effectiveness of education. There would not parts of society and all fields of endeavor, a more accurate definition of the limitations of education through planned experience of the pupil do with genetics. Since education is so extraordinarity important for all diseases and various abnormalities of form and function have much to realize that susceptibility to infection and tendency to degenerative organism and various aspects of advanced disease, we are beginning to intellectually by wise matings as by \$800,000 high schools. in medicine, after years of attention to the nature of the invading

Raymond Fosdick, then chief counsel to John D. Rockefeller, effected a sion during a major reorganization of Rockefeller philanthropies. In 1928 Gregg had been appointed director of the Medical Sciences (MS) Divi-

> Division of Medical Sciences title of the RF's Division of Medical Education, which in 1929 became the support for scientific research. This development was reflected in the new scribed by others.' Suffice it here to say that it signaled a shift from traditional Rockefeller concerns with education and applied social service to tion (RF). The character and consequences of this merger have been de-"the advance of human knowledge" transferred to the Rockefeller Foundaconsolidation of four Rockefeller boards, in which all programs related to

ular reference to mentality and temperament," and the "study and application of knowledge of social phenomena and social controls."4 the "conscious control of race and individual development with rather particior. A staff report of 1933 notes that all divisions should focus on two areas: "a new science of man," whose aim was the analysis and control of behavand medical sciences divisions were officially joined in a project to develop become the central focus of the foundation. By 1933, the natural, social, science of human behavior did not yet exist. Its development would thus ning, in turn, required a scientific understanding of behavior. However, a view of RF trustees and officers, the times demanded planning, and planpolicy emphasized research that promised a substantial social return. In the the "best" individuals and institutions, with little regard to field. The new research supported at the foundation. In the past, funds had been awarded to The reorganization was also accompanied by change in the kind of

were dwarfed by those of the Rockefeller Foundation. the genetics of behavior in the 1930s and 1940s. Their efforts, however, tions, and the American Eugenics Society (AES) all supported research on (or any) discipline. A number of wealthy amateur eugenists, small foundagenetics of mental traits. RF-funded efforts in this area were instrumental in tics." Of course no single institution was responsible for the creation of this the development of the field that would come to be called "behavior gene-This essay describes one strand in this broad program: work on the

research in the natural sciences. giving to all fields and nearly three-quarters of funds expended in support of mount. In the 1930s it accounted for more than one-third of foundation government scientists. Among them, the Rockefeller Foundation was parafoundations contributed most of the funds available for research by nonsearch, apart from that conducted at its own institutions. Thus the private In the 1930s and 1940s, the government provided little support for re-

of those who wished to distance themselves from the movement's scientific ment had already come under attack within the scientific community. Many crudity and reactionary politics, however, shared its strong hereditarian when the "science of man" program was established, the eugenics movecertain social commitments of RF trustees and officers. By the early 1930s. The decision to promote work on the genetics of behavior reflected

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edge of science. eugenics. And officers of the reorganized RF saw themselves on the cutting by these failings. Up-to-date research, whatever its aims, thus could not be open propaganda, they also tended to define eugenics as a movement tainted race. Not only did these people associate eugenics with scientific naïveté and assumptions and at least long-term commitments to the breeding of a bette

ended eleven years later, it had absorbed more funds than any other genetics genetics? The answer to that question lies in the complicated history of ear Why did the RF wait until 1945 to support American research in behavior project supported by either the MS or Natural Sciences (NS) Division. The headed by John Paul Scott, began in 1945. By the time Rockefeller funding lier Rockefeller efforts in human biology. "science of man" program, with its emphasis on behavior, began in 1933. Mammals" at the Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine. The study, its uncertain success) will be illustrated with a case study of the first major the falsity of environmentalist assumptions. The character of this quest (and efforts of various institutions-most importantly the RF-to demonstrate American behavior genetics project: "Genetics and the Social Behavior of beliefs and commitments. The field of behavior genetics emerged from the under a new name. There was, however, a strong underlying continuity of havior genetics, even in the 1930s-1950s, was not merely the old movement transformation of the eugenics movement. This essay describes another. Be-In his essay for this volume, Garland Allen looks at one aspect of the

Origins of The Rockefeller Program

the start not to support eugenics. His rejection of that program was "unbecame president of the reorganized foundation in 1929, determined from the development of modern science. According to Jonas, Max Mason, who especially stressed in Gerald Jonas's recent book on the foundation's role in eugenics. That RF officers wished to have nothing to do with eugenics is tion of science to social service and reform and hopelessly entangled with ogy, which was viewed as a throwback to the older emphasis on the applica-It is sometimes said that the RF of the 1930s spurned applied human biol-

eugenically oriented program in human biology. In 1925 Embree told Ray-Trustees and a member of the advisory committee of the AES, that he was mond Fosdick, the Rockefeller family representative on the RF Board of the old RF's Division of Studies, was thwarted in his efforts to develop a toward eugenics were mixed. Thus in the 1920s Edwin Embree, director of It is true that, even before the reorganization, attitudes of RF officers

possibilities of which we are beginning to explore. If it is possible to do tremendously interested in the sciences of human biology, the

> is also even more worth investment and speculation.* it is going to be much more difficult to take bad ideas out of people anything in such matters as eugenics and a better understanding of than it has been to extract hookworms; harder to give them good mental processes, we shall be making contributions indeed. I realize that inheritance than good surgery. While a more complicated undertaking, it

efeller Institute, both of whom apparently believed that the prestige of acatrustee endorsement for his efforts, Embree did not give up. On an extended dick not to support a large-scale project in this area. Although he lacked hygiene was in decline." Pearce and Flexner succeeded in convincing Fosdemic biology and genetics was rising whereas that of eugenics and menta the Division of Medical Education, and Simon Flexner, head of the Rock-Embree's plans were opposed, however, by Richard Pearce, the director of met with biologists to promote his program. Frustrated by resistance at the trip to Europe in 1926, ostensibly in connection with nursing education, he foundation, however, he soon resigned."

analysis of rejected proposals indicates that even Weaver's attitude cannot clined both Frank Lillie's and C. C. Little's proposals for support of sion in 1933, also adopted a critical stance. During the 1930s the RF debe characterized as a simple repudiation of eugenics. although not in Weaver's division and not in the United States. Moreover proposals that were explicitly eugenic in intent were funded in the 1930s. not constitute the whole story of the RF and eugenics. As we will see institutes for the study of biology and social problems. But these refusals do Warren Weaver, who was appointed director of the Natural Sciences Divihuman inheritance, race mixing, and differential birthrate." His protégé jected a proposal from the Eugenics Research Association for a project on mainstream kind-fell still further from favor. In his first year Mason re-With Mason's 1929 appointment as president, eugenics—at least of the

of Racial Biology" that he had first suggested in 1924. Indeed, he merely enclosed the original memorandum with his letter to Mason. According to In 1931, Lillie wrote to Mason, resurrecting a proposal for an "Institute

stock. The political and social problems involved are fundamentally universal contact and amalgamation has come. Moreover, the population. We are at a turning point in the history of human societyproblems of genetic biology.12 the age of dispersion and differentiation of races is past. The era of less on social health, that is the biological composition of the health and its extension into the field of public health; but it depends no the best stock biologically is not everywhere the most rapidly breeding populations press on their borders everywhere, and also, unfortunately The future of human society depends on the preservation of individual

Weaver considered Lillie's suggestion compatible with RF aims and deliberated the question of funding for a decade. Since it would promote basic research, neither Weaver nor Lillie associated the proposed institute with eugenics. Indeed, Lillie wrote that "it should be kept free of all propaganda concerning eugenics, birth control, etc.; and in such connections aim merely to furnish the indispensable scientific foundations on which social prophylaxis of the future must depend."

A number of factors contributed to the project's ultimate rejection. It violated foundation policies both against committing funds for long periods and endowing large institutions. The institute would be devoted to a specific problem—an approach rejected by Raymond Fosdick. In addition, 1931 was a very poor time for establishing enterprises that required a substantial infusion of funds. And Lillie's own research on biological maturation and sexual development, with aims similar to the proposed institute's, continued to receive support through the early 1940s. In

Six years later, Little advanced a somewhat similar proposal. In 1937 he met with the directors of the three RF divisions (Edmund Day of the Social Sciences Division, Weaver, and Gregg) to discuss the possibility of Rockefeller funding of an Institute of Social Biology and Medicine. The follow-up proposal reflects an array of loosely linked concerns: genetics in medicine, physiology of sex and contraception, human psychology, growth and development, "population problems," eugenics. The prose is dramatic (there is a "terrifyingly urgent ... need to preserve the sex cells of civilization—the centers of creative initiative before our overfed and undernourished civilization becomes a great uninspired eunuch with no power to generate the units that build the future"), but neither the content nor the relationship of these concerns is further defined. Thus failure of these two programs implies little about the RF stance toward the subject of eugenics as such.

The severest antieugenic remarks were voiced by Warren Weaver. For example, in a 1933 report he wrote that "work in human genetics should receive special consideration as rapidly as sound possibilities present themselves. The attack planned, however, is a basic and long-range one, and such a subject as eugenics, for example, would not be given support." He also asked (rhetorically) "whether we can develop so sound and extensive a genetics that we can hope to breed, in the future, superior men?" These comments are not necessarily contradictory. Weaver believed that "the human race needs, and needs desperately," a science of human genetics, which would ultimately be used to produce a better race. "His contribution to this end, however, would be funding of basic work in mammalian and microbial genetics.

Galton's own definition of "eugenics"—"the study of agencies under social control which may improve or impair the racial qualities of future

generations"—would seem to describe Weaver's efforts. But Weaver himself obviously applied a narrower definition. This is not the place to consider how Weaver's activities are best characterized, for Weaver was not responsible for funding work in human genetics. That field was the province of Alan Gregg, whose Medical Sciences Division was responsible for research with human subjects.

Alan Gregg, Psychobiology, and Human Genetics

Gregg first joined the foundation in 1919 as a young MD and three years later was offered a position as Richard Pearce's assistant in the Division of Medical Education. By the mid-1920s, that division had already begun to shift resources to the study of biology and psychology in relation to medicine and public health—a policy reflected in large grants to two German Institutes: Emil Kraepelin's biologically oriented Institute of Psychiatry in Munich and Oskar Vogt's Institute for Brain Research in Berlin.²³

However, the pace of change greatly accelerated after Gregg succeeded Pearce as director of the MS Division on the latter's death in 1930. During Gregg's tenure, the division drastically reduced its programs in medical education in order to support research in a new area variously titled "psychobiology," "mental hygiene," or, later, "psychiatry." Under these rubrics, Gregg supported a wide variety of biologically oriented approaches—endocrinological, neurophysiological, and genetic—to the understanding of behavior. Gregg's program in "psychobiology" (later called "psychiatry") absorbed about three-fourths of the funds expended by the MS division.²⁴

In Gregg's view, the costs of our failure to understand the workings of the human mind were manifest in the "economic, moral, social, and spiritual losses occasioned by the feebleminded, the delinquents, the criminal insane, the emotionally unstable, the psychopathic personalities," as well as in the less extreme but far more common (and preventable) fears, phobias, and aberrant behavior of otherwise sane human beings." In many countries, he argued, more beds were devoted to the care of mental cases than to all other diseases combined. He also considered the educational system to be enormously wasteful. (Indeed, Gregg's correspondence and internal memoranda actually focus much more on the failures of education than on medicine.)

The new field of psychobiology, designed to address these problems, encompassed various approaches to the understanding of mind. Work in human genetics constituted only one component in a multifaceted research program. But given Gregg's belief that differences in human cognitive abilities as well as susceptibility to mental illness were largely attributable to differences in genes, and his assumptions about the relevance of such differences for social policy, it was an important element.

tioned. In the 1930s, therefore, Gregg looked to Europe. Charles B. Davenport of Cold Spring Harbor is characterized as the "leading American worker in human genetics." He is also the only American menthat includes an extensive assessment of the state of American genetics. humans. At least that is what RF officers believed. Thus in a 1936 repor United States to promote research on the genetics of mental traits. American Geneticists, on the other hand, focused on corn and fruit flies and ignored psychiatrists had little interest in biology and virtually none in genetics In the 1930s, however, few attractive opportunities existed in the

traits, and in genetic counseling explicitly informed by eugenic concerns. institute was to engage both in research, especially on heritability of mental grant in 1934 in support of work on the genetics of psychopathology. In (one enabling him to work with Davenport at Cold Spring Harbor) and a Oluf Thomsen. His student, Tage Kemp, also received two RF fellowships RF Paris Office to the Pathological Institute of Copenhagen, directed by number of small grants in human genetics/eugenics were approved by the existence of accurate and complete medical records. Beginning in 1930, a in human genetics given their homogeneous and stable populations and the Human Genetics, directed by Kemp, at the University of Copenhagen. This 1936 Gregg appropriated \$90,000 toward establishment of an Institute of He considered the Scandinavian countries particularly suitable for worl

tists, the only projects still being funded were in Gregg's psychiatry pro of all programs in Germany. Except for two grants to Viennese social scienafter Hitler's seizure of power. In 1939 the foundation finally ended support of the German sterilization law), also continued to receive RF funds even Research and the German Psychiatric Institute (under Ernst Rudin, an author netics, and Eugenics. Other genetic/eugenic studies, at the KWI for Brain Fischer's Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) for Anthropology, Human Getwin research and for studies of the effects of poisons on the germ plasm at population." Between 1932 and 1935, the RF also appropriated funds for of biological and social factors in determining the character of the present racial or biological composition of the German people and of the interaction report, "to provide a means of finding a scientific basis for the study of the \$125,000 for a nationwide anthropological survey of the German people expended by the MS Division. Between 1930 and 1935, Gregg contributed directed by Eugen Fischer. The project was undertaken, according to an RF genetics of mental traits. As a result, it received a large share of the funds Germany was thought to be particularly advanced in research on the

chiatry and related subjects to be directed by the Mental Disorders search Council, which in the mid-1930s elaborated a new program in psy-Committee. During the 1930s the MS Division supported projects by D. K Foundation funds in Britain were channeled through the Medical Re

the Colchester Survey on mental deficiency, and R. A. Fisher for serological mental disorders, Janet Vaughan at Hammersmith on human heredity in re-Henderson and T. A. Munro at Edinburgh on consanguineous marriage and lation to psychic disturbances and neurological diseases, Lionel Penrose for

affected from breeding would thus work very slowly. slowly reduce their numbers since most genes responsible for mental defects schemes for segregating or sterilizing the mentally deficient would only solve a problem that had bedeviled eugenics since the 1910s: the fact that were hidden in apparently normal carriers. Policies that prevented only the antigens in blood were linked to such genes, they could serve as genetic tity heterozygote carriers of genes responsible for mental defect. If heritable early 1930s it seemed likely that serological analysis could be used to iden-"markers" for the traits of interest. The identification of such markers would Work in serological genetics was considered especially exciting. In the

and Germany, as well as Britain. " carrying out systematic research in pedigrees exhibiting anomalies. Thus given defect seemed quite promising—provided funds were available for any serological effects specific to these genes, however, it was assumed they sive genes causing mental defects when homozygous would themselves have Gregg supported a number of projects in serological genetics in Denmark prospect of finding one or more of the genes linked to those responsible for a Given the rapidly increasing number of recognized serological reactions, the serological effects and thus be directly detectable." Even in the absence of one relying on human symptoms. Some geneticists hoped that those reces peared to promise a far more straightforward approach to this problem than tests. In the late 1920s, however, the invention of serological genetics aperozygote carriers might yet be identifiable, for example through mental normal mentality were not completely dominant over a defective one, het slight phenotypic effects, that is, the phenomenon of partial dominance. If a would be closely linked with others occurring on the same chromosomes. stacle by making use of the fact that many "recessive" genes in fact have In the 1910s and 1920s some eugenicists hoped to overcome this ob-

lurning to America

During World War II, Gregg hoped that the Carnegie Institution would eventually become a major source of support for work in human genetics. (ERO), then the leading eugenics institute in the United States. By the mid-1930s, however, Carnegic trustees had become disenchanted. Among other embarrassments, the ERO's superintendent, Harry Laughlin, insisted After 1917 Carnegie took over funding of the Eugenics Record Office

Gregg's view, the RF needed to take up the slack. 12 likely that Carnegie would become a major force in human genetics. In as though Osborn might stay in Washington for some time, making it unof the American Eugenics Society, might persuade it to reenter the field direct the Army's Division of Information and Education. In 1944 it looked Osborn had been called to Washington during World War II, however, to on praising Nazi eugenic policies. In 1939 the ERO was closed. "Gregg thought that Frederick Osborn, a Carnegie trustee who was also the secretary

research there was supported by the Carnegie. States and found a position at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. His Biology in Berlin in 1935. The following year he emigrated to the United As a half-Jew, Kallmann had been removed from his position at the KWI for psychiatrist Franz Kallmann for research on the genetics of schizophrenia In 1945 he awarded the first in a series of substantial grants to the

ilization of so many people, that it was considered impractical even by the was to have been so massive, and would have involved the consequent sterproposed testing all close relatives of schizophrenics. The testing program carriers would exhibit minor anomalies and thus be detectable. He therefore the gene for schizophrenia. Kallmann believed that these apparently healthy compulsory sterilization law of 1933 to include the heterozygous carriers of for the 1930s. In 1935, while still in Germany, he proposed to extend the Kallmann's views on the "nature-nurture" question were extreme ever

high heritability of human intelligence. The subjects in this study were dogs project. Its goal—or rather Gregg's—was conclusively to demonstrate a In the same year Gregg also made a large grant to the Bar Harbor

phasis on mentality, in turn, reflected the field's eugenic origins. between medical and what would later be called behavior genetics. The em war and immediate postwar periods. There was, in fact, no real distinction selves were a central concern of work in medical genetics during the interhuman genetics, even the genetics of mental traits. And mental traits them ever, in 1945 there was no consensus that humans make the best subjects for about human behavior may appear somewhat peculiar. As we will see, how In a contemporary perspective, the use of dogs to substantiate claims

Medicine and Mentality

cists were convinced of the heritability of virtually all aspects of intellect, the author of an early genetics text that "musical, literary, or artistic ability. personality, and character. Few would demur from the view expressed by the importance of mental, rather then physical, characteristics. Most eugeni-At least in the Anglo-American world, eugenicists had always emphasized

> disposition or a strong moral sense are probably all gifts that come in the for example, mathematical aptitude and inventive genius, as well as cheerful

tions of health and disease received short shrift in eugenics literature. such as criminality and shiftlessness. But they emphasized mental defect restriction (to the extent that it concerned biology) was the problem of "feeblewith those of immigrant groups." Central to the debate over immigration southern and eastern Europe. American eugenic literature of the 1910s and and its purported decline the cause of greatest concern. In the United States people became criminals because they were feebleminded. In contrast, quesbelieved there were special genes for criminality. Most, however, assumed thinking it the root cause of most other social problems. Some eugenicists mindedness." Of course eugenicists were concerned with other traits as well. 1920s abounds in comparisons of reproductive rates of Harvard students the primary source of degeneration was thought to be new immigrants from Of all these traits, intelligence was generally the most highly valued

be concerned only with mental qualities."" be induced not to breed, "that would take care of their physical characteriswould take care of themselves. If those incapable of "sound thinking" could tics at the same time. . . . Our practical program of eugenics needs then to direct objective of the eugenics effort." In Osborn's view, physical factors Osborn, declared in 1948 he "would not emphasize physical health as a intelligence and personality, not disease. The society's director, Frederick ing both research and publications in the field. Its focus, however, was on served on the Board of Directors of the American Eugenics Society (AES). of the American Society of Human Genetics (which was founded in 1948) genetics—and their patrons—were active eugenicists. Five early presidents do with studies of clinical disease than of intelligence and temperament. Indeed, the AES itself played an important role in promoting and subsidiz. That is not surprising when we realize that most of the pioneers in human following the end of the Second World War, this field had relatively less to velop a science of medical, or more broadly, human genetics. In the decade Emphasis on mentality carried over to postWorld War II efforts to de-

eugenics, aimed at reducing disease, is of far less importance than a positive program to raise the level of the population in respect to mental traits. A 1954 editorial in the society's journal likewise asserted that negative

children at the higher levels of normal capacity, while reducing the of births among normal people, so as to increase the proportion of better human society and for individual and social happiness. This is the the average level of the whole and greatly increase the possibilities for a proportion of those at the lower levels of normality. This would raise The great possibilities for improvement lie in changing the distribution

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great field for eugenic advance, and here lies the opportunity of the Eugenies Society. "

It should be noted that Osborn headed not only the AES but also the Rock-efeller-funded Population Council, which supported most American twin research in the 1940s and 1950s.

mattered and not just the obvious abnormality." Thus in the immediate postreproduction if the individual possessing the defective gene was above averior genetics. A study of intellectual and emotional variation was therefore war as in the interwar period, medical genetics was, in large degree, behavage in character and intelligence. It was the "total genetic potential" that as a whole. Most counselors believed it eugenically unwise to advise against perfectly congruent with medical genetics as it was conceived in the 1940s ing to be effective, it was essential to have a genetic picture of the individual in human genetics was expected to inform genetic counseling. For counsel emotional component, which was itself highly heritable. On the other, work hand, differences in susceptibility to disease were thought to have a large lectual and emotional variation was justified on two grounds. On the one as much attention as the genetics of clinical disease. This concern with intel mental deficiency, normal intelligence, and schizophrenia received at least their work, medical genetics had a very broad meaning. The genetics of Thus in the perspective both of the scientists and of those who funded

But intelligence and temperament in dogs? In late 1945, after the project was already under way, Gregg talked with R. A. Fisher in London. According to Gregg's diary, Fisher "said that one of the most valuable things that could be done in genetics would be work with dogs in studying temperament and nervous disposition." The assumption that one could (and should) generalize from the behavior of other organisms to humans would have appeared plausible to many of Gregg's contemporaries.

In the 1940s some of the chief contributors to the field of "human genetics" worked with nonhuman organisms. Thus Curt Stern, author of the influential textbook *Human Genetics*, worked with *Drosophila*, and so did Hermann J. Muller, first president of the American Society of Human Genetics. Hans Nachtsheim, the most prominent German in this field during the immediate postwar period, worked with rabbits. The indirect approach to human genetics was strenuously defended by Alfred H. Sturtevant in his 1954 Presidential Address to the Pacific Division of the AAAS. According to Sturtevant, "man is one of the most unsatisfactory of all organisms for genetic study." He argued that:

there are enough unambiguous examples known to make it clear that the same principles are at work in man as in all other higher animals and plants—and even without such evidence, enough is known about the cytology of human tissues to give us confidence that no peculiar kind of

inheritance is to be expected in man. In fact, much of the argument concerning the practical aspects of the genetics of man is best based on experimental evidence from other organisms rather than on what is known directly from study of human populations. . . [Human research] is especially unsatisfactory with respect to the most important of all human differences—namely, mental ones.

mid-1940s, the MS Division provided most of the funds for his research. Cantt's work and recommended him for a staff position at the Johns Hop-Pavlov's laboratory was Alan Gregg. Gregg was greatly impressed with kins Medical School, where Gantt moved in 1929. From 1931 to the basis for differences in the dogs' temperaments. One of the visitors to ogy. Unlike Pavlov, he was much concerned with uncovering the genetic Pavlov, Gantt wished to use dogs to say something about human psycholcers—was Ivan Pavlov, who in 1929 began to relate his work on condimental traits. The most famous example—well known to foundation offiwith dogs: Charles Stockard's experiments testing whether breed differences Gantt worked with Pavlov at his Institute of Experimental Medicine. Like tioned reflexes and experimental neuroses in dogs to human mental disease.41 Nor was the Bar Harbor project the first to utilize dogs to study human man biology. Indeed, the RF had already funded an earlier genetics project For about six years during the 1920s, the American psychologist W. Horsley in dog anatomy were attributable to hereditary disorders in ductless glands. There was, moreover, nothing new about using dogs in studies of hu-

Dogs seemed particularly appropriate for Gregg's postwar project. As noted earlier, he was convinced that a rational social policy depended on clear and compelling proof of the falsehood of contemporary environmentalist assumptions. Educators, doctors, and the general public—all had to be convinced. The problem, as Gregg came to see it, was that the heritability of behavioral traits had been demonstrated in organisms—such as fruit flies and rats—to which few persons could relate emotionally. The solution lay in making the point with an animal that exerted a strong emotional appeal. From this perspective, dogs were ideal. Gregg was thus led to approach the geneticist Little, a former Harvard classmate and son of a dog fancier, whose cancer research with mice was already supported by the foundation.

C. C. Little and the Founding of the Jackson Laboratory

In 1929 Little resigned under pressure from the presidency of the University of Michigan. He had espoused birth control, tried to reform the university without the support of the faculty, and obtained a divorce. None of these

consideration of the question of birth control, have led to criticism in some geous statements of his views on controversial subjects, such as scientific cate of race betterment programs and the science of eugenics and his couraschool newspaper noted, "As a biologist, Dr. Little has been a strong advowere popular activities. Reporting on the reasons for his departure, the

stantially reduced, and Little turned to the RF for support. widow and the others. With the Depression, these private funds were subtyphoid fever and died without a will, the project was continued by his vided by Dorr. Although Jackson soon left for Europe where he contracted Ford offered to finance a private institute for cancer research on land pro-Webber (who owned the J. L. Hudson Department stores in Michigan), and the island) were summer residents. Jackson, his brother-in-law Richard son Motor Company), and George Dorr (one of the largest landowners on Desert Island, where Edsel Ford, Roscoe B. Jackson (president of the Hudof the University of Maine. The university ran a summer course on Mt dustrial establishments. Before his stint at Michigan, he had been president Fortunately, Little had wealthy friends in the Detroit business and in-

remained strong and would soon intersect with an interest of Gregg's. to cancer research; the RF provided funds for building, research, and maintenance of a mammalian stock center. However, Little's eugenic concerns During its first decade the Jackson Laboratory was devoted exclusively

ogy for having produced such a pet rather than be critical of the cruelty of animal experimentation. (1) their owners would be led to see the relevance of genetics to intellectual performance and (2) they would come to feel indebted to experimental biolthere would be two valuable by-products of a project to breed such a pet be a substantial market for a dog both friendly and bright. He also believed tion far more than anatomical features in dogs. Gregg was sure there would amiable and extremely smart. In his view, anatomy had been stressed to a program might also serve purposes that were, in all likelihood, incompatible ridiculous degree. People actually appreciated intelligence and good disposidogs, Gregg reasoned, it should also be possible to breed a pet that was both with the project suggested by Little. Were it possible to test intelligence in ments. Gregg's response was favorable, but he noted that a breeding ratory breed a uniform strain of dog to be used in cancer-related experi-In late 1941 Gregg received a letter from Little proposing that the labo-

and suggested talking it over with Little, whom he had seen acting as a and breed for intelligence would also work with dogs. Wilson liked the idea Health asking whether he thought that methods used with rats to measure years later he wrote Edwin B. Wilson of the Harvard School of Public breeding for intelligence in dogs. But the idea continued to simmer, and two In 1941 Gregg was merely speculating on the possibility of testing and

> of demonstrating heritability of intelligence in dogs. In Gregg's view, most judge in the Boston Dog Show. Gregg was delighted with Wilson's reply phenomenon in much the same way as we do with trained fleas."46 intelligent and less intelligent rats. They would simply "dispense with tha people would never be impressed with the demonstration that there are more He was particularly pleased Wilson had grasped his point about the value

dog, "just to show that genetically intelligence is capturable and reproducwhile to spend fifteen or twenty years breeding an extremely smart but small would no longer be in demand. Gregg asked whether it would not be worthto produce such a pet, fearing that their "morphologically perfect animals" ever, recognize and appreciate an intelligent dog. Current breeders refused useful, it was inaccessible to ordinary people. These people would, how departure," he wrote: ible." In this letter, the social agenda is bluntly described. "My point of Soon after, Gregg wrote to Little. He noted that although rat work was

conspicuously intelligent and satisfactory as a pet, I believe the considerable number of Americans and if such an animal was intelligent, scientifically tested animal were to be available for any transmitted hereditarily. . . . if as a result of some such effort a highly accessible form that there are some aspects of intelligence which are . . . some geneticists devoted to the task of showing in a clear and readily of their effort is wasted or worse. . . . I'd like to see the talents of is a conviction that one of the constant afflictions of educators is their pedagogic sources.47 intelligence is affected by heredity and that the limitations of education inference would be almost inescapable that in human beings also that environment is everything, but it is not. Consequently, a great deal ignorance of the hereditary equipment of their pupils. Educators think in certain instances are clearly coming from genetic rather than

to humans without arousing religious prejudice or superstitious bias." dogs, noting, among other factors, that they make a strong emotional appeal and to shape its destiny as it evolves." Robert Yerkes also endorsed using that will have in its own make-up the characteristics necessary to criticize it how to utilize it," he wrote, "we shall never be able to create a democracy tance of individual variation and if we do not understand how it arises and value of the proposed project as well. "If we are not convinced of the imporand much more prolific, than are any of the primates. He affirmed the social portant differences among breeds. Moreover, dogs are much easier to breed, ideal experimental subject. Fanciers had already established striking and im-Little's reply was enthusiastic. In his view, the dog would make an

promised Little \$50,000 a year for ten years, plus another \$50,000 to set up Gregg was, in any case, now prepared to move ahead. He informally

a laboratory. (The RF ultimately awarded \$632,000 to the project, over a total of eleven years.) He also asked him to recommend a scientific director.

different inbred strains of mice. so laboratory on a study of differences in fighting behavior among males in the invitation of the Russells, he already had worked two summers at the with a Ph.D. in genetics who was interested in the behavior of mammals. At the genetics of behavior. Indeed, Scott was at the time the only American thirty-five-year-old former student of his at Chicago, with a strong interest in cerning an appropriate director. Wright recommended John Paul Scott, a Little had been a student of William E. Castle's at Harvard. So had Sewall William L. Russell—were already members of the small staff of the Jackson Wright's former Ph.D. students at Chicago-Elizabeth Shull Russell and Wright at about the same time, and the men were well acquainted. Two of Laboratory. It was thus natural for Little to turn to Wright for advice con-

would have to be done with mammals. 22 Unlike Dobzhansky, Scott was convinced that work of human relevance netics of other organisms primarily for what they could teach about humans. sophisticated technique. Like Dobzhansky, Scott was interested in the ge-Theodosius Dobzhansky, who suggested a follow-up study using a more Drosophila stocks borrowed from Wright. That work caught the attention of lee. He even did a bit of behavioral genetics in Allee's laboratory with should have been influenced by the ecologist/animal behaviorist W. C. Alis thus not surprising that, while working on his Ph.D. at Chicago, Scott to study it scientifically. And so began my interest in behavior genetics." It that if heredity had all that an important effect on behavior, someone ought wrote, "I did not really swallow this, naive as I was, but it did occur to me knowledge of animal breeding to humans, Utopia would follow." He also all the world's ills were due to bad heredity, and if we would only apply our terized the book as "old-fashioned eugenics, based on the simple theory that The Fruit of the Family Tree. In an autobiographical essay, Scott charac-At the age of fifteen, Scott read Albert Wiggam's popular eugenic tract,

sociology or sociobiology (finally settling on the latter). He understood work on a new interdisciplinary science, debating whether to call it biophenomena. Scott reports that as the idea took hold, he "began to feel a little unscientific because they ignored biology. More than that, the solution to like the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus." He determined to begin major social problems lay in the application of biological concepts to social College in Indiana. There he became convinced the social sciences were After obtaining his degree in 1935, Scott accepted a position at Wabash

> social organization in humans and other animals. In 1939 he returned to a year, where he studied in various libraries and began to write a book on could "speak their language." Thus Scott and his wife moved to Boston for and continued to write his book (without finding a publisher) on the relehowever, that he would not be taken seriously by social scientists unless he vance of animal behavior to human affairs. Wabash, where he did both field and laboratory research on animal behavior

of Behavior Studies. * him a free hand to set up the research project and choose his associates respects as do humans." Allee advised him to accept, and Little promised undershot jaws, club feet, or hemophilia;" that is, they vary in just the same dogs are "timid or confident, peaceful or aggressive, and may be born with cause of the enormous variability among and within breeds and because Scott agreed to go and invented a title for himself: chairman of the Division firm support. But Scott was enthusiastic about research with dogs, both bewas a weak and struggling institution. There was no tenure for the staff or direct a study of the genetics of behavior in dogs. The Jackson Laboratory That was the situation in 1945 when he was invited by Alan Gregg to

ect; the journalists, how best to publicize the results. The latter also constithe public not only heard about the study but understood its point. tuted a "Committee on Social Interpretation," whose job was to ensure that scientific conferees were asked for advice on how best to proceed with the proj-New York Times and Gobind Lal of the Hearst papers, among others." The genetics. 7 Science journalism was represented by Walter Kaempffert of the lowing year; he would later coauthor the first text in the field of behavior Strandskov, and John L. Fuller. Fuller joined the project full-time the folas a summer investigator), and genetics by Clyde Keeler, C. S. Hall, H. H. been an assistant of Allee's at Chicago and would later work on the project by Frank Beach and Benson Ginsburg (another Wright student, who had ence), Theodore Schneirla, O. H. Mowrer, and C. R. Carpenter, physiology comparative psychology by Robert M. Yerkes (who also chaired the conferhavior. Social psychology was represented by Gardner and Lois Murphy, fields; indeed, they constituted a veritable "who's who" of research on be-Robert Morrison, were in attendance. So were scientists from a variety of Behavior" at the Jackson Laboratory. Two RF officers, Alan Gregg and In the summer of 1946, the RF funded a conference on "Genetics and Social

dogs, and wire-haired fox terriers. (Purebreds with very different behaviors dogs: African basenjis, beagles, American cocker spaniels, Shetland sheep For thirteen years, Scott and Fuller collected data on five breeds of

these analyses were unexpected, both to the investigators and the RF. ance were applied to at least 8,000 separate pieces of data. The results of which included multiple measurements); factor analysis and analysis of varidesign." In all, some 300 puppies were rated in thirty major tests (each of study the development of behavior, daily observations of the puppies were basenjis and cocker spaniels were cross-bred, using a classical Mendelian recorded from their birth to sixteen weeks of age. In the second phase, the ment, and their similarities and differences measured. At the same time, to the first phase of research, the five breeds were raised in the same environbut similar size were chosen, in order to use the same apparatus for all.) In

ers thus concluded that "nothing like the general-intelligence factor someperform required tasks by mobilizing different capacities.⁴⁰ The experiment pacities of individual animals were highly variable, but most animals could times postulated for humans" exists for dogs. 11 vated and for which it had the physical capabilities. Within breeds, the caany breed was able to perform well in a situation where it could be moti-Thus no breed could be said to be smarter than another. An individual from one test and badly in another; none was distinctly better in problem solving. low. Breed differences existed, but the same breed would do very well in In the first place, correlations among different behavioral tests were

early in development, to be modified by later experience, "but are thempear in full flower only later in life."62 selves developed under the influence of environmental factors and may apsimilar among them. Thus it appeared genetic differences do not appear young animals was highly variable within individual animals and strikingly of two breeds together reduced their differences. In general, behavior of also strongly influenced by habit and training. For example, raising puppies fearful in one situation were confident in another. Breed differences were Nor did they find evidence of general temperamental factors. Breeds

could the RF do with such results? only differences in motivation rather than cognitive capacities." What Indeed, he even speculated that "human differences in 'intelligence' reflect human estimates, especially for intelligence, "appear to be far too high." of their heritability estimates for various traits in dogs, Scott concluded that tions from a tendency to perform well in a particular situation. On the basis and motivational factors. It was extremely difficult to separate these reac-Responses to problem-solving tests were greatly affected by emotional

ness of educational measures is definitely qualified by the inherent potennot created by education as much as brought out by it and that the effectivebers of persons of the fact that intelligence and other valuable qualities are tialities of the recipients thereof." In correspondence, internal memoranda, agreement on the project's objective: the clear demonstration "to large num-In a 1944 memo of his interview with Little, Gregg wrote of their

> education.⁸⁰ primary objective is always defined as a demonstration of the limits of mass motions to appropriate funds, and even the published RF annual reports, the

rized by the investigators as follows: "The behavior traits do not appear to dom in the way in which they reach these goals."66 Given these conclusions, Most individuals can reach desired goals if they are allowed sufficient freement is one which permits a large degree of individual freedom of behavior which can be organized in different ways to meet different situations. . . . the study's results. In 1956, at the project's conclusion, these were summathey called constant attention to what they saw as the social implications of it will perhaps come as no surprise to learn that the "Committee on Social This means, in terms of human behavior, that the best sort of social environbe preorganized by heredity. Rather a dog inherits a number of abilities Interpretation" was never mobilized. Scott and Fuller did not provide such a demonstration. Even worse,

development of federal funding and the advent of peer review, scientists was unable to obtain results useful for his purposes. Thus even before the Gregg's clear social agenda and near total control of the purse strings; he qualified, however. Had the results of the project been more to Gregg's seem to have achieved considerable autonomy. This conclusion needs to be public. As it turned out, the study was effectively buried. liking, a committee existed to ensure that its message was brought to the In this essay the RF appears as a kind of helpless giant. Notwithstanding

science research of the post-war period has been disproportionately devoted could agree with the authors of a Population Council report that "social course differences in outlook and emphasis among these sponsors. But all Osborn, director of the American Eugenics Society, was also a trustee of the ships as well as by overlapping institutional memberships. Thus Frederick officers of these organizations were often linked by close personal relationor smaller, right-wing foundations such as the McGregor and Pioneer Funds original investigators were funded by some combination of the RF, the AES sions of the RF and other financial patrons in the field's early years. Mos to studies of the effects of differences in the environment with no regard to founded in 1952 and fully funded by the Rockefeller family. There were of Carnegie Corporation and president of the Population Council, which was (as well as by private patrons, usually wealthy amateur eugenicists). The patible with Gregg's than with Scott's assumptions. The direction of the field may be explained, at least in part, by the social agenda that informed deci-The trend of behavior genetics generally has been much more com-

they all sought to remedy this "imbalance." differences in the genetic material on which the environment act." And

entists whose views were congruent with their own. The strong hereditarian thrust of contemporary behavior genetics should thus be no surprise. thus difficult to reverse. However, patrons were usually able to identify sci-Laboratory, was highly personalized. When mistakes were made, they were The funding process itself, as we have seen in the case of the Jackson

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Group, Series, Box, and Folder numbers. Rockefeller Archive Center, North Tarrytown, New York, provide Record Citations to documents from the records of the Rockefeller Foundation,

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- 24. Ibid., p. 156.
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- to their purebred mothers. They also crossed the same F1 males to their sisters to Social Behavior, passim, and summary in Scott, "Investigative Behavior," p. 415. produce an F2. For further details, see discussions in Scott and Fuller, Genetics and 59. Scott and Fuller made reciprocal crosses and then backcrossed the F1 males
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- and Social Behavior, p. 388. 61. Scott, "Investigative Behavior," p. 416. See also Scott and Fuller, Genetics
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