

1. Analysis of the Hereditary Nature of Carrie Buck.

(From Deposition of H. H. Laughlin in Circuit Court Proceedings.)

1. *Facts*: Granting the truth of the following facts which were supplied by Superintendent A. S. Priddy of the State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-Minded, Lynchburg, Va.:

(a) *Propositus*: "Carrie Buck: Mental defectiveness evidenced by failure of mental development, having a chronological age of 18 years, with a mental age of 9 years, according to Stanford Revision of Binet-Simon Test; and of social and economic inadequacy; has record during life of immorality, prostitution, and untruthfulness; has never been self-sustaining; has had one illegitimate child, now about six months old and supposed to be mental defective. Carrie Buck has been duly and legally declared to be feeble-minded within the meaning of the laws of Virginia and was committed to the State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-Minded, where she now is, on June 4, 1924. Date of birth July 2, 1906; place of birth, Charlottesville, Va.; present address, Colony, Va."

(b) *Mother of propositus*: "Emma Buck, maiden name, Emma Harlow: Mental defectiveness evidenced by failure of mental development, having a chronological age of 52 years, with a mental age, according to Stanford Revision of Binet-Simon Test, of seven years and eleven months (7 yrs. 11 mos.); and of social and economic inadequacy. Has record during life of immorality, prostitution and untruthfulness; has never been self-sustaining, was maritally unworthy; having been divorced from her husband on account of infidelity; has had record of prostitution and syphilis; has had one illegitimate child and probably two others inclusive

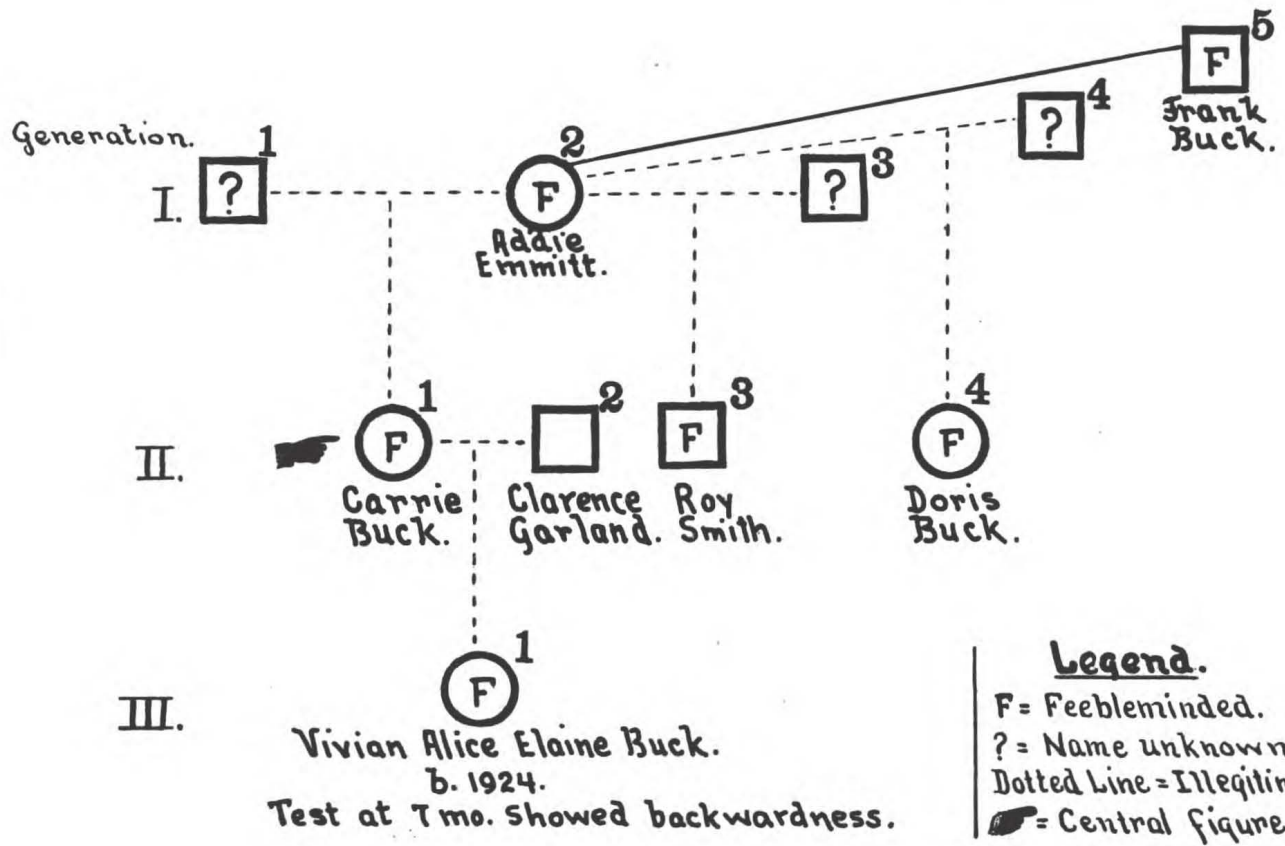
of Carrie Buck, a feeble-minded patient in the State Colony (Va.). Date of birth, November 18, 1872; place of birth, Charlottesville, Va.”

(c) *Family History*: “These people belong to the shiftless, ignorant, and worthless class of anti-social whites of the South. She (the propositus) has a sister and two half-brothers, whose paternal parentage cannot be determined. . . . She has life-long record of moral delinquency and has borne one illegitimate child, considered feeble-minded.” (According to depositions of the Red Cross nurse, Miss Caroline E. Wilhelm, of Charlottesville, Va., in the proceeding committing Carrie Buck to the State Colony, Carrie Buck’s illegitimate baby gave evidence of mental defectiveness at an early age.) “. . . this girl comes from a shiftless, ignorant, and moving class of people, and it is impossible to get intelligent and satisfactory data, though I have had Miss Wilhelm, of the Red Cross of Charlottesville, try to work out their line. We have several Bucks and Harlows, but on investigation it is denied that they are any kin to the Harlows; the maternal grandfather of Carrie Buck, and there is considerable doubt as to her being a ‘Buck,’ but the line of baneful heredity seems conclusive and unbroken on the side of her mother (Harlow), but all the Bucks and Harlows, we have here, descend from the Bucks and Harlows of Albemarle County, in which the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia are located, and I believe they are of the same stock. She (the propositus) has two or three half-brothers and sisters, but at an early age they were taken from the custody of their mother and legally adopted by people not related to them. All that I can learn about Emma Buck’s father, Richard Harlow, the grandfather of Carrie, was (that he) died from spinal trouble. Carrie Buck, when four years old, was adopted by Mrs. J. T. Dobbs of Charlottesville, who kept her until her moral delinquencies culminated in the illegitimate birth of a child referred to. She attended school five years and attained the 6th grade; she was fairly helpful in the domestic work of the household under strict supervision; so far as I understand, no physical defect or mental trouble attended her early years. She is well grown, has rather badly formed face; of a sensual emotional reaction, with a mental age of nine years; is incapable of self-support and restraint except under strict supervision.”

II. *Analysis of Facts*: Generally feeble-mindedness is caused by the inheritance of degenerate qualities; but sometimes it may be caused by environmental factors which are not hereditary. In the case given, the evidence points strongly toward the feeble-mindedness and moral delinquency of Carrie Buck being due, primarily, to inheritance and not to environment. We have, in the files of the Eugenics Record Office, many cases in which a single feeble-minded child appears in an apparently nor-

Most Immediate Blood-kin of Carrie Buck.

Showing illegitimacy and hereditary feeble-mindedness.



Vivian Alice Elaine Buck.
b. 1924.
Test at 1 mo. Showed backwardness.

mal family and a pedigree analysis shows no clue to hereditary cause, but if the same mother has more than one feeble-minded child, then, even in the absence of a more detailed pedigree record, the evidence weighs very heavily against the primary cause being environmental, and further, when the mother, herself, is feeble-minded and has more than one feeble-minded child, the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the cause of feeble-mindedness being due, primarily, to inheritance and not to environment. Further evidence of the hereditary nature of Carrie Buck's feeble-mindedness and moral delinquency consists in the fact that at the very early age of four years she was taken from the bad environment furnished by her mother and given a better environment by her adopted mother, Mrs. J. T. Dobbs, of Charlottesville, Va. It appears from the statements of the field investigator and of the Superintendent of the State Colony, that Carrie Buck, under the better environmental conditions, was able to attain only to the 6th grade in school and was able to be fairly helpful in domestic work under strict supervision, and that at the age of 18, she showed a mental age of 9, and was sexually very immoral, and finally bore an illegitimate child. All this is a typical picture of a low-grade moron. The facts about Carrie Buck being an individually feeble-minded person are sustained by her history and her formal and legal commitment to the State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-Minded. The question is whether her own heredity is such that her children would become assets or debits to the future population of the State. From the evidence of her mother's feeble-mindedness and moral delinquency, and of her own clearly demonstrated feeble-minded character the chances of Carrie Buck being a feeble-minded person through environmental and non-hereditary causes, are exceptionally remote.

The fact that she has already borne a child demonstrates her to be a potential parent. The family history record of her near-kin showing a very high frequency of feeble-minded persons, if true, demonstrates the hereditary nature of the feeble-mindedness and moral delinquency described in Carrie Buck. She is therefore a "potential parent of socially inadequate offspring."