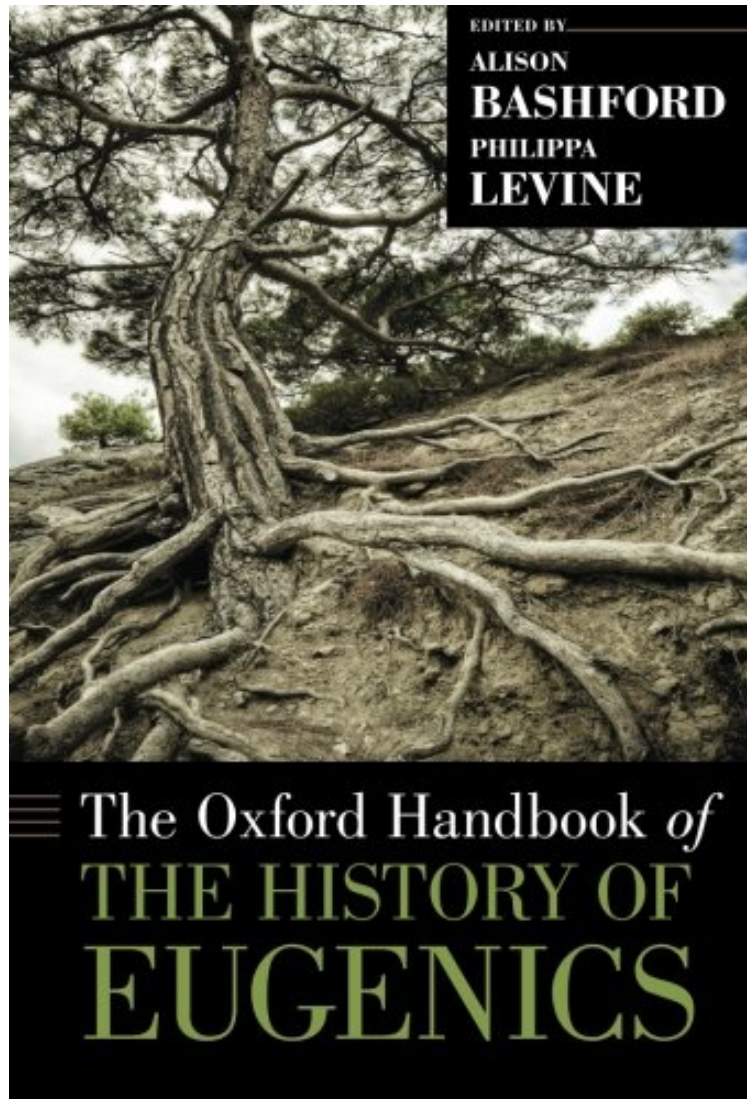


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From Brand: Oxford University Press, USA : The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics (Oxford Handbooks) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics (Oxford Handbooks):

5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Eugenic history in depthBy P. Hooper MayhewThese highly accessible essays are written by a cadre of experts and edited with unusual care. This compilation is highly

recommended. 4 of 7 people found the following review helpful. General Overview By Eric Leonardis This collection of essays is great for someone interested in the broad use of eugenics around the world. But for someone interested in writing a paper about American eugenics, I would suggest looking elsewhere. It is really eerie and unfortunate how this idea keeps showing up in new places. 25 of 44 people found the following review helpful. The History of Eugenics Has not Ended By Wild Swan This book covers the history of eugenics better than most because it covers eugenics in the post-World War II period and eugenics in countries other than Germany, the US and England. It is occasionally informative but it is not illuminating regardless of the period under discussion. Its most obvious failure comes from the fact that eugenics underwent radical changes after 2000 and these changes are not covered in this book. The American eugenics society renamed itself the Society of Biodemography and Social Biology in 2010 following a long power struggle which began in 2000. Biodemography is a new form of eugenics which is being sponsored by a unit of the US government - the Biological and Social Research division of the National Institute of Aging at NIH. The Handbook does not even explain the term - biodemography, let alone discuss the significance of a government sponsoring eugenics for the first time since the Nazi debacle. Granted that the changes in eugenics were not complete in 2003 when the Handbook was published, it remains the case that the book completely misses the change. Moreover, the English society responded to the changes in the American society though in a somewhat subtle way. Beginning in 2006 a series of conferences were initiated by the Galton Institute which are directly connected to the biodemographical movement. (The Galton Institute is the British eugenics society which renamed itself in 1979.) One such conference in Bristol in 2008 was sponsored by the Max Planck Institute of Demographic Research, which is the Vatican of the field of biodemography. The Galton Institute is also sponsoring the conferences of the European Human Behavior Association which was founded by Tom Dickins, currently a Galton Institute Council member. An interest in behavior genetics is a characteristic of biodemography. The Handbook does not discuss any of this. Nor are similarities and differences between the British and American versions of biodemography discussed. Another point is that there would not be a new version of eugenics if the old version were not flawed in the eyes of the eugenicists themselves. But the Handbook does not even discuss issues which, it turns out, were so important to eugenicists themselves that disputes over them tore the American society apart. (No new Officers or Directors of the American society were elected between 1999 and 2008 according to the society journal whereas new Officers and Directors were being elected in from 2004 on according to IRS filings and the CV's of current Board members.) One such dispute centers on the failure of the Theory of the Demographic Transition to predict the demographic realities of the year 2000 - increasing life expectancy and low, low fertility. The Handbook does not discuss this. There are others. Another flaw in the Handbook is the presence of unacknowledged members of the various eugenics societies who are allowed by the authors of the Handbook to make statements without acknowledging their eugenic connections. This vitiates all the history presented. Lesley Hall, for instance, who wrote the chapter on English eugenics, is in 2011 a member of the Galton Institute Council. David J Galton who is quoted frequently in the Handbook, is a vice president of the Institute in 2011. I do not think that a book which purports to be Handbook can be considered a good book when it misses so many important issues and when it blindly follows the interpretation of eugenic history offered by eugenic society members. As a period piece it has value.

Eugenic thought and practice swept the world from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century in a remarkable transnational phenomenon. Eugenics informed social and scientific policy across the political spectrum, from liberal welfare measures in emerging social-democratic states to feminist ambitions for birth control, from public health campaigns to totalitarian dreams of the "perfectibility of man." This book dispels for uninitiated readers the automatic and apparently exclusive link between eugenics and the Holocaust. It is the first world history of eugenics and an indispensable core text for both teaching and research. Eugenics has accumulated generations of interest as experts attempted to connect biology, human capacity, and policy. In the past and the present, eugenics speaks to questions of race, class, gender and sex, evolution, governance, nationalism, disability, and the social implications of science. In the current climate, in which the human genome project, stem cell research, and new reproductive technologies have proven so controversial, the history of eugenics has much to teach us about the relationship between scientific research, technology, and human ethical decision-making.

Both the beginner and the seasoned scholar should be able to find new and intriguing perspectives in this well-edited volume. * Maria Bjorkman, *British Journal for the History of Science* * An impressive survey. * Angus McLaren, *Histoire sociale* Vol. XLV No. 90 * About the Author Alison Bashford is Professor of Modern History at the University of Sydney. She has published widely on the modern history of science and medicine, including *Purity and Pollution and Imperial Hygiene*, and has co-edited *Contagion, Isolation, and Medicine at the Border*. Philippa Levine is the Mary Helen Thompson Centennial Professor in the Humanities at the University of Texas at Austin. Her books include *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*, and *The British Empire, Sunrise to Sunset*.