I speak as one who knows

The story behind The Child Who Never Grew

Pearl S. Buck
Throughout this exhibit, you will see quotations, documents, and other resources that use language that is not appropriate or politically correct today. The use of this type of language was not offensive or insulting during Pearl Buck's lifetime because it was considered medical terminology.

Pearl S. Buck International does not condone the use of such language today.
"There have always been mentally retarded among our citizenry. When our culture was largely pioneer and rural, their presence was not so noticeable and their plight less tragic than it is now. The simple tasks of daily life, as it used to be, provided more scope for their abilities than now, and consequently less criticism of their shortcomings."

Excerpts from "Memorandum on Retarded Children in Pennsylvania" by Pearl S. Buck, 1957
REPORT OF BIRTH
OF CHILDREN BORN TO AMERICAN PARENTS.

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE.

Nanking, Ku., China  December 28, 1920

(Name and place of birth)

Name of child in full  Caroline Grace Buck  Sex  Female

Date of birth  March 4 1920  6:30 P.M.
(Month) (Day) (Year) (Hour)

Place of birth  Nanking Memorial Hospital  Nanking, Ku  China
(Number and street, or hospital or hotel) (City) (Country)
Father:

Full name: John Lossing Buck  
Age: 30

Occupation: Agricultural Missionary

Present residence: Nanking, Ku., China

Birthplace: Town of La Grange, Dutchess Co., New York, U.S.A.

Naturalized (if foreign born)

Registered as American citizen: Nanking, Ku., China

Passport: 92261  
September 20, 1920  
Washington, D.C.

Mother:

Full name: Pearl Comfort Buck  
Age: 29

Name before marriage: Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker

Present residence: Nanking, Ku., China

Birthplace: Hillsboro, West Va., U.S.A.
"I remember I said to the nurse, 'Doesn't she look very wise for her age?' She was less than an hour old. 'She does, indeed,' the nurse declared. 'And she is beautiful too. There is a special purpose for this child.'"
"I, John Lossing Buck, a native and local citizen of the United States, hereby apply to the Department of State at Washington, for a passport accompanied by my wife, Pearl Comfort Buck, and six month old daughter Caroline Grace born Nanking, China."
Pearl S. Buck gave birth to a healthy baby girl. There was no indication that she would suffer from phenylketonuria (PKU), an inherited metabolic disease. If left untreated it leads to profound intellectual disabilities. At the time of her birth in 1920, both the illness and the treatment were unknown. Carol was not diagnosed with PKU until adulthood.
"I do not know where or at what moment the growth of her intelligence stopped, nor to this day do we know why it did. There was nothing in my family to make me fear that my child might be one of those who do not grow."

Pearl S. Buck
The Child Who Never Grew, 1950
"The child's span of attention was very short indeed, far shorter than it should have been at her age. Much of her fleet light running had no purpose— it was merely motion. Her eyes, so pure in their blue, were blank when one gazed into their depths. They did not hold or respond. They were changeless. Something was very wrong."

Pearl S. Buck,
The Child Who Never Grew, 1950
"Happiness, I now determined, was to be her atmosphere. I gave up all ambition for her, all pride, and accepted her exactly as she was, expected nothing, grateful if some flash came through the dimness of her mind. Wherever she could be most happy would be her home. I kept her with me until she was nine years old, and then I set out in search of her final home."

Pearl S. Buck,
The Child Who Never Grew, 1950
"I realize I must leave her in some place where she can be trained to the highest of which she is capable, and my heart is wrenched in two at the thought. I can't face it, really, yet, only I must do what is best for her."

Pearl S. Buck Letters to Emma, January 4, 1929
Throughout history people with disabilities were misunderstood. Those with epilepsy, the “feeble-minded”, the homeless, and criminals were placed together. They were neglected. By the mid-nineteenth century, the need for change was recognized. Dorothea Dix (1802-1887) helped create state asylums and ensured that they provide moral treatment.
Beginning in 1848 specific schools for children with intellectual disabilities began opening on the east coast. Eventually they were named training schools. Some, however, became overcrowded and underfunded. Also, the schools were set out in rural areas, an environment which was segregated and stigmatizing.
Pearl S. Buck began to search for a home for Carol. She saw many different places:

"Crowded rooms, lack of any individual privacy, little or no opportunity for play, a few, or more often, no toys or play equipment are the usual sights to be seen. The hopelessness in the eyes of the children, the terrible loneliness of belonging nowhere and of feeling useless and unloved even when there is no actual cruelty, is an atmosphere to destroy the most stable personality. Most parents cannot afford to send their children to the few private institutions that we have. They are torn between necessity and doom."

Excerpts from “Memorandum on Retarded Children in Pennsylvania” by Pearl S. Buck, 1957
Pearl S. Buck then visited the Vineland Training School in New Jersey.

"Happiness first and all else follows"

School Motto
In 1845, a Senator from Cumberland County, Stephen Ayres Garrison, battled on the floor of the New Jersey Senate for his state to recognize the rights of the intellectually disabled. S. Olin Garrison, (son) starts a school in his home in Millville, New Jersey.

1888

THE OFFICIAL SCHOOL OPENS
Garrison receives 40 acres of land under the name The New Jersey Home for the Education and Care of the Feeble-Minded Child. At the beginning there were seven children but by the end of the first year it became home to 55 children.

1900

NEW HEAD OF THE SCHOOL
In 1893 they changed the name of the school to The New Jersey Training School. In 1900, Garrison dies and Professor Edward R. Johnstone becomes head of the school.

1906

CREATION OF THE RESEARCH LABORATORY
Johnstone creates a psychological research laboratory and Henry H. Goddard became the director of the lab.
"In 1906, however, when the Vineland Research Laboratory of the Training School at Vineland, New Jersey, was opened, its director, Dr. Henry H. Goddard, began seeking information to assist him in his own work with retarded children."

The Gifts They Bring by Pearl S. Buck and Gweneth Zarfoss
Henry H. Goddard

Goddard is known for several things throughout his career:

- Advocating and revising the Binet-Simon intelligence test, a test still used today in the United States.
- Conducting a study of feeble-mindedness published as "The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness."
"In considering the question of care, segregation through colonization seems in the present state of our knowledge to be the ideal and perfectly satisfactory method. Sterilization may be accepted as a makeshift, as a help to solve this problem because the conditions have become so intolerable. But this must at present be regarded only as a makeshift and temporary, for before it can be extensively practiced, a great deal must be learned about the effects of the operation and about the laws of human inheritance."

"The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness" 1912
"The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness" became instrumental in powering the eugenics movement, including the passing of sterilization laws in several states. One of those states was New Jersey, although there were no documented legal sterilizations performed in the state. However, more than sixty thousand Americans were sterilized against their will.

Later, this study was discredited due to the poor quality of its science. Goddard faced much turmoil and controversy because of this.
Improving the Race.

A new science has been inaugurated. It is called “eugenics” and relates to the improvement of the race, chiefly in a physical way. In a word, it concerns the breeding of stronger children. Professor Francis Galton, the famous English biologist, says of the new science:

“The aim of eugenics is to represent each class or sect by its best specimens, causing them to contribute more than their proportion to the next generation; that done, to leave them to work out their common civilization in their own way.”

Scientists Are Studying How to Cut Down the Awful Cost to Mankind of Bad Heredity, Which Often Swells from a Tiny Pool to a Black Ocean of Mental Defectiveness.

THE CURSE OF HEREDITY
Francis Galton, in his book "Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development," coins the term eugenics meaning "good creation."

Eugenics began as a positive movement promoting the reproduction of those determined as healthy individuals and discouraged reproduction of those who were thought of as "feeble-minded", "morons", or "retarded" at the time, or those who fell outside social norms. It was believed that people inherited mental illness, criminal tendencies, and poverty. These were all conditions that they believed could be bred out of the population.

Eugenics was popular in America because it was a theory based on science.

It fell out of favor once it promoted sterilization laws beginning in 1907 and later when used by Adolf Hitler in his obsession to create a master race.
"The hope of every race is not in its common people. Democracy has shown us that while the mass may be educated to a certain degree, it cannot under our present system of lack of eugenic selection, proceed further than that degree. The common man has his inalienable rights and privileges, he is due his utmost development, but if universal compulsory education has shown us anything it is that comparatively few people can ever become educated. All the books in the world do not induce people to read if they do not want to read, and through the air is full of music, only a few will listen to it."

On the Cultivation of a Young Genius by Pearl S. Buck
This is the only known instance where Pearl S. Buck speaks of the word eugenics. It appeared in an article titled, "On the Cultivation of a Young Genius." This article appeared in "Opportunity Journal of Negro Life," on July 1937.

In the article she sounded much like W.E.B. Du Bois, who called upon the "talented tenth" to take responsibility for the African Americans' struggle. Pearl S. Buck states that she believes that geniuses can be found among any race, but they need to be nurtured and developed.
1911

STERILIZATION LAW IN NEW JERSEY

“An act to authorize and provide for the sterilization of feeble-minded (including idiots, imbeciles and morons), epileptics, rapists, certain criminals and other defectives”
The school's name is changed to The Training School at Vineland.

1912

GODDARD PUBLISHES

"The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness"

1913

STERILIZATION LAW UNCONSTITUTIONAL

In Smith vs. the Board of Examiners of Feeble-Minded the sterilization law is ruled unconstitutional.

1920

CAROLINE GRACE BUCK

Caroline Grace Buck is born to Pearl S. Buck and John Lossing Buck on March 4, 1920. In the same year the Training School at Vineland is studying the relation of brain capacity to intelligence.
1929
CAROL ADMITTED
Carol is admitted to the Training School at Vineland on August 9, 1929.

1945
EDWARD R. JOHNSTONE DIES
Professor Johnstone dies. Pearl S. Buck helps in finding a successor.

1946
DR. WALTER JACOBS HIRED
Dr. Walter Jacobs is hired as the director of the Training School at Vineland.

1948
PEARL S. BUCK ELECTED TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES
As early as 1948, Pearl S. Buck was elected to be on the Board of Trustees for the Vineland Training School. She becomes chair of the Board and still serves late into the 1960's.
Pearl S. Buck searched for a home for her daughter where she and the other residents would be treated as valuable human beings.

"Every child's face lit when he came into the cottages, and that there was a clamor of voices to greet him and call his name-Uncle Ed, they called him. I saw he took time to play with them and that he let them hug his knees and look in his pockets where there were small chocolates."

Edward R. Johnstone told Pearl S. Buck that their motto was not just sentimentality. He said "We've found that we cannot teach a child anything unless his mind and heart are free of unhappiness. The only child who can learn is a happy child."
Pearl S. Buck placed Carol Buck in the Training School at Vineland on August 9, 1929.

As she was searching for a place for her daughter to live she was informed that her first novel, "East Wind West Wind" was going to be published.

"This news came one morning when I was feeling very desolate at the prospect of a future separation from my child, while it did not compensate, nevertheless, it brightened life in its own way."

Pearl S. Buck knew she would have to continue to write to provide for Carol.
After the success of her novel, "The Good Earth", Pearl S. Buck and her husband John Lossing Buck donated enough money to create a building for Carol on the grounds of the Training School at Vineland. It would house up to fifteen girls.
1. The said Pearl S. Buck and J. Lossing Buck, have a
daughter named Carol Buck, aged twelve years, who is now, and for
further agrees that the said Carol Buck shall be properly
more than two years, has been a pupil at the said Training School;
clothed, and protected; that her conduct and habits have
and being satisfied with the care and training their daughter has
received there, and with the methods, discipline, and general
management of the School, the said Pearl S. Buck and J. Lossing
Buck, desire to make provision for the said Carol Buck's continued
care by the Training School, for the remainder of her life, and
furthermore, desire to erect and furnish, and landscape a cottage,
and equip a playground for the same. In this cottage, Carol Buck
shall have a single room, closet, bathroom, porch, etc. as hereafter
shown on the plans of the same.
"I do not belittle the efforts of those who care for retarded children in our state institutions. In a very few places there are frightening evidences of callousness and cruelty. But, by and large, caretakers do their best to see that the children are fed, protected and kept reasonably clean. There is no time, however, in a crowded public institution, for adequate educational or provision for happiness. Shelter, food, a minimum of cleanliness, is all that is being achieved. Under such a regime, the most normal human being would degenerate.

Excerpts from "Memorandum on Retarded Children in Pennsylvania" by Pearl S. Buck, 1957
In 1909 the National Committee for Mental Hygiene was created, today known as Mental Health America. The organization set forth the following goals: to improve attitudes toward mental illness and people living with mental health conditions; to improve services for people with mental health conditions; and to work for the prevention of mental illnesses and the promotion of mental health.
I have known of the work of the conscientious objectors and watched it with great interest and approval. The conditions in so many of these institutions are deplorable, and I have felt that the basic reason for this is the low type of person generally used for attendants. My own belief is that the most important person in such institutions are the attendants, or those who are in direct contact with the patients. Anything which the conscientious objectors can do to set higher standards of care and kindness for the unfortunate patients is one of the greatest contributions that could possibly be made to mankind. I have seen cases where kindness and patience brought a patient to surprisingly high levels of intelligence and behavior. Correspondingly, cruelty and carelessness can wreck what is left of a sick mind and a weak body.

Pearl S. Buck to The Mental Hygiene Program on March 12, 1945

*Conscientious objectors are military members approved to provide government-assigned alternative service in accordance with their moral, ethical, or religious beliefs in lieu of participating in combat.
1950

THE CHILD WHO NEVER GREW IS PUBLISHED

Pearl S. Buck's inspiring account of her struggle to help and understand her daughter, one of the first disclosures of its kind from a public figure.

1953

PEARL BUCK CENTER OPENS

Elisabeth “Lisl” Waechter founded Pearl Buck School in Creswell, Oregon for children with developmental disabilities. The school's name was inspired by Pearl S. Buck.

1965

AIMS

Vineland Training School name is changed to the American Institute for Mental Studies where Pearl S. Buck is the President of the Board of Trustees.
The 1950’s spurred many changes for people with disabilities and the places they resided. In the late 1940’s, articles began to be released regarding the conditions at institutions, especially state mental hospitals. These articles highlighted the overcrowding, abuse, insufficient staffing, and lack of adequate supplies in the institutions. They also disclosed the unnecessary and sometimes cruel testing of patients, and the neglect of necessary medical treatment. Such conditions were present in both private and public institutions.
And so began the fight for change. An unusual meeting for parents with children with intellectual disabilities was held in Philadelphia, and Pearl S. Buck was the speaker. In 1949 the Pennsylvania Association for the Retarded and Handicapped was formed. Today, known as ARC, they still continue their work.
In 1950 Pearl S. Buck wrote “The Child Who Never Grew” in article format for Ladies Home Journal, and soon after released a longer version as a book. In it she discussed the forbidden topic of parenting a child with a disability. She revealed that Carol had taught her that the world is made up of all different kinds of people, with different talents and needs, all of whom deserve the same access to opportunity.

After publishing this groundbreaking memoir, Pearl Buck received mailbags filled with letters from readers who had similar experiences, many seeking guidance. She answered as many as she could.
Pulitzer and Nobel Prize-winning author Pearl S. Buck (seated) visits a class for children with disabilities at the Pearl Buck School in Eugene in October 1965. At right is Elisabeth “Listl” Waechter, who founded the Pearl Buck Center in 1953. Waechter named the center for the author, who had a daughter with developmental disabilities.
"What interested me most, however, in this school was not the fact that it bore my name and not even that it was for retarded children, who are to be found in every community. What captured and held my attention most deeply was, and is, the fact that this school is a community school a private enterprise, begun by concerned citizens who had a personal problem, namely retarded children who did not fit the established school system."
Pearl S. Buck was a long time member of the Board for the Training School At Vineland, beginning in 1948 and continuing until the late 1960's. The school changed its name to AIMS, the American Institute for Mental Studies, in 1965.
In every age, however troubled, there are always heartening events. One of the most encouraging, in our times, is the awakening of the public to the needs and rights of the mentally retarded child. He has for too long been the hidden citizen, the forgotten one, but thanks to those who know of his plight and his potentiality, he is coming into his own. Those who know him best are his parents and his teachers, and from them now arises the vision of prevention of at least some of the causes of mental retardation, and certainly of amelioration of the lot of the mentally retarded child. Let us be grateful, not only for the sake of the child but also for the sake of our civilization. The test, I say again and again, of any civilization is the measure of consideration and care which it gives to its weakest members.

PEARL S. BUCK
The American Institute for Mental Studies (AIMS) is the corporate entity which identifies a world renowned, private, non-profit, research and demonstration complex. This organization specializes in the diagnosis, treatment, education and care of those with mental handicaps, including those functioning at a mentally retarded level, the brain injured, the slow learner and the so-called "exceptional child."

AIMS through its various units constantly strives to achieve two basic but equally important goals. One is to provide the child with what he or she seeks and requires most, love, understanding and acceptance, for without these ingredients the full development of potential can never be realized. The other is to identify the difficult problems in the field and to establish pilot demonstration centers backed by liaisons with universities to show the best techniques available in the handling of these problems in light of present knowledge. These processes in proper balance make it possible to improve the functional level and to ameliorate the handicap of the child.

AIMS continues to maintain its widely acclaimed research efforts as well as its training of professional workers at home and abroad.

"I think that the acceptance and study of the intellectually handicapped child helps us to remain human, and humane. I always like to say this, and I say it as often as I can, that the test of a civilization is in the way it treats its weakest members, and these are certainly the weakest and most innocent. We cannot afford to ignore these children."

[Signature]
1973

DEATH OF PEARL BUCK
Pearl S. Buck dies on March 6, 1973, leaving the care of her daughter, Carol, in the hands of her next eldest child Janice Walsh.

1974

DR. WILLIAM SMITH
Dr. Jacobs retired in 1974, and Dr. William Smith became superintendent.

1981

ELWYN INSTITUTE OF MEDIA, PENNSYLVANIA
The Elwyn Institute took control of the Training School to avoid closure.

1988

THE TRAINING SCHOOL AT VINELAND
The historic name is once again restored.
Pearl S. Buck left this "good earth" on March 6, 1973.

She had appointed daughter Janice Walsh, the second of her eight children, as Carol’s guardian. After Carol’s birth, Ms. Buck was unable to bear more children and adopted Janice in 1925 in New York with then-husband John Lossing Buck.
Janice became a member of the Board of Directors for the school. “My sister Carol was five years older than I was, we were very close and I visited as often as I could,” recalled Janice years later.

She also said about Vineland, “This was a wonderful and inspiring place. I think much of what I became in life as an occupational therapist, studying as an artist, and in receiving an honorary doctoral degree ... for my work; I think much of that started right here on this property.”
In the 1980s a four part series appeared in The Recorder, a newspaper in Hackensack, New Jersey. It detailed the horrific death of a resident at the school, Billy Kemner.

It also outlined many other unfavorable accusations made about the school.

Carol Buck was still a resident of the school at this time.
After the many problems at AIMS became apparent, Dr. William Scott was eventually arrested and found guilty of child neglect for his failure to correct dangerous conditions there.

In 1981, Elwyn Institute of Media, Pennsylvania assumed management of the school to avoid closure. They restored the school's campus, returned the school to its former name, and expanded or created many new community facilities.
May 28, 1987

Dear Ms. Walsh,

Enclosed in this envelope is a pot holder that Carol worked on with staff to complete. Once it was finished, she was given several options of what she could do with it. She decided to send it to you.

She is currently working on a pillow case that she will be encouraged to take back to cottage and use. She is completing this project by working one-on-one with staff.

Carol and I both hope you enjoy the pot holder.

Your sincerely,

[Signature]

Carla Spinnato
Weaving Instructor
Senior Enrichment
DEATH OF CAROL

COMMUNITY HOMES

As of 1996 Elwyn moved all of its residents off-campus and into community based group homes.
Carol Buck died at Vineland in 1992 at 72 years of age. By 1996, only a few years later, Elwyn had successfully moved all of its residents to community based group homes. Today, Elwyn New Jersey currently has 50 group homes.

On the grounds of what was previously the Training School at Vineland, Elwyn still holds day programs and maintains a medical group home.
Today the Pearl Buck Center annually supports the efforts of about 700 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Eugene-Springfield area of Oregon. Their programs include Pearl Buck Preschool, Community Employment, Supported Living, Life Enhancing Activities Program (LEAP), Project SEARCH, and Vocational Academy. Through these programs, they strive to provide the support these individuals need to be empowered, independent members of our society.
Alex loves his job at MOD Pizza where he has been working for three years. The pandemic has been especially hard on the food service industry. Like many others, Alex was temporarily furloughed and found himself staying home. Alex graduated from Pearl Buck Center's Project SEARCH internship program in 2017. After that, he worked with the Community Employment program staff to find a job he loves. After all the effort Alex put in, it was hard to stay home. When it was safe to return to work, he was ready and eager to return. And MOD Pizza was ready for him!
Organizations now work to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With the passing of laws such as The Americans With Disabilities Act, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act and the Fair Housing Act, employment, education and housing rights have been mandated. Support for integrated living and community inclusion continues to grow and evolve. Efforts are ongoing to educate the public about institutions. There is still work to be done, for in 2019, 37 states still had institutions where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live away from their families and communities.
The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University hosts a Visionary Voices collection which shares stories from advocates, self-advocates and family members who took great risks to ensure the safety and freedom of people with disabilities in Pennsylvania. You can hear their voices by browsing the collection of interviews here: https://disabilities.temple.edu/voices/interviews.html
What are some ways you can make the future accessible and inclusive?

- Learn more about disability history at www.museumofdisability.org
- Become involved in the ARC https://thearcalliance.org/volunteer/
- Sponsor a child through Pearl S. Buck who is facing challenges due to poverty, disability, and prejudice. https://pearlsbuck.org/sponsor-a-child/
- Read books like "The Pretty One" by Keah Brown, or "Strangers Assume My Girlfriend Is My Nurse" by Shane Burcaw, or "The Child Who Never Grew" by Pearl S. Buck
- Check out Librivox (LibriVox volunteers record chapters of books in the public domain, and then release the audio files for free.) Or Be My Eyes (Be My Eyes is a free app that connects blind and low-vision people with sighted volunteers for visual assistance.)