

# The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy, and Social Policy in Britain c. 1870-1959 (Oxford Historical Monographs)

Mathew Thomson



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#### **The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy, and Social Policy in Britain c. 1870-1959** (Oxford Historical Monographs) Mathew Thomson

This is the first full study of the great alarm about "mental defectives" in Britain between 1870 and 1959, and the resulting policies of segregation, community care, and sexual sterilization. Mathew Thomson examines the origins of these policies in central government and shows how they were put into practice by health professionals and local authorities. He reveals how policy-makers avoided extremist measures such as compulsory sterilization (introduced in Germany and parts of the US during this period), not for reasons of liberal principle but because of the socially conservative and anti-interventionlist nature of British political culture.

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