

Disability History Association Podcast

Interview with Chelsea Chamberlain

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Kelsey Henry: Hello, and welcome to another episode of the Disability History Association Podcast. I'm Kelsey Henry -

Caroline Lieffers: And I'm Caroline Lieffers -

Kelsey: And today it's our pleasure to be speaking with Chelsea Chamberlain, who is finishing up her PhD at the University of Pennsylvania. Chelsea, it's so wonderful to have you with us today.

Chelsea Chamberlain: Thank you for having me. It's great to be here.

Kelsey: So we always like to start off with anyone that we have on the podcast, getting to know a little bit about your journey to becoming a disability historian. Did you know that you were a disability historian in training when you got to grad school or did it sort of catch you by surprise?

Chelsea: It caught me by surprise. I started graduate school at the University of Montana, where I did a Master's. And I started that program thinking I was going to be a historian of the American West. I was interested in like western labor movements and the mining wars and those kinds of things. And then I took a class with the Western historian in the department and was like, uh, and he was retiring, and so it just didn't feel quite right. And then my advisor in the program, I was in a research seminar with him, and he, I was going to do something along the lines of Western labor history, and he said um-um - do something totally different that you've never done before. And he pointed me towards the National Conference on Charities and Corrections, their proceedings, because they had come up in a book that we had read in his seminar. And I started looking through those and came across a speech by Martin Barr, who you met in the dissertation, where he was railing about the threat of moral imbeciles. And I was taken in by this, you know, odd phrase and not knowing where it came from, or, or what it meant, and just started reading and, and was taken by -- he was talking about these institutions for the feeble-minded alongside sessions that were about education for the Deaf and the blind. Why are these all being talked about at the same time, but in such different ways? And I just kind of dove in, started reading historiography and followed the historical questions. I'm not disabled myself, and during the course of my graduate work my niece was diagnosed with a disability and that's been interesting in kind of shaping our relationship as we've gone. But yeah, I came to disability history just as someone who had a question and kept following it.

Caroline: That sounds like, I think, a familiar story for a lot of us – have a question and then keep following it. That's really well put. We had the pleasure and privilege of being able to read your dissertation, which I think we both really enjoyed. And your dissertation spends a lot of time focusing on the history of a particular institution, the Pennsylvania Training School for Feeble-Minded Children at Elwyn – if I have that right. Can you tell us a little bit just about this institution? Tell our audience about it and, like, what kind of place was it supposed to be? Who was it supposed to serve?

Chelsea: Definitely. So I'll just refer to it as Elwyn, the shorter name. And Elwyn was founded in the 1850s. It's among some of the earliest institutions for the - I'm going to say feeble minded throughout this, every time picture air quotes -- is one of the earliest institutions for the feeble minded. And it was founded by a teacher at a time where some of these places were founded by physicians, others were founded by teachers. It was founded by a teacher named James Richard who took on a handful of children from Philadelphia and New York and wanted to prove that they could learn and be, you know, taught to support themselves in careers. Very quickly, the institution leadership was taken over by physicians. So the superintendents very quickly were physicians and remained physicians through the twentieth century. So it was an interesting place that -- plenty of institutions were structured this way. It was semi-private, semi-public. So there were people who were there, and their parents paid tuition if they could afford it, but then over time the state also appropriated money to support students whose families couldn't pay that tuition. And so money came from the state, it also came from Philadelphia, which, it's very nearby Philadelphia. And money came from certain charity societies as well, to support the range of residents who were there.

Caroline: How did you come to make Elwyn the focus of your work?

Chelsea: Well, it goes back to that answer, where I first came across Martin Barr and then became obsessed with him. My Master's advisor would sometimes jokingly call him my boyfriend when I was working on my thesis and otherwise single [laughs]. But I wrote my Master's thesis on moral imbecility and ended up spending a lot of time with Martin Barr and his predecessor Isaac Kerlin, who was a very prominent superintendent. He founded the professional association of superintendents for these institutions. So, in the course of writing about moral imbecility I wrote about them, and when I decided to come to Penn for my PhD I knew that Elwyn was nearby and just decided to see what was there. And through a lot of luck, they had just recently finished processing their huge collection, thanks to a couple of grants from the State of Pennsylvania and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. They had just produced a basic finding aid and organized some things and gotten papers into boxes. So I arrived and it took a few emails, and I had to jump through a pretty absurd number of hoops. But then I was able to get in. And then, when I saw the incredible sources that they had I knew that this is the focus of the dissertation. This has to be written about. This is, like, this is the anchor, is being one of the first people in a new archive means, you know, it's, it was really lucky.

Kelsey: It sounds like you had one of those ideal, kind of, miraculous moments that historians are always sort of hoping for, searching for, like finding an archive that hasn't been written about, that hasn't been accessible before, and immediately recognizing richness and stories that haven't been told that are so abundant and urgent, like feeling that urgency.

Chelsea: I was really fortunate, and it was also the timing of -- there's this wonderful Dr Elliott Simon, he's a clinical psychologist but was the Director of Research at Elwyn which still operates today as a facility that, they have some residential services but mostly do community-based service and rehabilitation. And they actually kind of have a monopoly on all things kind of mental health care in the Philadelphia area. But he was, you know, just a history buff. He really cares about this history, he'd spent a lot of time with these things and was really excited to get historians into these sources. So he was a great support, helped me fight through the hoops to, he helped me prepare to talk to Elwyn's Human Rights Committee and get approval from them, which I had to get every year, and was really instrumental in making it possible to, to see these things and to point me to, you know, like, that filing cabinet over there is where the medical records are. Or, you know, because

it's not a super organized place. And like, over there are the huge indexes that will tell you where to find residents in the six different books that they might be located in. So he was crucial.

Kelsey: I feel like what you're really describing is something that doesn't often make it beyond maybe the acknowledgments of the dissertation or a book project that is so instrumental and crucial to doing archival work and accessing resources. It truly is collaborative and this myth of single-authored scholarship is so immediately debunked when you really talk to historians about the collaborative work that they do to access records that are difficult, difficult to access. It truly is a collaborative labor so thank you for sharing that with us, yeah.

So why don't we dive in a little bit more into the dissertation itself. Your work is really so tremendously beautiful and thoughtful, and one of the first chapters that we were really struck by analyzes the application forms that you found in Elwyn's archives. And we wanted to talk with you a little bit more about, kind of, the application form as a genre. So forms are super prescriptive and they try to prompt information into categories and boxes. And you use this language of institutions like Elwyn tried to sort their residents into "well-sorted citizenry." And applications were a part of that process. And yet people don't always fill out the forms the way that they're supposed to and as a historian, you can also read those forms against the grain. Can you say a little bit more about what it felt like, what it was like to work with those documents and what kinds of stories they prompted for you?

Chelsea: Yeah, I mean they, these, they were just incredible. When I found them, I was looking through them, Dr Simon and a historian at Westchester named Brent Ruswick have an article that used some of these forms. It's in the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* that provided kind of a framework, and then I took a large sample. I use 600 forms, taking 100 from about every 10 years and decided to use those to look at closely, because there's 6000 forms about. I was like, well, I can't look at all those because they're quite long and involved.

But going through those samples, what really struck me was the ways that parents who filled these forms out, because they were applying for admission to Elwyn, as well as providing information that the superintendent would use to diagnose the person once they arrive, if they were chosen for admission. The way that parents, you know, poured stories out over these documents that were designed to be raw research material for producing statistics, because these were superintendents. They were professionalising physicians and they were interested in kind of harvesting these forms for data and particularly for saying, this is about heredity, you know, they were looking for, to be tipped off about a way to indict the heredity of the person who was seeking admission. And despite that structure and that intention, that's not what the forms, how they read. You know, there are plenty that are kind of programmatic, but you see the limits of people operating with different vocabularies. Parents who don't understand what is being asked of them. When they ask, you know, does the child understand form, I don't know. Or the questions that come up about, the question, is the child religiously inclined? And if a parent is applying for a child who does not speak or does not walk they come up against a difficulty defining what it might mean for someone to be religiously inclined. That was one form that really stood out to me, is that the person who was filling out the form answered the question by saying, well, she mimics her older sister by getting on her hands and knees at prayer time. So yes? Even though it was a it was a child who did not speak.

And this, the forms included kind of an open area at the end to say, what else is there about the case that matters to you. And applications that were formed out by charity societies or

by family physicians, they often left that blank or just kind of said, see above, but that was the area where families really poured out stories. One that didn't make it into the dissertation but is the first time that I cried in the archive, have been plenty, but was a mother who used the form to write kind of a long confession about her own, kind of, suspicion that her daughter was impaired because she had tried to perform like a medicated abortion when she was pregnant with this daughter. And she confesses that her husband told her to do it, he went and got the medication and, and told her she had to take it and forced her. And she says, you know, that wasn't successful and now I'm being punished for trying to end my pregnancy and instead of ending it, now I have the disabled child and you need to take her.

So there was grief like that that comes out in these forms. And then there are also families who were grieved at the idea of having to send their child away. And that's the other stuff that made me cry. You know, people who have children with needs that they are unable to meet, needs for supervision or for physical care, you know, they need to be moved in and out of bed, or dressed, and if their parents aren't able to meet those needs, they feel like Elwyn is their last resort. And that, the grief they experience in making that choice comes through.

Caroline: It's really important what you're saying, Chelsea. I, I'm just really curious because I have this conversation with my students a lot, you know. I teach classes on the history of gender and sexuality, I teach classes on the history of health, disability, and racial justice, and often the stories that we encounter are filled with grief, right. And they do incite a lot of emotions in us. You described crying in the archives, I think many of us have had that experience of being kind of punched in the gut by something that we're reading on a piece of paper that's 150 years old, or whatever, or maybe in your case 100 years old, whatever. But I wonder, we also as historians are supposed to remain analytical and are supposed to be these good clinical, critical thinkers who are able to somehow transcend emotion and get to the analytical heart of the story. And I'm wondering if you have any thoughts you want to share, about that balance between emotion and analysis. Are those two things incompatible? Are they actually more closely linked than perhaps historians have been willing to admit? I would just love to hear your thoughts on that.

Chelsea: Thank you for that question. That's an important question. I was talking with my advisor, the wonderful Kathy Peiss this afternoon and we touched on this some as I'm trying to sort out what my dissertation's argument is. Because the problem with it having a lot of them that are kind of gesturing, and that, like, at bottom, the argument feels like it's complicated, it's really messy. There are lots of different stakeholders and interest groups with different degrees of power and different ideas about what the good life looks like and they're all pointing towards institutions or special education or diagnosis as certain elements of a solution to the problem of mental disability that they don't, that they regard as a problem and they're seeking solutions. And that saying it's complicated feels really dissatisfying. And what Kathy pointed me towards is where argument comes in and where analysis comes in, is, well, *why* is it complicated. To take the step, what makes, what makes it so complicated. And that's where I think the answer is this emotional side of things, that in order to understand why and the ways in which these messy landscapes play out and the ways that different groups interact with each other, we have to be willing to recognize the emotional state of not only ourselves, but of our subjects. And the complexity of their feelings and their priorities help get us to why something like perceived mental disability is so complicated and why so many people have different ideas about what it looks like to identify or quote unquote solve what mental disability is and what its implications are for a society.

Caroline: That's really interesting, something I think we need to keep talking more about. I mean there is this sort of emotional turn that has happened in a lot of different fields of history, including, I think the history of medicine, as we're more aware of the feelings that people were experiencing in the past and being attentive to the power that those held. And what that also means is that we as historians often get emotionally implicated in these stories as well. And I think we haven't fully worked out exactly what to do with that, but it's something we should talk openly about as a community, because it is very real and it affects, it affects our work and maybe for the better, maybe some cases not, it's hard to say, but, yeah.

Chelsea: I think it's valuable as a way to consider what historical writing can look like. And I've been really inspired by the work of Saidiya Hartman and Susan Burch's recent book as examples of like, we can totally reckon with this. And we can, that it's not only about working through our emotions before we put it on the page, but working through them on the page, and asking our readers to, to experience emotions about history with us. And I think that leads to history becoming a much more powerful thing than it might be if we limit it to something that's purely analytical.

Caroline: Yeah, thanks for thinking through this with us, Chelsea. Let's keep talking about Elwyn. There were people like over the age of 18 at Elwyn as well, right? There were adults?

Chelsea: Correct. So the average age of admission was 13 or so. Some children came when they were as young seven. And then there were some people who admitted, were admitted when they were in their 30s and 40s, but the duration of stay was quite lengthy so even people who arrived as adolescents could often stay there well into adulthood.

Caroline: That's really interesting. It's making me think about the, what, the name of the institution. It has children in the name, right? I wasn't imagining that?

Chelsea: Yeah, it does, and all of the superintendent's refer to their residents as children. They'll even call them perpetual children or refer to our children young and old. And that this this status assigned to them as feeble-minded also implies a child-like status.

Caroline: Hmm, interesting. When it comes to these quote "eugenic mass institutionalization" facilities, right, as you term them, I think, we often think of the State or the institution almost as like an aggressor, forcing children out of their family homes into the facility, but your work suggests that that wasn't really the case at Elwyn, or at least that's not the only possible case, right. And so I'd love for you say more about how a child would come, or a young adult, or an older adult would come to be institutionalized at Elwyn. How does that happen?

Chelsea: This is something that, what happened at Elwyn was unique in that, because of its semi-public status, they did not take anyone who was committed through the courts, so they didn't have anyone who was legally committed, they were just admitted. And they were also able to be a little bit more selective about who they admitted compared to strictly state institutions that had people, you know, forcibly committed by the courts. So Elwyn is a case where there's certainly more choice involved or more cases of voluntary, semi-voluntary admission. But I would say that even at state institutions who are taking people who have been legally committed, those state institutions are also taking voluntary admissions whose circumstances align with those who are being admitted at Elwyn.

So to get to Elwyn, parents were often referred by a physician or charity organization. This is during the rise of scientific charity and charity organization societies that are getting more

and more involved in lots of lower-class families' lives. And then as special education takes off, special teachers became people who were referring to Elwyn. But basically, someone would mention, you know, this child should be institutionalized, or the parents might have heard about Elwyn in an ad. And they would ask for an application form. The forms were also sent out and various charities had kind of stacks of them ready to go. They would fill out this eight pages worth of information and send it in, and then the superintendent would read through it and evaluate whether they had space for someone of the adjudged capacity that they would extract from the form, and then decide whether they would be admitted or not.

Kelsey: That's so fascinating. I, so I work on the history of developmental metrics, pediatrics and developmental psychology, so I, I think a lot about the history of the normal child, right, the clinical entity. But sort of, I'm trying to get at the ways that we need to understand histories of developmental normalcy to also understand diagnostic categories around developmental disability or feeble mindedness. I've read kind of in the historiography that you're working in, these institutional histories of intellectual disability or developmental disability, and I know that in those stories they're often discussed as carceral spaces, these eugenic mass institutions. But you kind of paint a different portrait of institutions like Elwyn as being more permeable than maybe we would have thought initially. And you write about this, especially in Chapter 3, exploring the ways that families could actually have more influence than I think most narratives have convey about how their children or their loved ones came and went from the institution. Students often ran away. So you found these instances in the archive of residents and families that were pushing against these strictures of institutional power. And that's one of the most compelling parts of your dissertation is the ways that you were able to get at those stories. That unsettle, unsettle historiography around institutions for feeble-minded people. And I'm wondering if you can say a little bit more, just share a couple of examples that you found in the archives that were either especially compelling or especially challenging, that speak to this idea of Elwyn as being a more permeable space than we might have thought.

Chelsea: Definitely, I mean that's something that really surprised me when I first started working in the Elwyn archive. I started with a couple of boxes of correspondence that they have, incoming correspondence that was written, often by families to the superintendent. And they also have the superintendent's outgoing correspondence. And what struck me was just how much of the superintendent's time was spent updating family members on the status of their kin, or writing letters to parents saying so-and-so ran away again, is he there? Or writing after summer vacation -- residents were allowed to go home and then when summer vacation ended, there was a bunch of letters went out saying, you know, break is over, you have to get them back. And that just surprised me because I hadn't even really, I, I know that often the books will, scholars will mention that there were summer vacations but it hadn't lodged in my brain that it was an option for some residents to go home and they would see their families over holidays. And that they were able to maintain some of those ties.

And, and then what interested me is thinking about how diverse the institution itself was. I think that when histories of institutionalization focus on eugenics, they often focus on the primary targets of eugenics, who were people who were actually like so-called borderline, or who were primarily marked as deviant because of their race or their gender or sexual behaviors and then their intelligence was used as a, as a reason, then, to institutionalize them. But I was interested in the wide spectrum. There were people like that in the institution and there were also people who couldn't speak and couldn't walk and needed a lot of supports. And I was interested in pointing out the different ways that those groups experienced the institution and that the superintendents, especially in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth century, were still committed to some level of education or like quote unquote enrichment outings for groups from Elwyn. Every summer they went to the circus in Media, groups of like 500 people going out to the circus. And so I was interested in the divide then in how the institution was designed for certain people who were there, and then other people who were there were entirely neglected in the ways that the institutional education and enrichment, who they were for and that they were for the quote unquote high grades, and then the custodial cases were left to their own devices.

And so, that means that talking about examples of resistance or running away, that those went to people, you know, only someone who can run can run away, and I think it's important to note that when we're thinking about the multi-faceted character of these institutions. But it was also, you know, some really incredible stories from those people who were able to resist in really obvious ways and really disruptive ways. I think my favorite one, I've like started dubbing it just the Lemonade Rebellion, where the -- Elwyn had a band, it was all boys and men, young adults and they were entitled to certain privileges. And one of those privileges was every year to celebrate all of their birthdays at once they got an elaborate dinner. They got to eat in the teachers' dining room and staff dining room instead of where everyone else did, and it was a huge deal. And then one year Superintendent Barr, to save money, cancels the dinner and says you're having lemonade and cake in the band room. And they lose, they lose it. Unacceptable. They up turn tables, throw instruments, lock themselves in a practice room, yell expletives at the teacher who's trying to get them out, and just create a huge scene. And according to the superintendent they yell, they say that they're going to stand by their rights to a full dinner. And they don't get the dinner, but when they're being, they're finally convinced to open the door and marched out. They're being marched to the custodial ward where they're going to be put for punishment. You know, it's a, it's a frequent punishment that they used to have people who thought of them, who had been ranked in a certain way, to have them live with people who had greater care needs. As they're being marched to the custodial ward they break loose and the whole group, they all try and run away. They're not all successful, but several of them do. They just leave and never come back. So that was one of, one of those ones, where you like, you're in the archive and you want to stand up and cheer yeah, you got 'em!

In terms of a challenging example, I think what was really challenging was seeing how a family's physical and financial resources shaped the ways that they were able to be involved in their kin's institutional life. And, you know, it took money and resources and time off work to be able to travel from Philadelphia or somewhere else in Pennsylvania to Elwyn for your monthly visit. And lots of people couldn't do that. And that there were wealthy families who paid extra money so that their child got to go on, they went on carriage rides around the campus or carriage rides into Philadelphia or shopping trips into Philadelphia. That lots of things that helped promote some residents having interaction with the outside world. And then others who were left behind. And so I think that was the most challenging thing is seeing the people who, either because they were deemed severely impaired and kind of written off as hopeless or because their families just did not possess the resources to physically get to them, that they ended up experiencing that neglect.

Kelsey: Chelsea, I'm actually wondering if you can backtrack a little bit something that you said piqued my interest and I'm really curious to hear more. In the Lemonade Rebellion story that you told you mentioned that students were accustomed to a particular kind of punishment if they rebelled, if they were in trouble, of being taken to the custodial ward. So going and being put with students or residents who required more care. And I'm wondering if you can say a little bit more about that practice - what you were able to make of it in

terms of the reasoning behind it. Were these residents expected to take on some of the labor of care when they were in the custodial ward?

Chelsea: Great question. A few things about that. So that's a really, like a long-standing disciplinary tactic from as far as I can tell the earliest growth of these institutions. On the one hand it's a practical measure because the custodial wards had locked doors and often some of the other wards for quote unquote high grade residents, they didn't have locking doors. So if someone threatened to run away or did run away and then were brought back, they would be put in a building where they could be locked in. And that happens to be the custodial ward where other people were. In terms of labor, laboring in the custodial ward would not have been necessarily a punishment, but just a standard expectation that most of the residents who were capable of work were required to do it. And that often did involve care work: feeding, bathing, dressing other residents who weren't able to do that for themselves.

There's one interesting letter that gets sent to Superintendent Barr around 1910. So, visitors weren't usually allowed inside the custodial awards which, from what we know about the conditions inside of them, we understand why the superintendent would not want people in there. But one father did go in to see his son, who was being held in the custodial ward as a punishment and writes a letter, very angry, saying that it's a place where, if anyone would see, would look or smell that they would become sick. That it's just not an environment that someone should have to live in. And so he actually withdraws his son after seeing that he's been forced to, to live in that ward.

And then I'll finish on this is -- I'm actually, I'm writing the conclusion of the dissertation now which you all didn't get because it's not written, but I've been going back to this exposé called "Suffer the Little Children" that was produced by Bill Baldini that focused on the Pennhurst State school, which is a different, it's a state institution in Pennsylvania. And in that 1968 exposé he does a whole segment where he talks to a boy who they called Johnny who they say, has an IQ of 69 and because he has behavior issues he is living in the ward Q2, which is the ward for people who don't speak and have high care needs. And so that is a form of punishment that's still being used, even in the late 1960s. And they talked to a doctor who says, yeah, the point is to degrade their humanity a little bit for, to make it so they don't misbehave again degrade their humanity and that's something that's still just sticks with me. And that piece ends with the reporter saying there are too many Johnny's. And this focus on the injustice being done to the boy who's living among people in horrible conditions as a punishment, rather than the people whose every day is the horrible conditions because they don't speak words, that's the thing that that gets me and that I really care about in the dissertation and in my future work and research is that, that there were lots of people in the institution and none of them should have been there. Where I think if we focus too much on people who were primarily eugenic targets because of their supposed criminality or, or moral deviance rather than kind of their fundamental dependence or interdependence, that we miss, we risk limiting the scale of the injustice to a certain class of people who weren't supposed to be there, rather than making the argument that none of them should have been. And that, you know, paying attention to the people in the background of the piece with Johnny in the room, rather than only Johnny in the room.

Caroline: It's really important, yeah, thanks Chelsea. You mentioned a little while ago that on the forms, the kind of information that they're collecting is meant, in part, to quote indict the heredity. That was a really powerful thing you said, that I wrote that one down. And you also alluded to eugenic sterilization just, just now actually. And you said that you know, perhaps often there's been too much focus on a particular sort of strata of people who are living in these institutions who will be targeted for eugenic sterilization. But even with that

said, I would like to ask a little bit more about that and just get a sense of what was actually going on at Elwyn. So Elwyn was a place where eugenic sterilization also occurred, right? [**Chelsea:** Right] From what you were able to tell is this limited to just like a particular population at Elwyn? Is this sort of across the board at Elwyn? In what kinds of circumstances is Barr able to authorize this procedure? Can you just talk us through a little bit of that?

Chelsea: Definitely. So Pennsylvania never passed a compulsory sterilization law. But sterilization still occurred. Elwyn sterilized nearly 300 people. And the way they were able to do that is they got consent from parents or guardians. Usually. That's one of those things, digging through the sources, I've found examples where they asked to sterilize someone and they didn't get consent and there's no sterilization in the medical records, so I assume, okay, they listened. Without consent, they didn't do it. But I'm still not positive on that front. And sterilization was primarily, was most often used as a way to provide superintendents some kind of peace of mind when discharging a resident. The idea was, well, they can, this person can probably cut it, their family will support them, but we cannot risk them reproducing and therefore we're going to sterilize them. That would often be the terms in which they would ask for consent. If, you know, parents asked to take a resident home, he would say you can, but first consent to this operation and then they'll be able to go home and be safe.

Something interesting though that happened at Elwyn is in the early 1930 the superintendent and one of the physicians publish a piece about sterilization and they make a really explicit argument that sterilization should not actually just be performed for people who are being discharged, people who are, have been diagnosed as high grade, but that actually sterilization is a helpful tool for institutional management, because -- and that it should be performed, particularly on women who are not able to care for their own hygienic needs. It was a labor argument, that because they're short-staffed and attendants don't like caring for women who are menstruating that an operation could solve the problem of menstruation and make it so that attendants had an easier time and weren't so burdened with their care. And they make this explicit argument in their article about, it's called selective sterilization, so they say, sterilization shouldn't just be limited to the people who we're going to discharge, but can also be used to make our staffing issues easier.

Caroline: That's really interesting because, well for, and horrifying, for many reasons. I mean, I think we often think of the eugenics sterilization has been just simply like cutting the fallopian tubes right. And are we talking about hysterectomies here? I mean that that's a much more invasive procedure.

Chelsea: Yeah there were different, different approaches kind of throughout the 1880s to 1930s. And at Elwyn they were always in favor of them most invasive option because of this argument that paired sterilization as not only a eugenic measure but tried to bill it as a therapeutic measure that if, you know, if residents were castrated or had their ovaries completely removed that their sexual urges would be lessened and attendants would deal less with masturbation, they would deal less with menstruation, in addition to not having to worry about reproduction. So in trying to cast sterilization as not only eugenic but also therapeutic, that also required them to perform much more invasive versions of those operations.

Caroline: Kelsey you look like you might want to ask a follow up question but I don't want to put you on the spot.

Kelsey: No, I don't have a question. I'm just, just taking in what you're saying Chelsea. I just hadn't realized that selective sterilization extended to just considerations about and the administration of these institutions and what would be easier on attendants. I know a little bit more about, like, in more contemporary discourse, all the controversy around growth attenuation therapies and procedures and thinking especially about the Ashley X case. But I know that there have been similar cases, and one of the rationales for growth attenuation procedures like hormonally or through hysterectomy is about burden of care, and menstruation, and often is very -- even though bodies of all genders menstruate -- is tied up with these ideas about like a menstruating feminine body being a burden, a burden of care, yeah.

Chelsea: It's also, my, my dad is a bioethicist and he does like healthcare ethics stuff, and I remember hearing him talk about cases they were being presented with. People making -- they weren't emphasizing the care issue but emphasizing that a period is a difficult thing to experience and sometimes a painful thing to experience. And this is, so talking about the comfort or like mental maturity of a person to handle the experience of menstruating and that was surprising me because that also gets brought up in this article in the 1930s as well, you know, they're trying to build the list of reasons why this is OK to do. They also say, look, well it's uncomfortable and some, some of the residents are disturbed by it so that's why we're doing it. But the explanation is a lot longer when it comes to easing burden of care, so you know that they're just, you know, they're piling up reasons and that one feels like it's not actually what they're focused on.

Caroline: I'm kind of torn between competing interpretations of Elwyn. And I -- maybe this was something that you also fought, like struggled through in your dissertation. Because there are so many ways in which this institution is horrifyingly abusive and carceral, that is the overwhelming impression. But it's also a place where sometimes the people who are in the band get to have these really fun dinners -- at least when they're not cancelled -- and hang out with their friends. Or a parent might actually celebrate that their child got admitted to Elwyn and see opportunity there. And I'm just wondering how you found room for these, kind of, competing narratives in your dissertation.

Chelsea: Yeah, and I've come to the point of sitting with the tension of both and, and recognizing that it's possible for a place to be all of those things. And that makes it harder to deal with, then just as, you know, eugenics bad, wrong, force, like, all coercion, all evil. And then you, you know, you're reading about some of the flexibilities or the, you're reading reports from teachers who are really passionate and reporting excitedly on like the progress a child is making in speaking and communicating their needs. And, and then you're like, well, I don't want to be an apologist for any of these things. And so I think it, it comes down to recognizing that they're -- just, just recognizing that there was space for joy in the institution doesn't mean we're crediting the eugenicists with creating that space. It's -- the space is to families who are fighting for people. It's to the, like, perseverance of residents who are forming fierce relationships with each other and, you know, seeking each other out and seeking joy in unsupervised places and in teachers who are showing up to their classroom and doing what they can with limited resources and celebrating victories where they happen. And coming back to the idea that recognizing those moments doesn't mean, you know, recognizing good pieces, good moments doesn't mean redeeming the institution. That we can still say that institutionalization shouldn't exist and that it's bad because greater moments of joy are found with greater frequency in homes and in communities. And how we can sit with the tension of compassion existing in a place without calling it a compassionate place.

Caroline: That's really, really well put, thank you, Chelsea. I think this tension also exists in the figure of Barr. He is, he's complicated, my goodness. I mean he's not the most famous name in the history of eugenics and we may need to talk about that a little bit because he, he did clash a bit in terms of his theories with other more famous folks like –

Chelsea: He did not get on board with psychology, so he missed the train on that one --

Caroline: [Laughs] Exactly yeah, yeah, psychologists like Henry Goddard, right, their names are kind of the famous ones that show up again and again in this history in this particular period, and Barr and he would not have gotten along. And, you know, I think a lot of Barr's ideas seem to have kind of fallen out of fashion, but he seems to have persisted with them nonetheless and it's tricky. As we were reading your dissertation you know, sometimes he seems terribly cruel, but sometimes he's also making concessions to residents and their families in ways that feel more generous. And he shows contempt for people with disabilities and he's using them and their labor to keep Elwyn's budget managed, basically, balanced. But he also has committed his life to working with people with disabilities. So how did you navigate writing about Barr? Was there anything you found really difficult about him or interesting about him or challenging about him as you were writing your dissertation?

Chelsea: Definitely, I mean I was struck by this contrast in making the transition from my master's research into the PhD. Getting the difference between reading his published papers and then reading his correspondence was where I was like, who is this? When, you know, in all of his published papers that's where he's making the political argument for eugenics. He's making a society-wide argument using really disturbing and harsh language about like, cutting out evil at the root and using the surgeon's knife in place of a, like, nurse's care or something like that. He, he loved he seems to almost like relish writing these really distasteful arguments for sterilization especially. And then in reading through these, this correspondence I discover, you know, a couple of really close relationships that he had with residents that really surprised me. And there's one, one young man who, I'm allowed to use his real name, because he gets, Barr mentioned his real name in his publications, his name is Albertus and he arrived at Elwyn as maybe like a nine or ten year old. Barr goes back and forth on whether he is a quote unquote idiot savant, so that's a term that perhaps bridges across to autism. Albertus was incredibly musically gifted. Sometimes Barr says he didn't have any, he wasn't feeble minded it was just he had a poor environment growing up, because he was orphaned. So he goes back and forth on whether he thinks that this young man is truly whatever that means impaired, but he loves him. He and -- Albertus goes through education, he raises some trouble by having an affair, with an engaged teacher. And, but he eventually moves up, despite his indiscretions, he gets kind of graduated and becomes an attendant, a staff member at Elwyn. And then he dies in his early 20s of I think pneumonia or the flu.

And every letter that Barr sends out the week that Albertus dies, whoever it's to, he, he tells them, Albertus died. It's a really dark time. And he dedicates one of his books to him. And, unlike many of the people who died it when he gets a gravestone in the institution cemetery. And that was a bond that really surprised me and there was another there's another case of young boy who only had he had two or three spoken words, you could say mama and identify a couple of toys. He had, he was mostly blind from glaucoma, or, trachoma, sorry, and his mother who clearly was very wealthy was super involved in his time at Elwyn. And she and Barr seem to have had a friendship. They wrote, she wrote lots of letters, and unfortunately she doesn't have very good handwriting so I can't tell you what all those letters say but they clearly had a real friendship. And as a result of that friendship, he spent a lot of time with this boy who usually people who required that level of support

would not have gotten as much of Barr's attention, but he would take him on outings. They would go and watch the other boys play football, they would go sledding they spent all this time together.

So, kind of like I said about the institution itself, it's interesting to me to recognize those moments of compassion, to see him as a as a person who felt strong emotions and deep devotion to many of the people who were in his charge. But, at the same time, he was able to hold that tenderness alongside a broad social vision in which these people would not exist anymore. And I don't really know what to do with that other than use it as a, as an indictment of ourselves, potentially, or maybe not an indictment, but a reminder that it's possible for people to hold these conflicting views -- to dedicate yourself to something and still hold like broader social views that are abhorrent. And that most of us when we're doing really, can be doing really bad things and believe that we're working for the good of the world. So I think if nothing else it's humbling to be reminded that villains, someone who's a villain in their public speeches doesn't look very different from your everyday person in their day to day life.

Kelsey: Chelsea just, your work does such a tremendous amount of unsettling. Like in the very specifically in the historiography of these of these institutions of institutions like Elwyn but even on a micro level looking at some of your historical actors like Barr, you're really able to capture sort of, the complexity of what happens when we approach the characters in our, in the stories that we're telling, our historical actors, not only through their public-facing published work, but actually getting into the weeds of more personal letters that they were writing that open up a window on to this disjuncture between what we, as human beings say we believe in, and what we do, and how we act. And that's a, it's such a complicated story, it's such a fascinating story. So thank you, thank you for sharing that, yeah.

This is a little bit of a pivot, but I wanted to hear a little bit more about -- something that you mentioned in the introduction of your dissertation is that there is a particular sort of narrative arc to the history of institutions like Elwyn for feeble-minded people moving from the late nineteenth century into the twentieth, which is that there's this shift from institutions that really were regarded as spaces for training and education, that were premised on this idea that feeble-minded people were educable, and a transition into seeing these institutions become more custodial, become more carceral, and often that's linked to the rise of eugenic thinking. So, new understandings of feeble-mindedness that are grounded in heredity, where feeble-mindedness is seen as permanent, a permanent fixed condition that is incurable. And Henry Goddard is a huge part of that turn. But many educators, this is a part of the story that you're telling really took issue with this and forced a really strong countercurrent in this conversation. And I was hoping that you could say more about where these teachers were coming from and how did they state their claims and sort of stand their ground amidst the rising tide of eugenic messaging that really countered this idea that feeble-minded people couldn't be educated.

Chelsea: Thank you for that. This is something that I'm thinking through more and more as I revise the dissertation. I'm really wrestling with how much of an arc or kind of rise and fall I want to tell and how much I want to do a continuity of, like, messiness. But I think that education is really important in this story of feeble-mindedness because it helps us pay attention to the values and priorities of superintendents and psychomedical experts and educators and the ways that they zero in on the population that they regard as borderline or people who are, I mean -- there's an undercurrent through all of these debates over eugenics and special education and institutionalization. There's an underlying assumption that there are some people who are obviously institutional cases and those are the people

who are fundamentally dependent. And there's, there's consensus among the experts and the educators by the time you get into the late nineteenth century that those people are not worth their time and they're not who they're interested in studying. And so I think that's, because I care about the multifaceted character of the institution it's important to recognize that there's a big group of people who are being ignored in these debates, and I think there's something we can learn about the assumptions involved and why those people can be ignored. But in these debates over this diagnostic category of the moron -- Goddard's term -- there's a tension between educators who see people who are at this kind of highest, most intelligent end of feeble-mindedness, those who are most likely to become self-supporting and therefore most worthy of receiving education and possible to educate and send off into the world. Compared to the fear of more strict eugenicists like Goddard and his colleagues who see someone who is technically feeble-minded but able to get along in society as the most dangerous because they can pass in some way as normal.

And this actually builds off of the older idea of moral imbecility that Barr and Kerlin fought for. So even though Barr kind of passes into obscurity because he doesn't believe in psychology, his ideas are grabbed onto. This idea that mental defect and moral defect are intertwined lives on in this idea that people who are at all feeble-minded, regardless of whether they can become economically self-sufficient, remain a threat because they're a hereditary threat and their threat is greater the more easily they might pass in society and find a mate and have a large family. So there's even this continuing idea when, when superintendents are calling it moral imbecility, they argue that moral imbeciles in their institutions shouldn't be educated. It doesn't matter that they can learn to read. If you teach them how to read they'll just use that to create, like, to commit more creative crimes. And to, like, rip people off and new and creative ways. So they see education as a liability for people who have mild mental disabilities.

And educators believe in educating that's, like, their deal and so that's where they primarily butt heads. And where educators are asserting the good of education, the purpose of it and that their goal is self sufficiency. And I think they believe in the idea that education is a form of moral formation that can overcome this perhaps moral defect or moral impairment that might be lurking with mild impairment, that they would see the educational process and commitment to someone as something that can overpower perhaps their potential criminality. Whereas the psychomedical experts are maintaining this belief that a moral defect is innate and incurable and can't be educated away. Sorry, that was a really long answer [laughs]

Kelsey: A brilliant answer, and I think it's so interesting you're saying about kind of this contradiction, it seems, where psychomedical experts are asserting kind of the immutability, the, like, the incurable nature of feeble mindedness but butt heads with educators who are claiming that feeble-minded people do have a capacity to learn. And the implication here is a fear that they're right and that education could be a tool, or an instrument for passing In society that could be a detriment to the, the larger public, to eugenic goals.

Chelsea: Right, and I think there's, there's also a tension, oh it's also has to do with the fact that the psychomedical experts within institutions -- there's a labor story here, that they want people who are, whose bodies work really well and who can be trusted to take direction and trained to perform valuable institutional labor. They want those people in the institution to help their budgets. And so there's a certain risk involved in passing that off to special educators, especially because special educators are claiming only the spectrum of feeble-minded people who could potentially perform that valuable labor. And what institution superintendents don't want is expanding custodial wards and that's what they're envisioning as their future if special education is able to claim these people and educate

them into social integration. Whereas the superintendent in the 1910s, they don't they don't want, that they're going to come around pretty quickly to recognizing that they can't institutionalize all of these people, that they've set their sights way too high. But right in those 1910s, like that's what the main contestation is about, where do these people's labor where does that Labor belong, as well as their perceived reproductive risk.

Kelsey: That accompaniment, the concern around labor and reproductive risk both are such essential parts of this story, and you walked us through that so clearly, too -- about the ways that those two tensions work together is so so fascinating and horrifying.

Chelsea: Fascinating and horrifying are kind of the key words of the project.

Kelsey: Yeah.

Caroline: I was wondering if you can explain a little bit more about Barr's category of moral imbecility. This doesn't belong to him alone, but we have been kind of talking about this throughout our conversation, and I wonder if you can just explain what this is, and also the ways in which it's like doesn't really map that cleanly onto intelligence as a framework, so if you could say more about that that'd be great.

Chelsea: Oh, I can. I wrote a master's thesis about it. It wasn't very good, but it was written. So moral imbecility it's it branches off from the idea of moral insanity which is older than moral imbecility. It goes back, like Benjamin Rush talks about moral insanity. But it really takes off from Isaac Kerlin, Barr's predecessor at Elwyn. So Elwyn is the home of moral imbecility. And it's the basic idea that just like some children or infants are born with mental defect, their mental faculties impaired, that there are also children who are born with their moral faculties impaired. And what's different between moral imbecility and moronity is moral imbecility proposes that you can have moral defect without any mental defect, that people can be absolutely kind of normally intelligent and still lack a moral sense and be incapable of moral behavior. Whereas moronity says that if you have moral defect that that is a symptom of a lower intelligence of a mental defect. So moral imbecility is really the word of the day in kind of the 1880s and 1890s up until 1910 when Goddard coins "moron" and it's basically used to explain people, especially those who are in these institutions, who are disruptive and won't listen and don't enjoy doing what they're told or what they're supposed to. It's also used as kind of an umbrella explanation for things like kleptomania or just to explain people whose behavior does not seem to align with how you would expect people to, like, they should care about consequences and they don't, so they do illegal acts. It's especially invoked in cases of really sensational, like child murderers. Like when you have a nine or eleven year old boy who's killing a playmate violently, or, like, boys, it's mostly boys who, like, enjoy killing animals or steal a lot or swear a lot. It ends, it's really broad category in kind of the way that moronity is. It plays that similar role of like someone's behavior you don't like and they don't respond to correction, you can label them as they're morally impaired and therefore require institutionalization.

What I find really interesting about Barr and Kerlin and their approach to this is it gets into interesting questions of criminal responsibility, is that they argue that if someone is committing crimes because they're morally impaired, they're not actually responsible for those crimes and therefore shouldn't be truly punished. So they're against prison for people who are moral imbeciles and want them to instead be institutionalized alongside the feeble minded, not least because they're helpful laborers because they are believed to be of, you know, typical intelligence, but also because the institutions are able to hold them indefinitely, whereas if they get a prison term they'll be their short term and then released. And they believe that they are irredeemable people who will always continue committing

crimes, and so, if you send them to prison they're just going to learn new types of crime to commit before and form new criminal networks, before you release them. So there's this, and, but they also argue then against, they don't think that anyone with moral imbecility should be executed, they're against the death penalty for them, because they're not responsible for their crimes. It's very complicated. But that's the diagnosis.

Caroline: Well, yeah I mean, it is complicated, but I also can't help but think that this, it often, it comes back to whatever framework people are wedded to, it's usually one that serves them, in that they can, for example, keep people in the institution who will be useful for them. And it also really highlights the extent to which these categories are very much, like culturally constructed or socially constructed and historically contingent. That what one generation will identify as moral imbecility, another one will identify with another term, and maybe a sympathetic historian, looking back will see it as resistance or an exercise of agency or something like that, right? So, yeah. It raises a lot of really important intellectual and conceptual questions for us as we work through this so, yeah, thanks Chelsea.

That actually gets us into a question that we wanted to ask about this whole concept of agency. And this is something that I've been thinking about a lot with with my students, we, you know I teach a history of childhood course so agency, of course, comes up a lot in our conversations. And in our efforts to honor personhood and dignity as historians, we often default to, like looking for agency. What does agency look like, well, we can find acts of resistance or acts of subversiveness that's, that's agency, and then we can, you know, hold that up and use that to honor people's dignity. But I know that there are some historians of childhood, who are saying is that the only way to be approaching personhood and dignity? Is agency even the right framework when you're dealing with populations that often have very little space in which to exercise agency. Are there other ways that we can highlight people's personhood? And I'm wondering kind of where you are on this conversation. Do we need to move away from just searching for agency, have we been misidentifying agency? Any thoughts that you have on these sorts of questions would be really valuable.

Chelsea: Yeah I'm happy to talk about that. That was, I talk about this some in the introduction, and that was my favorite part I think of the whole dissertation to write. I work with, there's a really great article by Holly Allen and Erin Fuller, it's in the *Disability Studies Quarterly*. And they make a really important argument for paying attention to, I think the way they put it is the significantly mentally disabled in institutions. And that's definitely part of my project, something I care about. The way that they get there is by saying we can identify agency among these populations, and we do that by expanding our definition of agency, how we think about it, that it can be non-compliance, it can be being an inconvenience that it, and they kind of expand the idea of what resistance looks like and the definition of agency to say, we could talk about these people, because they have agency.

And I think, for me, rather than using agency as a vehicle to get to dignity, we just jump over it, and say, dignity. That we identify the, the human dignity of all people while recognizing, I know the concept of the human itself, we can talk about how there are people who are not constructed as people and that that itself is historically contested. But I'm setting that aside, because I choose to. And just to say that we can we can write about these people because they're people, and we can seek to know them and understand them and their experiences and those are valuable whether or not they are intertwined with stories of resistance. And that it can be just as important to tell a story about how a person's humanity was degraded, as to how they stood up against that degradation. That's hard to do. I think it's, it's something that I've wrestled with in the dissertation is that resistance and, and agency help make some people visible in the archive. You know the boys in the band who did the Lemonade Rebellion, like they're visible to me. The people

who ran away because they were capable of running, they're visible to me because they show up in the runaway record. Whereas other people, it takes a little bit more digging. And, you know, people who weren't making a fuss, they didn't get as much space dedicated to them in the archive. So it's a matter of being really intentional about noting, okay, I'm going through these school records and there's a school record for someone who was really active and vocal and a pain in the butt. And they have pages and pages of stuff written about them. And so I can write about them and the things they did and the resistance that they waged. And then the next page is someone who spent their entire time at Elwyn in one ward in and out of restraints because they would chew their hair or tear their clothes. And they don't get an update written about them every year. They get two words written about them every couple of years. And to recognize the sparseness and name it and still insist that they be included in the narrative, that that matters. I don't think that we need to rank which stories matter more or less, but just to say that they, they're both there and that, you know, that these were all people who, by virtue of institutionalization, their dignity was attacked and that we can honor it by, sadly, not naming them because I'm not allowed to name them, but I'm discussing them and telling the stories just, you know, they were here.

Kelsey: I love the part of your dissertation where you were challenging the historian's impulse to search for agency as the way honestly of determining if a particular historical subject is worthy of discussing at all. Like, I think that you're right. The ways that agency or like the quest for recuperating or rehabilitating agency in marginalized subjects in history has resulted in sort of a black boxing of agency or an unwillingness to examine which historical subjects are going to continue to fall by the wayside if we're only looking for agency and really narrow ways. And I think that this is really important for disability historians, in particular. To use a contemporary term, if you're studying the history of people who are not neurotypical and we know that our definitions of agency and personhood are calibrated around particular standards of capacity and cognition, then you have a problem. And you have to think outside of those terms in order to tell stories about a wider variety of human experience. And I think that your dissertation does that really, really beautifully.

Chelsea: Thank you, yeah that's something that Marisa Fuentes's book has shaped my thinking on that a lot. It was really helpful, as well as, it's a book that I think, I don't know how many people have read it, but I loved it so much that I emailed the author, Anton Froeyman, I emailed and just said, thank you for this book. I loved it. It's called, *History, Ethics, and the Recognition of the Other*. And that book was really helpful for me, because he makes an ethical argument for -- history can be about just trying to, viewing historical subjects, all of them, as other because they are living in a time apart from ours. And that there is inherent value in seeking to recognize the other. And that is, like, a virtuous pursuit and something that we can do and label as significant in and of itself is just seeking to identify and recognize the other, who -- you know, their otherness we have, as historians, we have lots of different categories of otherness and that we exist in and that we analyze and use as categories of analysis. But if we accept all historical subjects as other by virtue of our distance from them across time, then just seeking to know them is a historical pursuit and ethical pursuit and a valuable one.

Kelsey: Thank you so much for that. So much to think about.

Caroline: Yeah, yeah that's a beautiful comment Chelsea. And you and I, like, full disclosure Chelsea and I have co-authored something for the Political Theology Network and so what I'm about to say is probably actually one of Chelsea's ideas just recycled.

Chelsea: [Laughs] I doubt it!

Caroline: One of her brilliant thoughts. But just as you were talking about looking to those moments in Elwyn where you see students finding joy and forming bonds and showing and sharing love with one another, I think so, too, can the historian look backward through time and show love to people past that maybe you weren't able to like walk alongside them in their moment, but you can walk alongside them now, yeah.

Chelsea: And I think that's powerful. And that actually gets at something that I mentioned to you all that I wanted to discuss and I think that that's an opening for this documentary that I'm a humanities advisor for, that it's pre production and still being put together, but it's called *The Fate of Human Beings*. And it's about cemeteries in state hospitals and institutions, and I think it is in the cemetery where there's a certain, there's an equalizing there. That you know, however, however many reams of paper that person generated in the hospital or quick lines that they, they all ended up in the same place as a consequence of institutionalization that, that it did the same thing to them. And that this documentary is interested in these cemeteries and in families who have tried to trace their kin to the cemeteries, as well as current efforts underway to memorialize them and to treat that as a space to have honor and remembrance, too. And I think that there can be lots of purposes and goals out of that, but just as a reminder of the cost and what institutions do, and that in recognizing and memorializing that, you know, not only people who, people who died, but also families that were ruptured. In the case of these families who are trying to, they know of an aunt who was institutionalized and that's all they know and they want to try and find where she is. That those acts of remembrance and seeking out are really valuable and something that can be done today.

Kelsey Henry: So we know that your dissertation stops in the 1930s and we're curious about what happens after your dissertation ends? What happens to Elwyn?

Chelsea: Elwyn is interesting because, I mean, the snapshot that I got is really limited chronologically in part because of the requirements of the human rights committee. That I was only able to look at things that extend up to like 1920 and then that's it. So I don't have the same kind of intimate portrait of life at Elwyn after that. But something interesting about Elwyn is, I think, because of its semi private status it maintains its population size so, whereas the state institutions are just ballooning, are doubling and tripling in size, Elwyn maintains, it has, it's one of the first institutions to have 1000 residents, but then it stays at 1000 residents, at least through 1930. And then, in the early and mid 1960s it's actually a pretty early leader in community-based services. They expand from a real limited focus on particular intellectual disabilities and instead broaden out. They're interested in intellectual and developmental and behavioral disabilities and start doing community-based rehabilitation programs and vocational -- they, they establish a lot of sheltered workshops and other placement options starting in the 1960s and are actually kind of, just as they were leaders in kind eugenic segregation, some of their superintendents are leaders in deinstitutionalization. And both the good things and the pitfalls of deinstitutionalization and how it progresses in terms of sheltered workshops and everything. But yeah, so they end up leading the way in that, and now it's huge because they have so many community-based resources there's like, I'm not going to get the number right, but at least like ten, fifteen thousand patients or, I think they're called clients now, clients who relate to Elwyn in that way. And they're spread across multiple states. There's like an Elwyn California and Elwyn New Jersey and yeah, all over the place.

Kelsey: It's so, it's so unpredictable, I've found, what happens to these institutions, especially as we move into an era of deinstitutionalization where care -- there's a lot of advocacy around and policy changes to move care from large institutions to more

community-based centers and back into homes. And the afterlives of each one of these institutions tends to look so particular. There's, there's not one story about what happens, so that's really interesting.

Chelsea: Yeah, there's places like Elwyn that's still operating and then there's Pennhurst, which is a haunted house and museum. They're, I am on the Advisory Board of the Pennhurst Memorial and Preservation Alliance and they work with the people who own the property and do the haunt, trying to incorporate more opportunities for education and historical education in different ways that people might interact with Pennhurst throughout the year.

Kelsey: So, Chelsea you already mentioned this documentary that you've been working on, on institutional cemeteries. I'm wondering if you want to say anything else about anything else that you're working on now, or that you're interested in that you want to share or you want to celebrate with us and with our listeners.

Chelsea: Sure, the documentary is something I'm really excited about. We've – where I'm going to land is pretty up in the air, I guess I'm up in the air and waiting to see where I'll land. And if I end up somewhere that has the resources the director of that film and I have talked about doing a digital project that would map the locations of these institutional cemeteries and their kind of memorialization status. That's something I'd be interested in doing depending on where I end up. And one piece of work that is, I don't know if you could call it quite forthcoming yet, but it's through review and it's part of a special issue in the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* on the concept of double age, so I'm talking about the relationship between chronological age and mental age and that's a paper that's actually, it's focused on Goddard and about the invention of mental age, what it tells us about what, how mental age relates to chronological age and how they kind of enforce each other, and kind of the quantification of the idea that mind body asynchrony is a problem that needs to be resolved or eradicated. And that paper concludes by talking about the Ashley treatment which you brought up earlier, Kelsey.

Caroline: We're so grateful for your time and for your wisdom on some really abstract and ethically complex scenarios, right? Working through a person like Barr, thinking about the concept of agency. And so, just incredibly grateful for your time, for your work, and we will be looking forward to reading those publications and watching that documentary, absolutely.

Chelsea: And thank you for having me on and for engaging with my work so closely, I mean you're practically committee members now. [Laughs] I really appreciate. It's helped me think through some things as I look for look towards the defense, well, revisions and then the defense in April, so thank you.

Kelsey: Thank you, Chelsea.

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Caroline: Thanks to everyone out there for listening or reading the transcript. Please join us again next time. Bye bye!