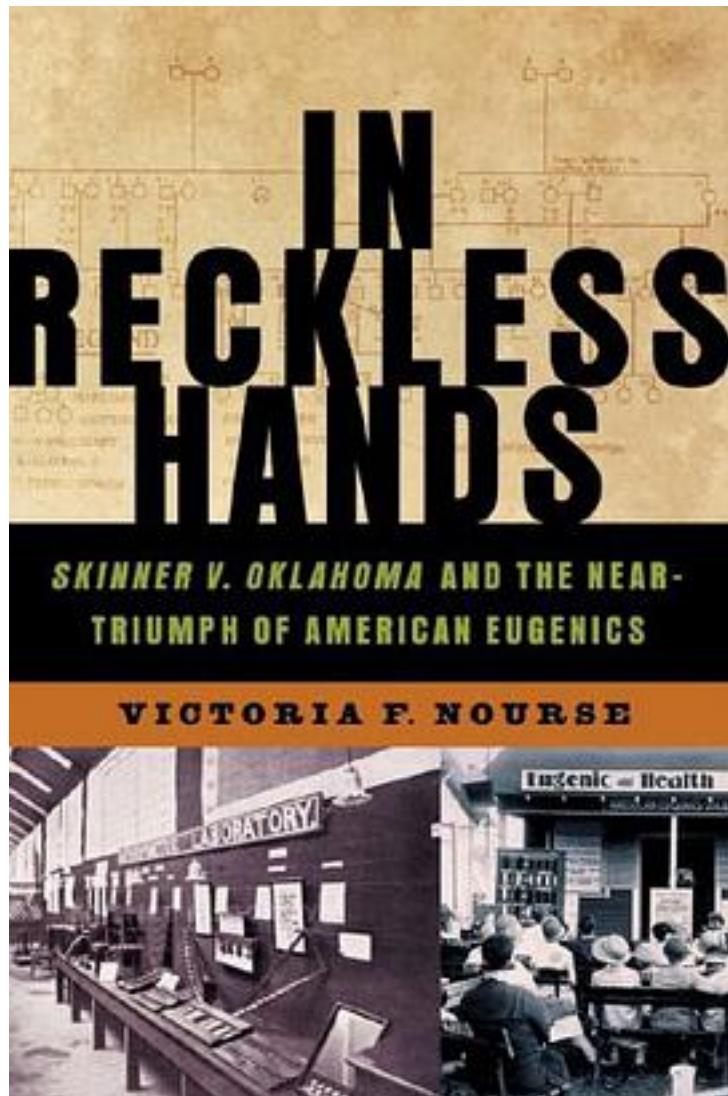


In Reckless Hands



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In the 1920s and 1930s, thousands of men and women were sterilised at asylums and prisons across America. Believing that criminality and mental illness were inherited, state legislatures passed laws calling for the sterilisation of 'habitual criminals' and the 'feeble-minded'. In 1936, inmates at Oklahoma's McAlester prison refused to cooperate; Jack Skinner was the first to come to trial. An heroic cast of characters fought the case to the US Supreme Court but only when Americans learned the extent of Nazi Germany's eugenics project did the inmates triumph. In this disturbing, forgotten history of America's experiment with eugenics, Victoria F. Nourse combines engrossing narrative with sharp legal analysis. She explains the consequences of this landmark decision and tells the stories of these men and women who fought for human dignity and the right to have a family.

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