

entific” backing to the new social theory in America. In 1861, only two years after the publishing of Darwin’s *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, Sir Henry Wentworth, tutor to the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, traveled to America where he met with Albert S. Bickmore, the scion of a New England shipping family. Bickmore was then working as an assistant to Harvard naturalist Louis Agassiz. Wentworth told Bickmore that he thought it would be a grand idea for him to leave Agassiz and go to New York, to establish a museum of natural history in the city where America’s financiers were located. Agassiz’s institution was out of the way, Wentworth complained, and besides, Agassiz was an opponent of Darwin’s.

The role of the Museum of Natural History

Huge financial resources were immediately made available for the museum project from the top circles of New York finance, including J. Pierpont Morgan, Hugh Auchincloss, Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., James Brown and Howard Potter of Brown Brothers (now Brown Brothers Harriman), Levi Morton and George Bliss of Morton Bliss, members of the Phelps family, and members of the Dodge family. John D. Rockefeller also chipped in, but for reasons of class, the Rockefellers were not admitted to the new museum’s board of trustees for two generations to come.

Exhibits were collected and stored, first in the offices of Brown Brothers, then in an armory. In 1871, the cornerstone of the museum building was laid, and finally in 1877, the American Museum of Natural History had its grand opening. At the ceremony, Harvard President Charles W. Eliot explained its purpose: “In whose honor are the chief personages of this nation, state, and city here assembled? Whose palace is this? What divinity is worshipped in this place? Nothing else than the stupendous doctrine of hereditary transmission [which will] . . . enhance the natural interest in vigorous family stocks . . . give a rational basis for penal legislation, and promote both the occasional production of illustrious men and the gradual improvement of the masses of mankind.”

The morality of the racist cabal behind the museum became shockingly evident in 1898, when the museum dispatched Lt. Robert Peary to the North Pole in its ship, *The Roosevelt*. On orders from Dr. Franz Boas of the Museum’s Anthropology Department, Peary “obtained” five Eskimos and brought them back to New York for examination. After a few months’ close observation, four of the Eskimos died. Boas had them stuffed, mounted, and placed on display.

New York was scandalized. *The World* editorialized: “The scientists who were delighted to study leisurely the Esquimaux here in New York have long since forgotten these simple folk from the bleak Arctic. True, four of them died here, of tuberculosis, but not until these wise men had learned everything they care to know. And then, were not the corpses turned over to the doctors for the very interesting dissections which added much to our knowledge on ethnological sub-

How Harriman helped Hitler exterminate Jews

Between 1921 and 1941, approximately 3 million Jews and 6 million other Eastern and southern European people were denied admission to the United States as a result of the Harriman family’s eugenic immigration quotas.

In fact, well after news of Hitler’s anti-Semitic extermination policy had reached the world outside Germany, the Harriman circle continued to do everything in its power to maintain strict limits on the number of Jews allowed to enter the United States. The restrictions championed by Harriman were not lifted until December 1941, when the United States declared war on the Nazi Reich.

As the 1930s wore on, the Nazi persecution of Jews caused the German immigration quota to fill completely, with available quota numbers backed up for many years in the future. In February 1939, when New York Sen. Robert Wagner introduced a bill to allow 20,000 German-Jewish children to come in above quota, to be adopted by American families who had already volunteered to take them, it was H. H. Laughlin of the Harrimans’ Eugenics Record Office, and John Trevor, a trustee of the Museum of Natural History and the director of the Record Office’s Eugenics Research Association, who led the successful campaign to defeat the bill.

To do this, they organized a “Coalition of Patriotic Societies,” that brought together everything from the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, and the American Legion, to the KKK, and hundreds of other organizations, real and fictitious. Nearly all the testimony delivered by this coalition against the bill was presented by Laughlin or Trevor.

Then, in June 1939, 937 German Jews escaped the Nazis on the German-American Lines ship *The St. Louis*, and sailed to America to seek refuge despite their lack of quota numbers. As *The St. Louis* sailed up and down the East Coast waiting for permission to land, Laughlin issued a special report on immigration which demanded that “international sentimentality” not cause America to lower its “eugenical and racial standards.” Laughlin demanded that the United States cut its quota by a further 60 percent, and that “loopholes” which allowed Jewish immigration to America by excusing the “moral turpitude” of fleeing Jews who had smuggled money out of the Nazi Reich be closed.

As a result of Laughlin’s agitation, *The St. Louis* was turned around, and the 700 of its passengers who could not receive permission to debark in Britain were returned to Europe, where they were eventually incinerated at Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Dachau.