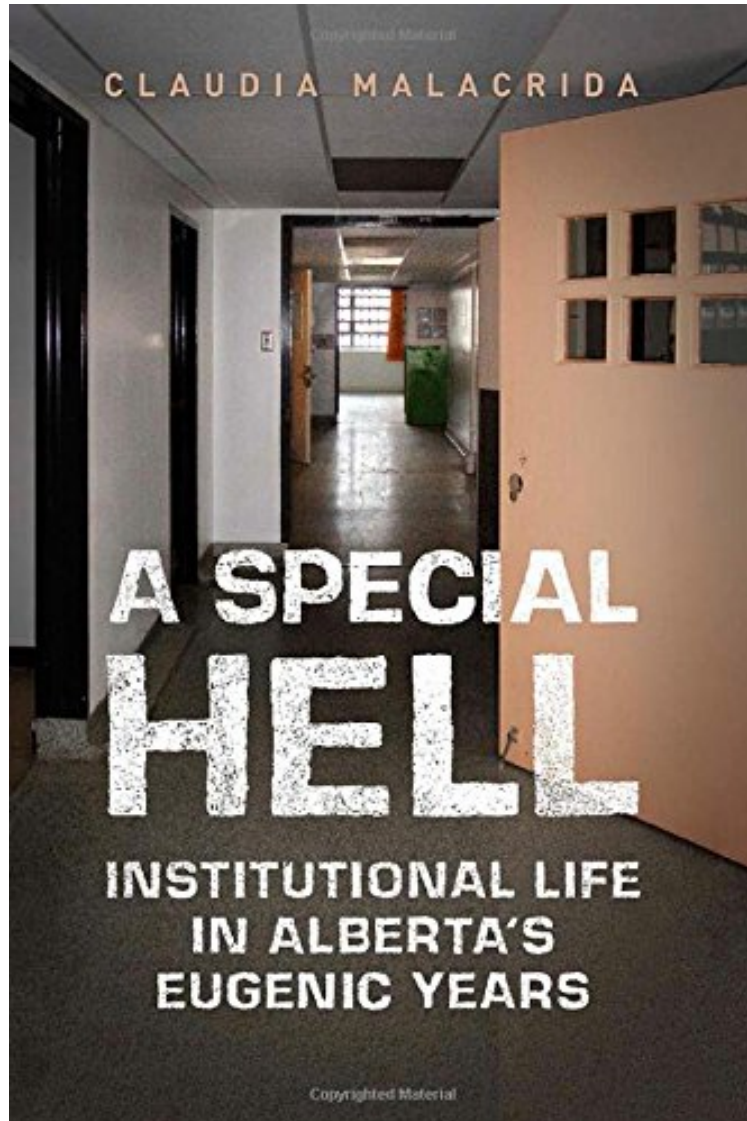


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A Special Hell: Institutional Life in Alberta's Eugenic Years

Claudia Malacrida

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Claudia Malacrida : A Special Hell: Institutional Life in Alberta's Eugenic Years before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Special Hell: Institutional Life in Alberta's Eugenic Years:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy vickie manciniConfirmed what I already know. That "she ill hell" needs to be closed !

Using rare interviews with former inmates and workers, institutional documentation, and governmental archives,

Claudia Malacrida illuminates the dark history of the treatment of mentally defective children and adults in twentieth-century Alberta. Focusing on the Michener Centre in Red Deer, one of the last such facilities operating in Canada, *A Special Hell* is a sobering account of the connection between institutionalization and eugenics. Malacrida explains how isolating the Michener Centres residents from their communities served as a form of passive eugenics that complemented the active eugenics program of the Alberta Eugenics Board. Instead of receiving an education, inmates worked for little or no pay sometimes in homes and businesses in Red Deer under the guise of vocational rehabilitation. The success of this model resulted in huge institutional growth, chronic crowding, and terrible living conditions that included both routine and extraordinary abuse. Combining the powerful testimony of survivors with a detailed analysis of the institutional impulses at work at the Michener Centre, *A Special Hell* is essential reading for those interested in the disturbing past and troubling future of the institutional treatment of people with disabilities.

Malacrida draws from a vast amount of documentation. Her book is packed with statistics and academic writing but leavened with direct testimony from inmates and staff. valuable for anyone with an interest in this dark period of institutional history. (Nelle Oosterom *Canada's History Magazine*, June-July, 2015) This is an important and timely review of a place and time in Canada's history from which we must learn much. The stories told in *A Special Hell* are essential to understanding what happened at the Michener Centre and why, so as not to repeat that history. (Deborah Stienstra, Professor in Disability Studies, University of Manitoba) *A Special Hell* is an interesting and well-crafted book that adds to our knowledge and understanding of the institutional care of people with developmental disabilities in Canada. Malacrida does an excellent job of combining scholarly analysis with interviewees telling their own stories. (Dick Sobsey, Professor Emeritus, Department of Educational Psychology and John Dosssetor Health Ethics Centre, University of Alberta) Claudia Malacrida gives the reader a comprehensive, probing, and thorough history of the inner life of a public residential institution for people with intellectual disabilities. She has woven a story from the perspectives of inmates, primary care workers, and townspeople, along with institutional documentation, governmental reports, and the stories from inmates relatives. This is an exceptional work, and one that gives voice to those participants whose voices are usually silent or silenced. (James Trent, Professor, Department of Social Work, Gordon College) About the Author Claudia Malacrida is a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Lethbridge.