



New York State Archives

**New York State Board of Charities Census of Inmates in
Almshouses and Poorhouses A1978**

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Table of Contents

Overview of the Records	3
Arrangement	3
Administrative History	3
Scope and Contents	4
Use of Records	4
Access Terms	5

Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	Chapter 140 of the laws of 1875 required public almshouses and poorhouses in New York State to keep records on individual inmates and to send copies of these records to the State Board of Charities each month. Census forms in this series provide information on individual inmates' personal, family, and economic history.
Creator:	New York (State). Department of State
Title:	Census of inmates in almshouses and poorhouses
Quantity:	96.6 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1826-1921
Bulk Date:	bulk 1875-1921
Series:	A1978

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Series is arranged alphabetically by name of county or city institution, then chronologically by date of census or admission date.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

Chapter 140 of the laws of 1875 required almshouses and poorhouses in New York State to keep records on individual inmates and to send copies of these records to the State Board of Charities each month. At a conference of the state's county superintendents of the poor, a committee developed the initial standard form used for census reporting. These forms were used until 1905, when the State Board of Charities introduced a revised version. A form was completed for each inmate upon admission and batches were sent to the Board of Charities monthly as directed by the 1875 statute.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content Note

Census forms provide detailed information on almshouse and poorhouse inmates: date admitted (includes admissions from as early as 1826); sex; age; color; marital status; birthplace; last residence (1906-1921 only); how long in the U.S.; how long in the state (New York); at what port landed (1875-1905 only); if "head money" paid (1875-1905 only); if naturalized; when and where naturalized (1906-1921 only); birthplace of father; birthplace of mother; inmate's education (e.g. "read and write"; "none"); habits (if temperate or intemperate); habits of father; occupation of father; habits of mother (1875-1905 only); if parents dependent or self-supporting; if grandparents, brother, sisters, and other relatives dependent or self-supporting (1875-1905 only); inmate's occupation; religion (1906-1921 only); if a parent, how many children living (1875-1905 only); health and dependency of children (1875-1905 only); what labor inmate can perform; if inmate has received public relief; if inmate has received private relief; if parents or other relatives have received relief (1875-1905 only); if inmate was previously in an institution; name and address of relatives or friends (1906-1921 only); and prospects for self-sufficiency (1875-1905 only).

Although the bulk of the series is dated 1875 to 1921, some institutions are not documented for the entire time period. Forms from 1875 to the mid 1890s are in bound volumes; later forms are not bound. The census date is not identifiable for these loose forms. They are grouped at the end of each county or city by inmate admission date.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this material.

Alternate Formats Available

Microfilm is available for use at the New York State Archives or through interlibrary loan.

Alternate Formats Available

Items Online

High resolution images of selected original documents in this series are available in State Archives Digital Collections.

The entire series is digitized (from microfilm) and is available to New York State residents for free on Ancestry.com New York. You must sign up for a free account to access these records without a paid subscription.

To learn how to create the free account, go to [How to Use Ancestry.com New York.](#)

[Census of Inmates in Almshouses and Poorhouses, 1830-1920 on Ancestry.com](#)

[Census of inmates in almshouses and poorhouses, 1826-1921 in Digital Collections](#)

Access Terms

- Institutional care
- Social service
- Census records
- Monitoring
- Poor
- Subsidizing
- Almshouses
- New York (State)
- Public welfare