



New York State Archives

**New York State Defense Council Division of Health and
Hospitals Health and Hospital Resources Files from the
Adjutant General's Office A4238**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	With the declaration of World War I, the State Department of Health placed its organization and resources at the disposal of the New York State Defense Council and the Adjutant General's Office. This series consists of correspondence, memoranda, lists and reports, census data, and some bulletins and newspaper clippings on work undertaken by the Council to inventory and apply the state's medical resources to aid troop mobilization and the casualties of war.
Creator:	New York State Defense Council. Division of Health and Hospitals
Title:	Health and hospital resources files from the Adjutant General's Office
Quantity:	2 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1917
Series:	A4238

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Arrangement

Organized into 4 subseries: Subseries 1, Correspondence Files; Subseries 2, Lists of Health and Hospital Resources; Subseries 3, Census and Inventory of Hospital Resources; Subseries 4, Census and Inventory of Military Resources.

Subseries 1, Correspondence Files: Alphabetical by last name, then by subject. Subseries 2, Lists of Health and Hospital Resources: Alphabetical by subject. Subseries 3, Census and Inventory of Hospital Resources: Alphabetical by name of correspondent or hospital. Subseries 4, Census and Inventory of Military Resources: Alphabetical by last name.

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Administrative History

Internal evidence in the series suggests that these files were kept in the Adjutant General's office. Correspondence dates to September of 1917, which marks the ending tenure of Louis W. Stotesbury as Adjutant General. Upon Stotesbury's resignation, Charles H. Sherrill became Adjutant General. As is reflected in the series, the Division of Health and Hospitals cooperated with the Adjutant General's office as well as the state Department of Health.

With the declaration of World War One, the State Department of Health placed its organization and resources at the disposal of the State Defense Council and the Adjutant General's Office. The council had responsibility for the general mobilization of the state's resources and expenditures for the military census (appropriated by Chapter 103 of the Laws of 1917). The Adjutant General's office had charge of the National Guard and detailed planning for the mobilization through its Resource Mobilization Bureau. Thus, Adjutant General Stotesbury worked closely with Hermann M. Biggs, who was chief of the council's Division of Health and Hospitals, and with staff of the Health Department's laboratories.

These offices were sources and recipients of official information on organizational and policy matters, and of correspondence traveling through both governmental and private channels. Biggs was also chair of the Tuberculosis Committee of the Medical Section of the Council of National Defense, and New York's pioneering war work to test for tuberculosis (by Roentgen-ray), assure sanitary conditions in troop camps, provide vaccines, and plan for care of tubercular soldiers is well documented in the series. Work of the division closely followed analysis of reports of the Canadian experience with returning soldiers and conditions in France during the early years of the war.

Establishment of the State Defense Council's Division of Health and Hospitals marked the start of the state's organized efforts to address health-related military issues such as: adequate supervision and care of soldiers who might be invalided at home; prevention of epidemics due to mobilization of large bodies of troops; a census of hospitals and medical and nursing resources of the state; increasing laboratory facilities to provide antitoxins, sera, and vaccines for the troops in the field and in camps; and measures for the sanitary protection of areas adjacent to concentration camps.

Specific features of the division's plan, well documented in the records, included: enforcing Chapter 469 of the Laws of 1917 (establishing a county tuberculosis hospital in each county with a population over 35,000) enacted because of reports of the large number of tubercular soldiers returned from the front in the early stages of the war; expanding the Health Department's laboratory service (developed during the Mexican Campaign of 1916) to furnish sera (for smallpox, meningitis, dysentery, pneumonia, etc.) initially for U.S. and British troops in France during the winter; conducting a medical census to assess physicians' (including osteopaths) medical training and physical fitness for war service or qualification to serve on exemption boards; conducting a hospital census to assess bed capacity and availability of treatment for incapacitated returning soldiers; enlisting all state health officers and public health nurses in the Sanitary Reserve Corps with a pledge not to serve outside the state in war work

without consulting the Department of Health; extending a system (begun in Albany County) for "corrective work" to treat rejected applicants for enlistment, providing free treatment by physicians, surgeons, dentists, and opticians to enable applicants to serve; and assuring "moral welfare" and health in military training camps, by gathering information on the sale of liquor to enlisted men, investigating complaints of unsanitary conditions, indoctrinating soldiers on the danger of venereal diseases, conducting sanitary surveys on the suitability of sites for mobilization camps, and exterminating mosquitoes at encampments to prevent disease.

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Scope and Content Note

The series consists of correspondence, memoranda, lists and reports, census data, and some bulletins and newspaper clippings on work undertaken by the State Defense Council to inventory and apply the state's medical resources to aid troop mobilization and the casualties of war. The series is organized into four subseries, as described below.

Subseries 1, Correspondence Files. The subseries includes incoming and outgoing correspondence and reports among county defense committees, the Office of the Surgeon General, local health boards, and others. The material pertains to: the medical and hospital census; regulation of private medical practices; training schools for nurses and enrollment of public health nurses; x-ray examinations, including special tuberculosis exams for the National Guard and experimental work with the Roentgen-ray; rehabilitation of soldiers and reports from county "Corrective Committees" on work with rejected applicants for enlistment; various sanitary, laboratory, and disease control measures, including serum production, and lists of sanitary supervisors, their districts, and county physicians; and pamphlets on regulations concerning venereal disease, social hygiene, and tuberculosis in France.

Subseries 2, Lists of Health and Hospital Resources. The subseries includes information on the organizational and personnel responsibilities of the division, and a memorandum of its work and a special report on budgeting. Also included are varied files of lists apparently maintained by the Adjutant General's Office, including: tabulations of institutional resources; city and county health officers, and county committees on health and hospitals; medical members of exemption boards; clinics and dispensaries; charity organization societies; Public health nurses working in county clinics and hospitals, and nurse training schools; and other health resources, such as agencies employing nurses.

Subseries 3, Census and Inventory of Hospital Resources. The subseries includes correspondence and a card file inventory of hospitals. The correspondence is between the Adjutant General and the division, county home defense committees, the Council of National Defense, medical societies and charitable organizations, and physicians. Correspondence pertains to: questions on filling out medical census forms, making corrections, or reporting duplications; plans and work of medical and hospital subcommittees of the county defense committees; cooperative efforts on the special medical census and the hospital census, including hospitals for the treatment of the insane; and assessment of services and health

facilities, especially relating to tuberculosis diagnosis and care, including reports on hospital facilities for contagious diseases and discussion of Canadian hospital conditions brought about by the war.

The census of private and state hospitals, and county and city almshouses, was undertaken by direction of the governor under Chapter 103 of the Laws of 1917. The inventory of New York hospitals, numbering about 230, consists of pre-printed 5 x 8" cards completed in manuscript. It tallies such statistics as: capacity of hospital; possible bed increase if required for war emergency; number of ambulances; number of laboratory and x-ray facilities; membership of attending and resident staff; and number of Graduate Nurses.

Subseries 4, Census and Inventory of Military Resources. The subseries includes preprinted forms (measuring 8.5 x 14") completed in manuscript. The forms were returned by osteopaths to the Military Census Bureau, Special Medical Census Division, by direction of the governor under Chapter 103 of the Laws of 1917. The forms provide information on: individuals' place of residence; date of birth; citizenship; academic degrees; graduation; hospital or dispensary positions; license to practice; present occupation; branch of medicine; past and present military status; war experience; height and weight; habits; number of dependents; and public status.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Container, folder, and roll lists are available at the repository.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

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

Alternate Formats Available

Microform is available at the New York State Archives through interlibrary loan.

[Health and hospital resources files from the Adjutant General's Office, 1917](#)

Access Terms

- Hospitals
- Health
- New York (State)
- Lists (document genres)
- Public health
- Emergency nursing
- Osteopathic physicians--New York (State)
- Reports
- Military hygiene
- Women in war
- Tuberculosis--Research
- World War, 1914-1918
- World War, 1914-1918--Health aspects
- Public health nurses
- X-rays
- War and society
- Sanitation
- Census records
- Coordinating citizen participation
- Physicians
- Memorandums
- Military service, Voluntary
- Planning emergency services
- Biggs, Hermann M.
- New York (State). Adjutant General's Office
- Stotesbury, Louis W.