



New York State Archives

Historical background and research files B1440

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of various records considered to be historical that were collected or retained by the Willard Asylum for the Insane (later Willard State Hospital and Willard Psychiatric Center). Records include chapel books; hospital rules and regulations; patient and staff handbooks; orientation material; histories of Willard facilities; biographies of founders and officials; training materials; legal documents and photographs of groups and activities. Also included are early reference works on psychoanalysis, demonic possession, hysteria epidemics, and double consciousness.
Creator:	Willard Psychiatric Center (N.Y.)
Title:	Historical background and research files
Quantity:	5 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1869-1987
Series:	B1440

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Arrangement

Arranged by type of record.

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Scope and Content Note

This series contains a wide assortment of record types considered to be historical or archival in nature which were collected or retained by several entities at the Willard Asylum for the Insane (later Willard State Hospital and Willard Psychiatric Center), including the Willard Staff Library. The records were collected and preserved for their historical interest, to provide information to the public, or for research value in the areas of treatments and conditions, patient life, staff training, facility expansion, and infrastructure repair and improvement.

Records include chapel books; material relating to Willard State Hospital's centennial (1969); published hospital rules and regulations; laws regulating the insane and state hospitals; patients' handbooks and orientation material; staff handbooks; typewritten histories of Willard facilities, and biographies of founders and officials; local histories of the Seneca Lake region; and photographs of various hospital groups and activities.

Of particular interest in the series is an original notebook kept during the first formal training class for attendants (1887). These classes later evolved into curricula for the Willard State Hospital School of Nursing. One group of news clippings details the events and circumstances leading to the closure of the Willard School of Nursing. Information includes class roster; attendance list; printed handouts; outlines of lectures; and copies of examinations.

Another distinct group of records consists of leases, deeds, and mortgages concerning hospital property; and contracts and specifications for construction.

A significant portion of the records document attempts to restore Chapin Hall, and its ultimate destruction. A distinct set of records, salvaged from Chapin Hall shortly before its demolition, consists of a variety of reports, correspondence, memoranda, and fiscal documents dating from the 1880s.

Also included in the series are early reference works (1840s-1920s) dealing with such topics as psychoanalysis, demonic possession, hysteria epidemics, and double consciousness; collections of published articles on mental health topics and facilities; and copies of published annual reports of other mental health facilities.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Container list.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

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

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Portions of this series are apparently part of a collection started in 1924 by Mrs. Margaret E. McDonald, Assistant Principal of the School of Nursing. Sometime after the School of Nursing closed, portions of the School of Nursing Library collection was consolidated into the Willard Staff Library.

These records were transferred to the State Archives from Willard Psychiatric Center at the time of its closure in April, 1995.

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Access Terms

- Archiving
- Mentally ill--Housing--New York (State)
- Diagnosing mentally ill
- Regulating psychiatric hospitals
- Documenting psychiatric hospitals
- Treating mental disorders
- New York (State)
- Mental health personnel--New York (State)
- Nursing schools--New York (State)
- Researching
- Photographs
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Psychiatric hospitals--Employees--In-service training--New York (State)
- Reports
- Training
- Regulations
- Seneca County (N.Y.)
- Mental health laws--New York (State)
- Mental health facilities--Law and legislation--New York (State)
- Willard (N.Y.)
- Administering psychiatric hospitals
- Insanity (Law)--New York (State)
- Psychiatric hospital care--New York (State)
- Employees' manuals
- Psychology, Pathological
- Mental health facilities--Employees--New York (State)

- Psychiatric hospitals--New York (State)--Employee rules
- Psychiatric hospitals--Law and legislation--New York (State)
- Mental illness--Treatment--New York (State)
- Psychiatric hospitals--Employees--New York (State)
- Historic buildings--New York (State)
- Willard State Hospital (N.Y.)
- New York (State). Office of Mental Health
- Willard Asylum for the Insane
- New York (State). Department of Mental Hygiene