



New York State Archives

Willard Psychiatric Center Documentary Images B1442

New York State Archives
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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of photographic materials such as prints, slides, postcards, and film from Willard Psychiatric Center. Images span the institution's history providing extensive visual documentation of most daily activities. Images of staff and patients, both in groups and individually, include therapies and rehabilitation; meetings; and treatments. Recreational scenes include parties, sports, dining; ceremonies; receptions; holidays; and entertainment. This series includes images of the buildings and grounds.
Creator:	Willard Psychiatric Center (N.Y.)
Title:	Willard Psychiatric Center documentary images
Quantity:	18.25 cubic feet
Quantity:	4500 photographs; 9000 negatives; 1900 slides; 275 lantern slides; 2 motion pictures
Inclusive Date:	1880-1993
Bulk Date:	1930-1993
Series:	B1442

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Arrangement

Arranged in five subseries: Subseries 1, Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Photographs, ca. 1880-1910, 1.5 c.f. (ca. 700 items); Subseries 2, Negatives, ca. 1948-1968, 4 c.f. (ca. 8,000 negatives); Subseries 3, Staff Photographer's Photograph, Negative, and Subject Files, 1950-1982 (bulk 1968-1978), 3.5 c.f.; Subseries 4, Color Slides and Snapshots, ca. 1978-1993, 2 c.f. (ca. 2,000 snapshots and slides); Subseries 5, Portraits of Directors, 1869-1993, .25 c.f. (11 photographs), and Subseries 6, Motion Pictures, ca. 1971, 0.3 c.f. (2 motion pictures).

Subseries 1, Photographs, is arranged by photographic format. Subseries 3, Staff Photographer's Files, is arranged in rough alphabetical order by subject. Subseries 4, Color Slides and Snapshots, is arranged roughly by media. Subseries 5, Portraits of Directors, is arranged chronologically by tenure of director. Subseries 6, Motion Pictures, is arranged by film.

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Scope and Content Note

This series consists of ca. 4,500 photographs (black-and-white and color), ca. 9,000 negatives, ca. 1,900 slides, and ca. 275 lantern slides maintained at Willard Psychiatric Center. The images span the institution's evolution from the Willard Asylum, to the Willard State Hospital, to the Willard Psychiatric Center, and provide extensive visual documentation of almost every aspect of staff and patient daily activities, as well as special occasions.

In addition to identification photographs, the records include scenes of recreation activities (such as parties, sporting events, and field days for patients and staff); committees; officials; classes; staff and patients in groups and individually; meetings; dining; ceremonies; patient therapy and rehabilitation training; treatments; staff training; receptions; holiday celebrations; entertainment; and visitors. Also documented are interiors and exteriors of buildings, grounds, and facilities, including maintenance, construction, and equipment.

Some prints are captioned on the verso or have handwritten, stamped, or typewritten captions attached. Many of the 35mm black-and-white negatives have contact sheets. Earlier black-and-white negatives are larger in format. These earlier negatives are usually grouped with a single brief caption attached and date from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Subseries 1 consists of about 700 images from the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the form of lantern slides, albumen prints, silver gelatin prints, picture postcards and photographic postcards.

The approximately 275 lantern slides were apparently retained by the Nursing School at Willard State Hospital. Although almost all slides are numbered, there is no index. The bulk of the slides are related to the history of medicine. They consist of a wide variety of images reproduced from old master paintings, prints, sculptures, stained glass, and other illustrations. Most depict medical themes including hospitals, early treatments, and nurses attending the sick and suffering. One group of 39 slides is devoted to the life and work of Florence Nightingale. Later scenes are taken from photographs of clinics, nursing schools, operating rooms, and hospital wards in the United States and abroad. One distinct group depicts the programs and activities of nurses of the American Red Cross (ca. 1920s) in foreign countries such as Haiti, the Philippine Islands, and Poland.

A distinct group of 34 slides (ca. 1943) is a set of 35 mm glass slides entitled "The Human Eye is Anatomical Transparencies." These slides are accompanied by a printed guide which gives an extended caption for each slide.

Also included in the first subseries are 24 stereoscopic views and ca. 450 silver gelatin and albumen prints mounted on board in small photograph albums. These earlier photographs

typically depict staff members and their families, scenes on the grounds, interiors, and buildings. Many are captioned. Some duplicates are present.

Subseries 2 consists primarily of 4 x 5" black-and-white negatives. Some black-and-white negatives measuring 2 1/4 x 3 1/4, 5 x 7", and 8 x 10" are also present, as well as a few black-and-white photo prints. Some of the negatives are unidentified, but most are grouped in their original film boxes and labeled with subject and date. Included are patient and staff identification photographs and depictions of groups of patients and staff; buildings; grounds; student nurse training; occupational therapy activities; ceremonies; and field days. Local area scenes as well as photos of local school groups (such as sports teams and cheerleaders) and other unidentified subjects are also represented.

Subseries 3 includes black-and-white photographs, negatives, and contact sheets; a history of Willard Psychiatric Center; memorandums of policy concerning privacy rights of patients; subject consent forms; requests and instructions for photographic reproductions; color snapshots and negatives; and 35 mm slides. Some of these images were published in "The Window," the Willard periodical, and some issues are present. Many of the photographs are captioned on the verso; some show a stamp identifying the photographer, one of whom was Richard Mearns. Some of the photographs are labeled as the property of the Willard Psychiatric Center. Part of the duties of the staff photographer was to photograph new staff and arriving patients for identifications purposes and some of these identification photographs are present.

Subseries 4 contains a wide variety of images showing medical treatments, grounds, patient workshop activities, and staff on duty, but most typically depict patients and staff in informal recreational situations such as picnics, field days, or holiday celebrations. Many of the approximately 1,500 snapshots are housed in original commercial envelopes with negatives. Some envelopes are labeled with date and subject. Many of the slides are housed in original commercial boxes labeled by subject and date. Approximately 450 slides are present; some slides are stamped with the photographer's name and are captioned. Some 200 instant camera photographs ("Polaroids") and some black-and-white snapshots are also present in this subseries.

Subseries 5 consists of eleven oversize photographic portraits of each of the eleven successive directors of the Willard Asylum for the Insane, Willard State Hospital, and Willard Psychiatric Center.

B1442-96A: This accretion contains several additions to preexisting subseries. An accretion to Subseries 1, Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Photographs, contains photographs, stereoscopic photographs, and postcards (1886-1909). The images most typically depict staff groups and building exteriors. A few document interiors, patients, and board members and other officials. Postcards depict buildings and field days.

B1442-96A: An accretion to Subseries 4, Color Slides and Snapshots, consists of color slides (1963-1983) depicting a variety of units and activities at Willard State Hospital (later Willard Psychiatric Center) including recreation, occupational therapy, field days, parties, and food services. One group of slides depicts an alleged patient in a complete sequence (apparently

staged?) from admission through discharge. Approximately one-half of the slides are labeled or otherwise identified.

B1442-96A: This accretion also contains material which comprises an entirely new subseries, Subseries 6, Motion Pictures. These records consist of two color motion pictures labeled "Camping" and "Golf Course 1971," respectively.

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Related Information

Related Material

Series B1445, Willard State Hospital School of Nursing Records, contains additional photographs of similar subjects. Series B1475, Director's photograph and news clipping file, contain other photographs from Willard State Hospital.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Container list and item list (for Subseries 1, 19th Century Photographs) available at the repository.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Patient identification photographs and other images depicting patients are restricted in accordance with Mental Hygiene Law, Section 33.13, relating to confidentiality of clinical records. Access is permitted under certain conditions upon approval by the Office of Mental Health.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

These records were transferred to the State Archives by authorization 19069 when the facility closed in April, 1995.

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Access Terms

- Instant camera photographs
- Eye--Anatomy
- Nursing students--New York (State)
- Snapshots
- Lantern slides
- Dye diffusion transfer prints
- Mentally ill--Care--New York (State)
- Treating mental disorders
- New York (State)
- Picture postcards
- Photograph albums
- Slides (photographs)
- Photographs
- Medicine--History
- Stereoscopic photographs
- Color photographs
- Boudoir photographs
- Color prints (photographs)
- Albumen prints
- Seneca County (N.Y.)
- Negatives (photographs)
- Photographic prints
- Willard (N.Y.)
- Administering psychiatric hospitals
- Black-and-white prints (photographs)
- Photographic postcards
- Documenting asylums
- Mental health facilities--Employees--New York (State)
- Nursing--Study and teaching
- Motion pictures (visual works)
- Nurses--New York (State)

- Gelatin silver prints
- Color slides
- Psychiatric hospital patients
- Psychiatric hospitals--Employees--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
- Nightingale, Florence.