



*New York State Archives*

**Syracuse Developmental Center Historic Prints and  
Photographs B1695**

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New York State Archives  
222 Madison Avenue  
Albany, NY 12230  
[archref@nysed.gov](mailto:archref@nysed.gov)  
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

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## Overview of the Records

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<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	Photographs take 1878-1925 consist of images of children in their school environment and in individual portraits taken for case files or descriptive admission applications. Later 20th century images show institutional activities like woodworking, farming, sports, and picnics. Some images are enlarged portraits of staff and board members. There is a small amount of miscellaneous print material such as descriptive application files, a plan of the school, greeting cards, programs and brochures.
<b>Creator:</b>	Syracuse Developmental Center
<b>Title:</b>	Syracuse Developmental Center historic prints and photographs
<b>Quantity:</b>	1.4 cubic feet
<b>Quantity:</b>	including 420 photographs
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1878-1990
<b>Series:</b>	B1695

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## Scope and Content Note

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The series consists of historic photographic prints (early 19th century - 1925) and later era photographs (to 1970) primarily of children shown in their school environment or as individual portraits taken for case files or descriptive admission applications. Since these images were kept among records stored by the Syracuse Developmental Center's museum, it is likely that they were gathered for their possible exhibit value, or retained after microfilming. Also present is a small amount of print material that may or may not be related to the images. There are very few negatives.

Some early images are obviously removed from case files and have names or admission and discharge information attached or written on the verso. One such group is labeled "Pictures G-Z, some A's" which suggests an organizational scheme (perhaps interrupted or abandoned cataloging of some kind). Among the miscellaneous print material are four descriptive application files (with admission dates 1878, 1890, 1907). The two earliest are marked "Do Not Shred." It is not clear how these files may relate to the photos.

There are ca. 100 black and white photos (5 x 7 inches or smaller) showing woodworking and other institutional activities dating early in the 20th century. One album of small mounted

photos (ca. 2 x 3 inches) appears more personal in nature (no attribution). A group of ca. 100 photos (8 x 10 inches) shows the Syracuse State School facility and student activities during the mid-1920s. There are also 13 mounted, undated photos (8 x 10 inches) showing booths at an unidentified institutional exhibition. Of note is a group of 10 enlarged photographic portraits (11 x 14 inches), probably of doctors, school officials, or board members. They are neither captioned nor dated.

Later 20th century photographs are largely snapshots (3.5 x 3.5 inches), ca. 50 of which are in color. Typical images are of farming, sports events, and recreational activities (e.g., picnics). Of special note are two small photos of the original cornerstone (laid in 1854) that were taken at the time of renovation of the Syracuse State School (1969-1970).

Also included is a small amount of print material, including greeting cards, information sheets, programs for physical fitness, recreation, and scouting demonstrations, and publicity brochures. There is also a copy of a key plot plan of the Syracuse State School, with prints. Approximately 120 snapshots dated from about 1970-1990 and depicting typical scenes and activities of the institution were added in 2006.

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## Use of Records

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### Access Restrictions

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 for People with Developmental Disabilities.

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## Administrative Information

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### Custodial History

This accretion was donated to the New York State Archives by a former administrator of Syracuse Developmental Center from materials that were discovered at her home. The photographs were inadvertently left interfiled with her personal records and donated to the state archives after her retirement.

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## Access Terms

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- Exhibiting
- Snapshots
- Black-and-white prints (photographs)
- New York (State)
- Children with mental disabilities--New York (State)
- Color prints (photographs)
- Intellectual disability facilities patients
- Syracuse (N.Y.)
- Documenting intellectually disabled children
- People with mental disabilities--Institutional care--New York (State)
- New York (State). Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
- Syracuse State School for Mental Defectives
- Syracuse State Institution for Feeble-Minded Children
- Syracuse State School
- New York (State). Department of Mental Hygiene
- New York State Asylum for Idiots