



New York State Archives

**Willard Psychiatric Center burial and interment records
B1760**

New York State Archives
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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of burial registers, cemetery plot maps, and administrative files and reports relating to the maintenance, operation, and administration of the Willard Psychiatric Center cemetery. More than 5,000 patients are buried in the Willard Psychiatric Center (formerly the Willard Asylum for the Insane) cemetery which included Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and Civil War veteran sections. Burial registers include name; age; nativity; death and burial dates; and plot locations. Soldier's ranks, companies, and regiments are noted.
Creator:	New York (State). Office of Mental Health
Title:	Willard Psychiatric Center burial and interment records
Quantity:	1 cubic foot
Quantity:	4 volumes
Inclusive Date:	1876-2000
Bulk Date:	1876-1929
Series:	B1760

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Arrangement

Chronological.

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Administrative History

The original cemetery was started at Willard Asylum for the Insane (as the facility was then called) in 1870. Included in the original cemetery grounds was a Civil War cemetery for patients who were veterans. Patients were accorded burial according to religious denomination. A Jewish cemetery was started on January 15, 1932 and a separated Catholic cemetery was started on February 3, 1959. Approximately 5757 patients are buried in the cemetery. The

registers usually indicate graves where disinterment occurred when a family member requested that a body be moved to another cemetery of their choosing. During 1989 staff at the Willard Psychiatric Center initiated a project where graves were remarked and the entire cemetery remapped.

After the Willard Psychiatric Center closed in 1995 the cemetery was still used and maintained on the grounds of the facility. Some patients who were at Willard at the time of the closure requested that they be buried in the hospital cemetery. The cemetery is administered with respect to these patients' wishes; as these patients die they are interred in the Cemetery.

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Scope and Content Note

This series consists of four burial registers, cemetery plot maps, and administrative files and reports relating to the maintenance, operation, and administration of the Willard Psychiatric Center cemetery. The burial registers are arranged chronologically and name indexes appear at the front of each volume. Formats vary slightly over time. Volume 1 (July 1870 - July 1885) includes the following information: name of deceased, age, nativity, date of death, date of burial, whole number, form, lot (which all refer to the location of the body in the cemetery), witness name, and remarks (indicating whether an autopsy was performed.). Volume 2 (July 1885- June 1890) includes identical information. Included in Volume 2 is a separate section for the Soldiers' Cemetery. Soldiers' ranks, companies, and regiments are noted. In Volume 3 (Oct. 1891 - April 1929) soldiers are identified in the name index.

Disinterments are noted in red pen; included is date of disinterment, cemetery removed to and whom taken by. Interleaved in the soldiers' section are additional sheets of paper which contain duplicate information to the burial records. Volume 4 (July 1929 - Jan. 2000) includes separate sections for the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant cemeteries. A separate section marked "Soldier's Cemetery" is left blank. A memorandum concerning the burial of lab specimens is interleaved in Volume 4. As reflected in the registers, it was common practice to bury body parts, such as limbs amputated for medical reasons, in separate containers or caskets in graves with corpses. Such information is noted in the "Remarks" column of patient interment registers. In rare instances deceased infants born to patients are included in the registers.

The plot maps were drafted in 1989 from medical records and an old undated plot plan. Maps are not drawn to scale and do not depict double grave rows. Plot keys duplicate information graphically represented in the maps. Administrative files contain facility and maintenance reports, memoranda, copies of burial record inquiries, and correspondence, historical anecdotes, and receipts related to a 1989 cemetery restoration project. An additional folder consisting of handwritten notes and photographs documents aspects of the restoration such as grave remarking.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Volumes are name indexed at the start.

Volume list.

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Use of Records

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 of Mental Health.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

These records were transferred to the Archives in January 2001.

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Access Terms

- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
- Psychiatric hospitals--New York (State)
- Willard (N.Y.)
- Administering psychiatric hospitals
- Burial records

- Cemeteries--Recording--New York (State)
- New York (State)
- Seneca County (N.Y.)
- Ovid (N.Y.)
- Psychiatric hospital patients--New York (State)
- New York (State). Department of Mental Hygiene
- Willard State Hospital (N.Y.)
- Willard Psychiatric Center (N.Y.)
- Willard Asylum for the Insane