



New York State Archives

**Rome State School Colony Supervisors' and Matrons' Files
B2387**

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

Table of Contents

Overview of the Records	3
Administrative History	3
Scope and Contents	4
Use of Records	4
Access Terms	4

Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	Colonies were created in 1883 as homes outside the main institution for younger patients who were judged to be potentially competent to be trained and transitioned to occupational and personal independence. This series documents duties and activities of female Colony Matrons, Colony Assistant Supervisors, and Colony Supervisors. Types of records include colony policies and procedure manuals for supervision and training of girl patients; individual colony descriptions and histories; colony personnel job descriptions; matron attendance sheets; notices; and subject files.
Creator:	New York (State). Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Title:	Colony supervisors' and matrons' files
Quantity:	0.75 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1918-1944
Series:	B2387

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

Colonies were created in 1883 as homes outside the main institution for younger patients who were judged to be potentially competent to be trained and transitioned to occupational and personal independence. Colony staff consisted of a Colony Supervisor and Assistant Colony Supervisor. In the male colonies the supervisor and assistant were man and wife. As entities located physically from five to 80 miles outside the main institution, colony personnel were somewhat more responsible for carrying out their activities on their own initiative. Colony staff provided care, training, and oversight of their patients as well as oversaw their physical facilities. Assistant Colony Supervisors were required to have a professional background in either teaching or nursing or two years of satisfactory experience in the care of mental defectives.

Skills taught to female patients emphasized cooking and domestic service. Training for girls included personal hygiene, cooking, sewing, clothing mending and alteration, cleaning, decorating, personal finance, and other skills related to home economics. Male students were chiefly taught farming and dairy skills.

The Colony Supervisors (or Matrons) also performed public relations and employment placement duties for the colony with the local community. Employers of the patients were expected to help teach their patient-employees responsibilities of living in their homes and to gradually prepare the patients ultimately to be discharged from the institution.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content Note

This series documents duties and activities of female Colony Matrons, Colony Assistant Supervisors, and Colony Supervisors (known as Psychiatric Attendants circa 1970). Types of records include colony policies and procedure manuals (1920s) for supervision and training of girl patients; individual colony descriptions and histories (1942); colony personnel job descriptions; matron attendance sheets; (policy and procedure) notices; and subject files.

Matron attendance sheets document the names, service statistics, and working history of Rome State School matrons. Information is given in either "Active" (1928-1944) and "Inactive" (1918-1942) status, dates worked, dates one matron substituted for another, dates of vacation, illness, or other absences. The lists also contain notes recording initial starting dates, dates of transfer either to another colony, out of colony service to ward service, or date a matron had left service altogether. The "Colony List" provides sheets for each colony and a record of matrons who have worked there. A "matron" served as the head of an individual female colony. The sheets are handwritten on a lined paper format.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Records identifying patients are restricted permanently in accordance with Section 33.13, Mental Hygiene Law, relating to confidentiality of clinical records. Access permitted under certain conditions upon application to and approval by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.

Access Terms

- Describing workers

- Attendance records
- Administering mental health facilities
- Intellectual disability facilities--Employees
- New York (State)
- Developmentally disabled--Institutional care--New York (State)
- Employees' manuals
- People with mental disabilities--Institutional care--New York (State)
- New York (State). Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
- New York (State). Department of Mental Hygiene