



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Department of Correctional Services Albion  
Correctional Facility Inmate Case Files W0002**

---

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

---

## Table of Contents

---

Overview of the Records .....	3
Arrangement .....	3
Scope and Contents .....	3
Other Finding Aids .....	8
Use of Records .....	8
Administrative Information .....	8
Access Terms .....	9

## Overview of the Records

---

<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	Albion Correctional Facility, located in Orleans County, N.Y., is a medium security correctional facility for female felons. Inmate case files describe in great detail the family and social background, arrest, confinement, and release/parole of incarcerated women.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York (State). Department of Correctional Services
<b>Title:</b>	Albion Correctional Facility inmate case files
<b>Quantity:</b>	415 cubic feet
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1894-2002
<b>Series:</b>	W0002

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Arrangement

---

Roughly numerical by DIN number.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Scope and Content Note

---

This subseries of the general inmate case files series, Series 14610, consists of inmate case files relating to women who were incarcerated in Albion Correctional Facility. Inmate case files describe in great detail the family and social background, arrest, confinement, and release/parole of inmates. The content of the case files reflects the role of each institution.

Beginning with inmates released after 1956, only the following case files categories were transferred to the State Archives: inmates who died in custody, sex offenders, inmates of certain minority ethnic groups, inmates who received life sentences, and a 2% sample of all inmates who were released from any correctional facility. All other case files were destroyed.

W0002-78: This accretion consists of approximately 7,000 inmate case files relating to women confined at the Albion State Training School from 1894 to about 1968. The records relate to the

periods when the institution functioned as a reformatory (1894 to 1931) and as an institution for defective delinquents (1931 to 1971). Albion again functioned as a reformatory from 1957 until 1971; case files from this later reformatory period are included in accretion W0002-93B.

1) REFORMATORY RECORDS. The records include approximately 3,000 case files for the 1894-1931 period when Albion and its predecessor, the Western House of Refuge for Women, functioned as a reformatory. The case files cover inmate numbers #1 through #3187. The reformatory received women between sixteen and thirty years of age committed for prostitution, public intoxication, vagrancy, truancy, and other misdemeanors. Women served indeterminate sentences of up to five years with release based on a system of merits and advancement within a number of cottages at the institution. The records document each inmate's progress through Albion's reformatory system.

a) Cover of case file folder. The cover of the folder provides summary information on the inmate including name; place of residence; crime; name of judge and court where sentenced; previous convictions; age at admission; where born; name of parents; religion; occupation; and education level.

b) Record of Conviction and Sentence. This record includes convicted person's name; birthplace; occupation; crime; previous convictions; date of conviction; name of judge; county; and date of sentence to Albion.

c) Warrant of Commitment. This record provides basic information on the sentence and authorizes local police authorities to deliver the convicted person to Albion.

d) Inmate summary record. This is a one-page record summarizing the inmate and her family. Most of the family information relates to her parents including names; whether alive or deceased; residence; where born; occupations; educational level; religion; criminal record; antisocial habits; and number of children. Information on the inmate contained on the record includes date of birth; residence; where born; previous arrests; religion; physical data; mental age; marital status; and previous institutional history.

e) Inmate record card. Beginning in the 1920s, case files include a card summarizing the inmate's reformatory experience. The card includes name; birth date; crime; marital status; mental age; dates transferred to different cottages; dates of work assignments (kitchen, sewing, outside work, etc.); names of any children; and results of medical laboratory tests (e.g. Wassermann, smear test).

f) Cottage record cards. Case files may contain one or more cards recording the dates of various inmate work assignments performed while living in a certain cottage. The cards list the name of the cottage with a list of assignments and number of months the inmate was at each. Cards also include a summary of the inmate's character and conduct while living at the cottage.

g) School report cards. These cards are bi-monthly reports of inmate progress in the reformatory school. The cards provide numerical grades in Arithmetic, Language, Geography, Spelling, Writing, Reading, and Conduct.

h) Staff reports. Case files may contain short narrative reports by reformatory staff which describe inmate conduct, work habits, attitude, education, and health.

i) Record of intelligence tests. This record gives a numerical score that the inmate achieved on a standard intelligence test, such as the Yerkes-Bridges Point Scale Examination, and the inmate's mental age as determined by the test scores.

j) Correspondence. Reformatory staff heavily censored both correspondence sent by the inmate and to the inmate. As a result, case files contain many letters that were never received or sent. These include letters from the inmate to family members describing the inmate's feelings, relations with family and others, conditions at the reformatory, plans for the future, etc. The records also include letters from family members to the inmate relating to the same topics. Many letters were sent to the reformatory superintendent by family members, religious, social agencies, schools, and other institutions providing information on the inmate or asking for information. Case files may contain letters from the inmate or her family after she was released describing her life and parole experience. Files may also contain copies of letters sent by the reformatory to relatives, guardians, social welfare agencies, police officials, and others providing information on an inmate either still at the reformatory or previously released.

k) Court documents relating to inmate's children. Children could stay with inmate mothers until two years of age. After this age, children were placed in the custody of a family member, a welfare agency, or another person or an adoption was arranged. Case files may contain court documents (notices, orders, petitions, affidavits) which were used in the process of placing the child in legal custody or adoption.

l) Petitions. Case files may include petitions to the reformatory's board of managers asking for the early parole of an inmate. Petitions, usually signed by a number of community members, describe the good character of the women and any special situations making parole necessary. Files may also contain similar petitions sent to the governor on behalf of an inmate.

m) Parole agreement. If an inmate was released on parole, case files may include a parole agreement completed by the person, usually a family member, who was to have custody of the inmate during parole. The agreement lists the conditions of residence and employment and sets conditions of moral character, habits, and associations for the inmate to follow.

n) Discharge at Expiration of Term of Commitment. In cases of inmates staying in the reformatory for the maximum term of sentence, there is a record ordering the release of the inmate by the board of managers.

2) DEFECTIVE DELINQUENT RECORDS. The Albion records include case files for approximately 3,700 defective delinquent inmates. The records relate to the period from approximately 1921 to 1965, although there are relatively few records after 1960. Included are several hundred case files for inmates transferred to Albion from Bedford Hills in 1931. Most of the records in the case files are identical to those records from other correctional institutions. In addition, however, the Albion case files contain a number of special records pertaining specifically to the classification and care of defective delinquent inmates. Many of the records are identical to those found in case files of male defective delinquent inmates from the Institute

for Defective Delinquents at Napanoch (W0017-88B) and from the Woodbourne Correctional Institution (W0059-89A). Among these special records are the following:

- a) Certificate of Mental Defect and Orders for Commitment to an Institution for Defective Delinquents. This record is the certification by a board of examiners of an individual's "mental defect" and the order of commitment of the individual to the institution by a county judge. (This certificate was authorized by the Laws of 1919, Chapter 633.) The record includes the name of the court and judge, inmate number, county of residence, and the total number of inmates committed to Albion so far during the year. The record lists the information used by the examiners in determining the individual's mental condition including her family history, educational level, health history, when the mental "peculiarity" was first noticed, delinquency record, previous institutionalization, use of drugs and alcohol, character traits, and a summary of her mental and physical condition. The record includes a certification by the examiners that the individual is defective delinquent and should be committed to a special institution.
- b) Certificate, Application, and Order of Transfer. This is a record authorizing the transfer of a defective delinquent from another correctional institution to Albion. The record contains several parts that reflect the process of transfer: a certification by the original institution's psychiatrist that the inmate is a defective delinquent; a petition from the original institution's warden or superintendent to the Department of Correction requesting an examination of the inmate; a certification by a board of examiners that the inmate is a defective delinquent; and an order of transfer from the Commissioner of Correction. The record also includes a two or three page statement by the examiners pertaining to the inmate's background, criminal behavior, social attitude, character traits, and mental condition based on correspondence with relatives, institutional records, and interviews with the inmate.
- c) Psychological reports. Case files may include a number of reports describing psychological interviews with the inmate and summaries of her performance on a variety of intelligence, educational achievement, personality, and mechanical aptitude tests. The reports list the inmate's mental age, I.Q., and educational age based on results of the Binet-Simon tests (and its various revisions), Wechsler-Bellevue, Gray Oral Reading, Stanford Achievement, Otis, and other psychometric and achievement tests. Case files may include the original tests completed by the inmate, particularly the Stanford Achievement tests. Each inmate is usually given a mental rating (e.g. "low grade moron," "high grade moron," "borderline normal") based on test results. The reports include comments by the psychologist relating to the inmate's character and personality, attitude toward the tests, improvement from earlier tests, and need for additional testing.
- d) Psychiatric reports. Case files usually include several reports by psychiatrists completed after interviewing the inmate. Reports are based on these interviews, on staff reports, and on information gathered from family members, educators, religious, employers, and local police officials. The reports summarize the inmate's background, personality, criminal activity, adjustment to confinement, work attitude, behavioral problems, need for further examinations, prognosis for improvement, and recommendations for continuing confinement or release.
- e) Physical and neurological examination reports. Albion case files usually contain several health reports not found in most corrections case files. Inmates were normally given several

thorough physical examinations and files contain reports of each. In addition, inmates were given a neurological examination that resulted in a detailed two-page report.

f) Social history. Case files may include a multi-page social history based on inmate interviews and on information provided by family and others. The social history provides detailed information on family history (grandparents, parents, and siblings); personal history (birth and early development, education and social development, sexual development, personality, health, family setting, use of drugs and alcohol, friends, occupation, and associations); and previous arrests and institutionalization.

g) Service Unit chronological record. Case files may include a detailed multi-page record describing the inmate's confinement and preparation for parole. The record summarizes the inmate's adjustment to confinement, school and work record, attitude, health and hospital record, and includes an evaluation by the social worker on the inmate and prospects for her parole.

h) Progress Notes. Case files include several pages of chronological notes relating to each inmate. The notes relate to letters received and sent, visits to the physician or hospital, staff reports received, parole staff visits, and general comments on the inmate's progress.

W0002-93B: This accretion contains 38 case files for inmates released from Albion Correctional Facility during the period 1957-1976. There are records for both male and female inmates.

W0002-98I: This accretion consists of a 2% sample of case files for inmates released from Albion Correctional Facility in the period 1976-1981. Also included are files of all inmates who died in custody, sex offenders, inmates of certain minority ethnic groups, and those who received life sentences. There are case files for both male and female inmates.

W0002-00: Most of the case files in this accretion document inmates who were originally incarcerated in the Division for Mentally Defective Delinquency Women at the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills. As provided in the Laws of 1931 (Chapter 456), the division was transferred to the Albion State Training School, which was briefly renamed the "Institution for Mentally Defective Delinquent Women" before reverting back to its former name. Case numbers in the accretion fall between 115 and 256 (case number 7 is also included) and are preceded by the prefix "MD" signifying "mentally defective." The case files occasionally include photographs of inmates.

W0002-05A: This accretion consists of case files for approximately 42 female inmates and approximately 24 male inmates incarcerated in the Albion Correctional Facility during the years 1985-1988.

W0002-08: This accretion contains a 2% sample of case files of inmates incarcerated in Albion Correctional Facility, the majority of whom were released from 1988-1992. In addition to the sampled case files, prisoners receiving life sentences, sex offenders, inmates who died in custody, and inmates of Asian and Native American ethnicity are included.

W0002-13A: This accretion consists of case files of inmates who were released during the period 1978-2005 from Albion Correctional Facility. The files are predominantly medical in nature.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Other Finding Aids

---

### Available at Repository

Folder lists are available at the repository.

### Online Index

The number of inmate case files for certain correctional facilities is limited due to file sampling plans. Currently, the [index to series W0002](#) contains three entries for this facility.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Use of Records

---

### Access Restrictions

Summary information on adult inmates is disclosable under law. State Archives staff will review records containing probation, parole, medical, and juvenile criminal history data and disclose information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law and Personal Privacy Protection Law. The identity of victims of sex crimes is not disclosable. Unless a specific law forbids disclosure indefinitely, all records must be disclosed after 75 years.

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Acquisition Information

This subseries was transferred under RDA 14610 by the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.



## Processing Information

W0002 is formally part of Series 14610, Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Inmate Case Files. To improve access, Series 14610 was divided into "W" subseries corresponding to individual correctional facilities.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Access Terms

---

- Albion (N.Y.)
- Correctional institutions--New York (State)
- Orleans County (N.Y.)
- Administering correctional facilities
- Women prisoners--New York (State)
- New York (State)
- Female offenders
- Prisons--New York (State)
- Corrections--New York (State)
- Monitoring prisoners
- Criminals--New York (State)
- Case files
- Incarcerating criminals
- Prisoners--New York (State)
- Inmates of institutions--New York (State)
- Prison sentences
- Albion State Training School (Albion, N.Y.)
- Western House of Refuge for Women (Albion, N.Y.)
- Albion Correctional Facility