



New York State Archives

**New York State Department of Correctional Services Bedford
Hills Correctional Facility Incarcerated Individual Case Files
W0010**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, located in Westchester County, N.Y., is a maximum security correctional facility for women. Case files describe in great detail the family and social background, arrest, confinement, and release/parole of incarcerated females.
Creator:	New York (State). Department of Correctional Services
Title:	Bedford Hills Correctional Facility incarcerated individual case files
Quantity:	319 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1915-2004
Series:	W0010

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Arrangement

Roughly numerical by DIN number.

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Scope and Content Note

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

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

W0010-77B: This accretion consists of approximately 600 case files from Westfield State Farm and its predecessor, the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills. The accession consists of three separate groups of records, each reflecting a different function served by the institution since it opened in 1901:

1) "DEFECTIVE DELINQUENT" RECORDS. The accretion includes approximately 50 case files relating to incarcerated individuals tested at the Bedford Hills Laboratory of Social Hygiene from 1915 to 1920. This laboratory tested all reformatory admissions and segregated those they deemed "medically defective" from the rest of the prison population. The records reflect the laboratory's extensive psychological testing and psychiatric evaluations and its investigations into the heredity and environment of those who were incarcerated. The records include in-depth interviews and extensive family histories based on field visits and information received from family, employers, social welfare agencies, schools, and institutions of previous confinement. There are extensive staff notes and minutes of staff meetings with information on the incarcerated individual's background, criminality, social attitude, physical and mental health, and need for confinement.

2) REFORMATORY RECORDS. This accretion contains approximately 500 case files relating to women who were incarcerated at the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills from about 1925 to 1930. The most important records contained in these case files include:

Pre-sentencing report. These reports are similar to those found in other corrections case files completed by local probation officers. These four-page reports provide information on the incarcerated individual, her present crime, previous criminal activity, family background, employment and educational history, etc.

Commitment to reformatory. This is the record committing the convicted woman to Bedford with summary information on the crime, the court, and the sentence.

Admission Record. This record provides summary information on the incarcerated individual, her family, the crime, and lists persons who are authorized correspondents.

Family history. A four-page summary of the incarcerated individual, her physical and mental health, family, criminal activity, and background.

Psychological and psychiatric reports. Case files may include several reports by reformatory psychologists and psychiatrists based on interviews with the incarcerated individual and on results of a number of standard achievement and intelligence tests.

Chronological notes. Case files include several pages of chronological notes relating to the incarcerated individual from admission to parole. The notes briefly describe progress, correspondence, health problems, disciplinary problems, and release and parole.

Pre-parole reports. Case files usually include a report on the incarcerated individual's application for parole which contains summaries of their institutional life by various reformatory staff with recommendations for parole decisions.

Correspondence. Reformatory staff evidently censored a large amount of correspondence. As a result, the case files contain many letters never sent or received by the incarcerated individual. These include letters to and from family members. There are also many letters sent to the reformatory from family members, religious, social welfare agencies, schools, and other institutions providing information on the incarcerated individual requested by the reformatory. There are also letters from the incarcerated individual to the reformatory reporting on parole and from the reformatory to the incarcerated individual or her family requesting information about parole.

3) WESTFIELD STATE FARM PRISON RECORDS. The accretion includes approximately 80 case files relating to those confined at the State Prison from approximately 1955 to 1965. While containing basic documentation from sentencing to release/parole, these case files contain only about one-fourth of the records found in a typical case file from a male prison. There are no medical records in the folders; these apparently were filed in a separate location. There are few identification records or records used in the classification of incarcerated individuals. Also, there are no extensive pre-parole reports as in most other prison case files.

W0010-88E: The series consists of institutional case (medical case history) files consisting of, but not limited to, commitment papers, custodial data, fiscal data, identification data, and related correspondence for all individuals released prior to January 1, 1957 and not subsequently readmitted.

W0010-91: This accretion consists of case files for approximately 1,100 females incarcerated at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility between the years 1957 and 1978. Many were serving life sentences.

W0010-94C: The accretion consists of psychology files on women incarcerated in Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The files relate solely to behavior and subsequent psychological evaluations, and include psychiatric reports, interdepartmental memoranda, and notes, referral letters, and other communications about the patients. Psychiatric reports typically include name and consecutive number; date; source of referral; history; summary of interview; diagnosis; prognosis; and recommendations and/or impressions of the attending or consulting psychiatrist. Researchers should consult complete case files, where available, for full information on incarcerated individuals documented in this accretion.

W0010-98D: This accretion consists of a 2% sample of case files for those who were incarcerated in Bedford Hills Correctional Facility from 1976-1981. Several women are also classified as serving life sentences. One is of Asian ethnicity. Very few died in custody.

W0010-08: This accretion contains a 2% sample of case files of those who were incarcerated in Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, the majority of whom were released from 1988-1992.

W0010-13A: This small accretion consists of scattered case files of women who were released during the period 1978-2005 from Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The files, which were apparently missing from several previously transferred accretions, appear to be entirely medical in nature.

W0010-21: This accretion documents incarcerated individuals whose sentences reached maximum expiration dates in 2003-2004. Records only document those categorized under specific felony and central monitoring classes: Class A-1, CMC A status; Arson (1st, 2nd); Kidnapping (1st, 2nd); Conspiracy (1st); Coercion (CMC A, class D only).

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

W0010-13, W0010-19, W0010-21: Folder list is available at the repository.

Online Index

The [index to series W0010](#) contains 5129 entries that include the name, release date, and identification number. Index currently relates only to incarcerated individuals released from the institution between 1940 and 1978.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Summary information on adult incarcerated individuals 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.

W0010-21: This accretion was transferred under RDA 16112.

Processing Information

W0010 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.

W0010-88E: Files were received at the Archives in two shipments: 1.) Transferred from Bedford Hills Correctional Facility on 12/1/1988 (22 cubic feet); and 2.) Transferred from Clinton Correctional Facility on 12/28/1988 (20 cubic feet). The combined files (42 cubic feet) were accessioned on 1/5/1989. Due to active mold infestation the records were microfilmed by Archives staff in 1989; silver master microfilm was sent to the State Records Center for secure storage. Paper records were destroyed in December 1990.

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Access Terms

- Inmate records
- Administering correctional facilities
- Incarcerating women prisoners
- Westchester County (N.Y.)
- New York (State)
- Female offenders
- Monitoring prisoners
- Bedford Hills (N.Y.)
- Case files
- Incarcerating criminals
- Correctional institutions
- Prisons
- Prison sentences
- Women prisoners
- Corrections
- Criminals
- Prisoners
- Inmates of institutions
- Bedford Hills Correctional Facility (N.Y.)