



New York State Archives

**New York State Department of Correctional Services Eastern
Correctional Facility Inmate Case Files W0017**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	Eastern Correctional Facility, located in Ulster County, N.Y., is a maximum security correctional facility for male felons. Inmate case files describe in great detail the family and social background, arrest, confinement, and release/parole of incarcerated men.
Creator:	New York (State). Department of Correctional Services
Title:	Eastern Correctional Facility inmate case files
Quantity:	339 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1920-2004
Series:	W0017

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Scope and Content Note

This subseries of the general inmate case files series, Series 14610, consists of inmate case files relating to men who were incarcerated in Eastern 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.

W0017-88B: This accession consists of approximately 7,000 inmate case files relating to inmates confined at the New York State Institution for Male Defective Delinquents at Napanoch from 1921 through 1956. The case files relate to inmates with inmate numbers between 1 and 7893. Many of the Napanoch inmates were transferred from other institutions within the corrections system. The case files, therefore, contain many records from these institutions that were transferred to Napanoch with the inmate.

Most of the records in the Napanoch case files are similar to case files from other corrections institutions, typically documenting the arrest, sentencing, confinement, and release of the inmate. In addition to these standard case file records, Napanoch created a number of psychological and psychiatric reports used to test, evaluate and classify its unique defective

delinquent population. The most important of the special records in the Napanoch case files include the following:

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 Napanoch by a county judge. The record includes the name of the county and judge, date of order, date of admission to Napanoch, the inmate's name, inmate number, county of residence, and the total number of inmates committed to Napanoch so far during the year. The record lists the information used by the examiners in determining the individual's mental condition including his 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 physical and mental condition. The record includes a certification by the examiners that the individual is "mentally defective" and should be in a special institution.

Certificate, Application, and Order of Transfer. This is a record authorizing the transfer of an inmate from a corrections institution to either Napanoch, Woodbourne Correctional Institution, or, in the case of women, to Bedford Hills. Inmates could be transferred to these special institutions if an inmate was examined and found to be a defective delinquent. This record contains several parts that reflect the process of transfer: a certification by the institution's psychiatrist that the inmate is a defective delinquent; a petition from the institution's warden or superintendent to the Department of Correction requesting an examination of the inmate; a certification by the 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 several 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.

Identification Memorandum. A one-page summary describes the inmate at admissions. The record includes the inmate's age, race, physical characteristics, appearance, intelligence level, and whether right or left handed.

Classification Board summary. A one-page record lists the inmate's Psychiatric Classification (e.g., "feebleminded") and Administrative Classification (e.g., "restricted, prolonged tractable").

Chronological Notes. This multi-page list provides a chronological summary of reports, correspondence, and memoranda relating to the inmate during his confinement. The majority of the summaries relate to reports prepared by the Parole Board, the institution's Classification Board, and various individual staff relating to the inmate's behavior, adjustment, health, vocational and academic education, performance of work assignments, religious life, and to conditions leading to discharge or parole. The notes also summarize visits to the inmate and inmate interviews with institution staff.

Medical history record. The majority of case files contain a multi-page medical history or anamnesis completed by Napanoch staff. The record is based largely on correspondence and interviews with a number of the inmate's family members, employers, local police and social welfare officials and others who could provide information on the inmate's life prior to confinement. The record provides detailed information on the life and health of the inmate and

of his siblings, parents, and grandparents. The record describes the inmate's birth, childhood, and development with emphasis on illnesses, family and social adjustment, character, habits, education, and criminal behavior. The anamnesis summarizes physical, psychometric, and psychiatric examinations given the inmate and suggests when the inmate might be eligible for release.

Psychological examination reports. Completed by a Napanoch staff psychologist, these one-page reports list the inmate's performance on a variety of intelligence, educational achievement, personality, and mechanical aptitude tests. Case files may include several reports. The reports list the inmate's mental age, I.Q., and educational age based on results of the Binet-Simon (and its various revisions), Wechsler-Bellevue, Gray Oral Reading, Stanford Achievement, Otis, and numerous other psychometric and achievement tests. Case files may include the original tests completed by the inmate, especially the Binet-Simon and Stanford Achievement tests. Each inmate was given a mental rating (e.g., "low grade moron", "high grade moron", "borderline normal") based on these results. Many inmates were given the same test several times over the course of confinement and the reports include these results. The reports conclude with comments by the psychologist relating to the inmate's character and personality, attitude toward the tests, improvement from earlier tests, and the need for additional testing.

Psychiatric examination reports. Case files usually include several reports prepared by Napanoch psychiatric staff. These reports duplicate the results of intelligence tests found on the psychological reports (e.g., mental age, I.Q., and mental rating) and provide detailed information on the inmate's background and adjustment to confinement. The reports are based on inmate interviews and staff reports and on information gathered from family members, educators, religious, employers, and local police officials. Background information on the inmate contained in the reports includes: basic inmate identifying data; family history (including the health, employment and criminal history of parents, siblings, and grandparents); early development of inmate (e.g., birth data, illnesses or health problems, behavior at home, relationship to parents and siblings, punishments used at home); data on education, employment, military service; and previous criminal activity. The reports summarize the inmate's personality, adjustment to confinement, work attitude, and any behavior problems. The reports comment on the ability of the inmate to care for himself after release and, in some cases, may recommend long-term or permanent confinement if the inmate is judged likely to continue criminal activity.

Correspondence and questionnaires relating to the inmate's background. Case files may include letters or completed questionnaires received from family members, educators, employers, institutions of previous confinement, and others containing information on the inmate's background such as: characteristics of the family and neighborhood; social and economic status of the family; physical and mental health history of the inmate and family members; personality, social behavior, and early signs of mental defect; use of alcohol and drugs; and educational, religious, and employment history.

W0017-94: The accretion consists of a 2% sample of case files for inmates released after 1956.

W0017-95: The accretion consists of commitment papers which were inadvertently separated from their respective inmate case files. The papers are for inmates entering the Eastern

Correctional Facility. Each set of papers typically includes court orders to correctional facilities for inmate to appear in court; receipt from correctional facility to court for inmate; list of personal property transferred; correspondence concerning transfer of inmate; and court order committing inmate to correctional facility stating conviction, crime, indictment number, and length of sentence. Material relating to commutation may also be included.

W0017-95A: This accretion consists of commitment papers that were inadvertently separated from their respective inmate case files. The papers are for inmates being transferred to the Institution for Male Defective Delinquents at Napanoch, New York. Each set of commitment papers typically includes certificate of mental defect; application for commitment or transfer; order for commitment to an institution for defective delinquents; mental history obtained by state examiners; indictments; copy of sentence; certificate of mental defect by a physician or psychiatrist; order of transfer; certificate of confinement; and list of personal property transferred.

W0017-98H: This accretion consists of a 2% sample of case files of inmates released from Eastern New York Correctional Facility in the period 1976-1981. Also included are files for inmates who died in custody, sex offenders, inmates of certain minority ethnic groups, and those who received life sentences.

W0017-05: This accretion contains a 2% sample of case files for inmates incarcerated in Eastern Correctional Facility. In addition to the sampled case files, files for prisoners receiving life sentences, sex offenders, inmates who died in custody, and inmates of Asian and Native American ethnicity are included when available.

W0017-08: This accretion contains a 2% sample of case files of inmates incarcerated in Eastern 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 when available.

W0017-13A: This accretion consists of four inmate case files which should have been transferred in earlier accretions.

W0017-21: This accretion documents inmates whose sentences reached maximum expiration dates in 2003-2004. Records only document inmates 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

W0017-94, W0017-05, W0017-13, W0017-19: Folder lists are available at the repository.

Online Index

The [index to series W0017](#) identifies 6,756 inmates admitted to Eastern Correctional Facility between 1920 and 1956. Each entry includes the inmate's name and identification number. Some entries include the inmate's birth date and release date.

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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

W0017-13, W0017-19: These accretions were transferred under RDA 14610 by the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. W0017-21: This accretion was transferred under RDA 16112.

Processing Information

W0017 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.

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Access Terms

- Prisoners
- Corrections
- Inmates of institutions
- Inmate records
- Administering correctional facilities
- Correctional institutions
- Prisons
- New York (State)
- Ulster County (N.Y.)
- Napanoch (N.Y.)
- Monitoring prisons
- Case files
- Incarcerating criminals
- Criminals
- Eastern Correctional Facility