



National Archives and Records Administration

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Annual Reports of St. Elizabeths Hospital (The Government Hospital for the Insane)

The Government Hospital for the Insane began operations in 1855 to provide treatment to the mentally ill. Congress originally established the hospital to care for soldiers, sailors, and indigent residents of the District of Columbia. If the hospital had vacancies, it also accepted additional patients for a fee. Early on, people referred to the hospital as St. Elizabeths after a nearby tract of land, and in July 1916, Congress, officially named it St. Elizabeths.

Annual Reports

Congress required Federal agencies to write an annual report providing an overview of their accomplishments. Because St. Elizabeths Hospital was administratively within the Department of the Interior (DOI), the hospital wrote the report and submitted it to the Secretary of the Interior, who included it in his annual report to Congress. The reports include

- Lists of the members of the Board of Visitors, the men who inspected the hospital to ensure that it was operating well and caring for the patients properly
- Lists of the staff physicians and associate chaplains
- Statistics on the race and sex of patients, as well as the number of patients who had been in the army, the navy, or who were civilians
- Numbers of patients from the states, territories, and foreign countries;
- Narrative of the year's highlights
- Information on hospital expenditures, such as office equipment, hospital supplies, livestock, and food. These lists are often very detailed and include inventories of specific food items.
- Itemized receipts of board paid for private patients (1881–1903 only) that include the person's name, the date the hospital received the payment, and the amount
- Special reports or drawings in some annual reports. For example, the 1900 report includes a special report on patients who died from tuberculosis.

For more information, see the following reference reports:

- *Patients and Staff at St. Elizabeths Hospital (the Government Hospital for the Insane) in the Federal Census, 1860–1940*
- *St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1907–1940: The Central Classified Files of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior*

See also: Kleiman, Miriam, "Rich, Famous, and Questionably Sane: When Wealthy Heirs Sought Help from a Hospital for the Insane." *Prologue* Summer 2007, Vol. 39, No. 2

<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2007/summer/mccormick.html>

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