

LETCHWORTH VILLAGE.

THIELLS, N. Y.

Letchworth Village is a state institution for the care of feeble-minded and epileptic persons, and is located at Thiells, Rockland County, N. Y., three miles west of the Hudson River, and near the town of Haverstraw. Its site comprises an area of 2100 acres of varying altitudes, ranging from 400 feet to 1100 feet above the sea. The farm and building sites comprise about 1300 acres, divided in the center by Minnisceongo Creek, a small stream having an average width of about 40 feet. To the east of this stream is a broad abrupt ridge, which descends rapidly towards the highway and the main line of the Erie Railroad. Along this ridge are located the administration building and the three groups for boys and men. Between the Minnisceongo Creek and the Ramapo Hills to the west is a broad valley, extending almost the entire length of the improvable land. In this valley will be located the different groups of buildings for girls and women. The hills are covered with a second growth of chestnut and oak.

The Board of Managers of Letchworth Village propose to provide for the housing of approximately 3000 persons in detached buildings, arranged in separate groups as follows: administration; trainable boys; men, infirm males; trainable girls; women, and infirm females.

This plan primarily provides for the separation of the groups for the males from those for the females by a large natural brook which runs through the center of the estate. The improvable boys are to be in a group by themselves, quite distinct from the adult males and the infirm. The adult males are to be located near the group for the infirm to provide for the utilization of the able-bodied in the care and nursing of the infirm cases. All of the buildings for the males are to be located near the large tracts of land available for farming purposes in order properly to utilize their labor in farming, dairy and garden operations.

The young and teachable girls are to be separated from the women and the infirm females. The women are to be located between the laundry and the group for the infirm females, thus providing for the economical utilization of their services in these departments.

The general administrative and utility buildings are to be located near the center of the plant. The physicians and other persons employed in nursing and other service are to be housed in comfortable but modest dwellings located near the buildings where they are employed.

The various groups are to be served by nearby buildings for kitchen, dining, school, industrial and assembly purposes. The different groups are to be so separated as to prevent the intermingling of the inmates in these groups when it is so desired. The inmates who belong in any one group will be classified in the separate buildings in that group according to ages, mentality, etc. Each house will be a home, where the children will present a family unit in the village community.

The plan proposes housing the inmates in detached dormitory buildings of one story, fireproof construction, each building to accommodate 70 children. The buildings, some of which are nearly completed, are architecturally simple and have adequate provision for heat, light and ventilation.

The one-story dormitories now under construction will cost about \$500 per capita. The simplicity, size and arrangement of the buildings are such that they can be administered at the lowest possible cost for paid service.

The institution was opened for the admission of children on July 11, 1911, and the present population numbers one hundred. It is governed by a board of seven managers, appointed in rotation by the Governor for a term of seven years. Subordinate to the board is a superintendent, who is the executive head of the institution.

Reprinted from *The Institutional Care of the Insane in the United States and Canada*, By Henry Mills Hurd, William Francis Drewry, Richard Dewey, Charles Winfield Pilgrim, George Adler Blumer, American Medico-Psychological Association. Committee on a History of the Institutional Care of the Insane, Thomas Joseph Workmann Burgess, Volume 3, The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1916, Pages 259 – 260.
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