

Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam & Queens Counties 1883

Orleans County. - The poor-house of this county was visited on the evening of November 1, 1883. It is a commodious brick building, nearly new, heated by steam, and well supplied with water. The plaster in most of the rooms having fallen off, it had recently been replaced by wooden ceilings, and was being painted. The number of inmates, mostly aged and infirm, was 84, over two-thirds of whom were males. Of these, three men and three women were classed as chronic insane, only one of whom, so far as could be learned, had ever been at any State asylum. They were all regarded as quiet, harmless cases, and two of the men and one of the women were said to be good laborers. The building has no separate accommodation for the chronic insane, it being the policy of the county to send all of this class requiring special attention to the Willard Asylum. The institution throughout was clean and in good order and the inmates apparently well provided for. I did not deem the removal of any of the insane necessary.

Oswego County. - I visited and examined the chronic insane of this county, February 22, 1883, in company with Dr. George P. Johnson, attending physician. The number then under care was, men, 16; women, 32; total, 48. The attendants are one man and two women, each at \$20 per month. The visiting physician receives \$365 per year. The total annual expense for medical and other supervision of the insane, exclusive of the time devoted to them by the keeper of the poor-house, is \$1,085, or \$22.60 per patient. The old building adjusted to associate rooms under the recommendation of the Board, several years ago, is occupied wholly by women, and their apartments are cheerful and comfortable. The new building, at the rear, occupied by both men and women, is constructed with single rooms ranged on either side of central halls. It is gloomy and uninviting and has no outlook, the windows being very small and above the reach of the patients. This building might readily be adjusted to associate rooms, and by enlarging and lowering the windows, it could be made pleasant and comfortable, and that with moderate expense. There were no insane, at the time of my visit, in any form of mechanical restraint. Dr. Johnson informed me that one man was, at times, excited and noisy, but that there were no continuously disturbed men. There were two women considerably excited and one of them was noisy. As Dr. Johnson thought the supervision was adequate to the class of insane in the care of the county, I did

not recommend any removals. He assured me that if the condition of any of the insane, at any time, should seem to demand, he would promptly inform the Board, or take measures to secure their transfer to the State. The county has now seven patients at the Willard Asylum.

Visited June 14, 1883, accompanied by Miss Terry, Secretary of the State Charities Aid Association, and Dr. Johnson, attending physician. The inmates numbered 18 men and 31 women; total, 49. We went through all the wards and saw every patient, and none were in any form of restraint, nor in seclusion. The force of attendants was the same as last reported. The periodically excited man - **Michael Cary** - referred to in my last visit, has, at times since then, been extremely violent, and is regarded as dangerous. The superintendent decided to remove him to the Willard Asylum, and he will soon be sent to that institution. The two excited women noticed in my last report were, at the time of this visit, quiet and orderly, and, it was said, caused little or no trouble. There seemed to be no necessity for removals other than the case referred to.

Visited July 25, 1883, in company with the State Commissioner in Lunacy. Since my visit of June 14, 1883, two cases, both women, have been brought from the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica, and the disturbed and violent man then referred to, **Michael Cary**, has been transferred to the Willard Asylum. One woman, 32 years old, had been admitted direct from her home, where she had been held for several years after becoming insane. No deaths or other changes, in the mean time, had occurred. The number under care was 17 men and 34 women, making a total of 51. There were no cases in seclusion, nor in any manner restrained, and they were generally quiet and orderly. We united in the opinion that no immediate removals were necessary.

Visited October 19, 1883. At my last visit, July 25, 1883, there were 51 insane - 17 men and 34 women - in the asylum department of this county. Since then, the changes have been as follows: Admitted, one man brought from his home, but formerly an inmate of the State Lunatic Asylum, and two women, one of these being a recent case awaiting removal. Lost by death, one man aged 63 years, an inmate 27 years; one woman, 68 years of age, and but a short time in the institution; and one woman, 70 years old, an inmate 15 years. There has also been discharged, one woman, taken away by her friends. This left 50 insane under care

viz.: 17 men and 33 women. One of the men, temporarily excited, was confined in a room on the basement floor, and one woman, said to destroy her clothing, was in the restraint of straps at the wrist. One of the women referred to in my last report, returned from the State Lunatic Asylum, was on furlough at her home and it was thought she might remain permanently in family care. The other, **Ellen Kelly**, about 45 years old, had become extremely noisy and violent, and the superintendent had decided to transfer her to the Willard Asylum. There were no other disturbed or excited cases, nor any under mechanical restraint. The walls of the building were being cleaned and whitewashed, and the wood-work is to be painted in lighter colors, so as to give the halls and rooms a more cheerful appearance.

Otsego County. - I visited the poor-house of this county June 23, 1883, accompanied by Commissioner Miller. Among the inmates, 14 were classed as insane, of whom there were three men and eleven women. Of these, we recommend the removal of two to the Binghamton State Asylum, viz.: **William Fuller**, aged 65 years, an inmate nearly two years, having never been at any State asylum; is destructive of clothing and extremely filthy, and if allowed liberty is inclined to wander. **Polly Powers**, 54 years old, an inmate only a few days, but regarded as insane for several years, having been retained in family care; is violent and noisy, with homicidal tendencies. There was another insane man in the institution - **Norman Tripp** - 40 years of age, an honorably discharged soldier of the late war, whom we advised removed to the State Lunatic, or Binghamton Asylum, as the duration of the insanity, of which little could be learned, might determine as proper. He had been an inmate about two months, having been rejected by the State Soldiers' Home, because of his mental condition, and was very feeble, infirm and incoherent. The others were quiet, orderly, chronic cases, many of them being domiciled with the poor-house inmates. The county has eighteen insane at the Willard and seven at the Binghamton Asylum.

Among the poor-house inmates we found two feeble-minded young women, viz.: **Mary Niver**, 18 years old, an inmate several years, and **Nellie Thayer**, 27 years of age, an inmate ten years, and the mother of three illegitimate children, two of whom died in the institution, the other being at the Orphan Asylum at Cooperstown. We advised the superintendent to apply for the admission of these cases to the Newark Custodial Asylum.

Within the past few years considerable improvement has been made in the poor-house of this county. The evils of indiscriminate association of the sexes, however, still exist, notwithstanding that attention has repeatedly been called to them. A very moderate expenditure, in the erection of a division fence, and the inclosure of yards, would effectually separate the sexes, and the importance of the matter was urged upon the attention of the superintendent, who resides at the institution and was present.

Putnam County. - The County poor-house of Putnam was visited December 11, 1883, when it contained 40 inmates - 24 males and 16 females. Of these, five men and four women were classed as insane. One of these, **Daniel Clancy**, 45 years old, had been an inmate about one year, committed as a vagrant, and was then probably insane. He has fixed delusions that a conspiracy exists against his welfare, and is at times extremely violent and considered dangerous. As the county has no superintendent of the poor, I communicated with the chairman of the board of supervisors, advising his removal to the Hudson River State Hospital. The others were quiet and orderly cases, and most of them of long standing. The inmates were generally aged and infirm persons, and several were helpless and bed-ridden. The only child in this institution was a nursing infant in charge of its mother. There was one feeble-minded young woman, **Emma Ferguson**, 26 years old, whom I recommended to be removed to the Newark Custodial Asylum.

The building was clean, in good order, and its supplies appeared to be abundant and proper. There is no means of warming the sleeping-rooms of the men's department, situated on the upper story, and in extreme cold weather it seems they must suffer. I advised that a stove be placed in the upper hall for warming these rooms.

Queens County. - I visited the Queens County Lunatic Asylum, near Mineola, March 12, 1883. Within five minutes after entering the building, I was upon its wards, and visited every hall, room and apartment devoted to the insane, and also the kitchen, dining rooms and laundry. The records showed 126 patients, of whom 57 were men and 69 women. There were a few spare beds, though some of the rooms, in my opinion, contained more beds than they can suitably accommodate. There were no insane in any form of restraint, nor were any found secluded. All were comfortably clothed, clean in their persons, and orderly and quiet.

Twelve of the men were at work in the wash-room, pounding clothes in barrels, and about fifteen women were at work in the laundry and kitchen. A number were also engaged in making and mending clothes. The building throughout was clean, and the beds and bedding comfortable and tidy. A number of the men were engaged in games, as checkers, backgammon, etc., and there were no disturbed or noisy patients. Within a short time, the county had removed four violent and troublesome insane to the Binghamton State Asylum, and it has also 16 insane at the Willard Asylum. According to the records, the whole number of patients in the institution during the year ending September 30, 1882, was 154, and the daily average was 129. The actual expense of maintenance and care is reported to have been about \$3 per week; and deducting the income derived from paying patients, the cost to the county for its pauper patients is said to have been \$2.23 per week. It is seldom that so large numbers of insane are found so quiet and orderly in any institution as they were in this, upon the occasion of my visit. The building, however, is poorly adapted to its purposes, and it requires constant labor and vigilance to maintain a proper standard of care. In the event of a fire, there would doubtless be great loss of life. There is an urgent need for more land, so as to furnish out-door employment for the men.

May 15, 1883. The number of insane was 127, of whom 60 were men and 67 women. At the request of Dr. Rogers, superintendent of the asylum, I made my examination unaccompanied by him. I went through the entire building, and saw all of the insane. In the washroom there were twelve men and eight women at work; in the laundry, six women; and in the kitchen and dining-rooms, three men and two women. Each of these departments was in charge of a paid employee or attendant. During my visit the patients partook of their dinner, consisting of beef stew, potatoes, bread and butter, and tea. The meal was abundant, and the inmates were quiet and orderly at the tables. Upon the wards, I found one man - **Henry Halsey** - in the restraint of a muff, and one woman - **Ellen Donahue** - in a camisole. Both of these cases were said to be, at times, destructive of their clothing. There were no other insane in any other form of restraint. Two cases were in bed, sick - one with consumption and one suffering from internal hemorrhage. These were isolated in separate rooms. I conversed freely with all the patients who so desired, and heard no serious complaints. There were no noisy nor filthy patients; all were comfortably clothed and clean; and the wards and rooms were in good order. By resolution of the board of supervisors, no

paying patients have been received since May 1, 1883. The supply from this source being thus cut off, the population of the asylum will probably soon be considerably diminished. There were two cases to be discharged in a few days, said to be improved sufficiently so as to go to their homes. The superintendents have been directed by the supervisors to remove all recent insane to the State hospitals, and to commit only the chronic class to the county asylum, which heretofore, under various pretexts, has received considerable numbers of acute cases.

Visited September 5, 1883. Since my last visit, May 15, 1883, six patients - two men and four women - have been removed from the Willard Asylum, by the superintendents of the poor, and placed in the county asylum. An actual count showed 131 patients, viz.: 64 men and 67 women, as against 127 at my last visit. I went through the building, in the yards, and over the grounds, unaccompanied, and saw all the patients. These were found as follows: Of the men, 31 were in the yard under the supervision of two attendants; one was in his room, temporarily sick; seven were on the ward in charge of an attendant; three were at work in the kitchen; twelve were pounding clothes in the wash-room; two were painting the inner wood-work of the building; and the balance were at work in the garden and upon the grounds. Of the women, 39, in charge of two attendants, were in the yard; seven were employed in the wash-room, four in the ironing-room, two in the common kitchen, two in the superintendent's kitchen, and 13 were on the wards, of whom seven were engaged in sewing. There were no greatly disturbed nor violent men. One woman, an inmate several years, was in her room, feeble and emaciated; one, in the yard, was excited and noisy; and one upon the ward - colored and blind - was destructive, and in the restraint of a camisole. The walls of the building had recently been well white-washed, and the interior wood-work was being repainted. The wards and rooms were clean and tidy, and the building throughout in good order. I examined the bread, meat and other supplies, and found them of good quality and abundant. The number of patients, it will be seen, was greater than at any time before reported since the opening of the asylum. There are ten attendants and employees, who have to be accommodated, at night, upon the wards, and every bed is occupied. The matter would seem to require the attention of the Board, and I respectfully suggest that it be referred to the committee on insanity, with the view of conferring with the authorities in regard to the enlargement of the building, or the removal of a part of the insane to State

asylums. I addressed a communication to the superintendent upon the subject, and requested him to bring it to the attention of the board of supervisors, at their next session. On the 13th of September he informed me that he had laid the matter before the supervisors, and that they directed that plans and specifications for the extension of the buildings be immediately prepared.

Visited December 5, 1883. On the 1st of November, 1883, Dr. Rogers, superintendent of this asylum from its opening, was superseded by Dr. Charles H. Clemment, of Hempstead, who is now in charge. A number of paying patients had been removed, so that the insane under care was reported to be 120, as against 131, upon the occasion of my last visit, September 5, 1883. Of these, 58 were men, and 62 women. One, a man about 60 years old, was a recent case, awaiting removal to the Hudson River State Hospital. My visit was in the evening, and during my stay the patients were all retired. I went over the halls with the superintendent, and there were a few noisy cases, though most of them were in quiet sleep. I learned that the supervisors had decided not to extend the buildings, as had been contemplated, and it seemed desirable, therefore, to remove a part of the insane to State care, as the asylum contains little or no spare room, and might be suddenly called upon, at any time, to meet pressing demands, in which view the superintendent fully concurred. To this end we selected twelve of the most disturbed and troublesome cases - six men and six women - and I addressed the board of superintendents recommending their removal to the Binghamton State Asylum, viz.: **Michael Meskall, William P. Crayton, Nelson R. Townsend, James McCarty, John Freshler, Mathias Knoup, Charity Jackson, Jennie G. Gaswell, Elizabeth Houser, Bridget Kane, Phebe Walters, and Henrietta Wright.**

In reply to my communication in regard to the removal of the insane referred to above, to the Binghamton State Asylum, Superintendent Losee, Secretary of the Board, addressed me as follows: 'I assure you that the suggested removal of patients meets the views of the superintendents of the poor, and that their removal will be attended to at the earliest convenient date.'

The poor-house of this county, situated on Barnum's Island, about ten miles from the asylum, was visited December 6, 1883, accompanied by Dr. J.A. Hutchinson, attending

physician, and L.D. Simons, late superintendent of the poor. Its inmates then numbered 108, of whom 95 were males and 13 females. Of the males, 30 were young men under 35 years of age, and apparently in good health and of fair intellect. Only three of these had acquired settlement in the county, the others being tramps and vagrants. Of the females, seven were very aged, three were colored, two blind, and one was a young woman with a nursing infant. The hospital, a detached cottage, contained nine cases, all males. There were no insane. The buildings are quite comfortable, and throughout, were clean and in good order.