

Minnesota State University, Mankato,  
Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center.  
St. Peter State Hospital, St. Peter, Minnesota. Collection, 1855-1974.  
SMHC Manuscript Collection 103

**St. Peter State Hospital, St. Peter, Minnesota. Collection, 1855-1974. SMHC Manuscript Collection 103. 32 1/2 Hollinger boxes, 1 records center carton, 27 volumes, and 3 oversized folders.**

**ABSTRACT:**

The St. Peter State Hospital collection contains information on the institution from 1855 through 1974. The collection is divided into four series: General Hospital History, 1856-1974; Buildings and Grounds, 1855-1972; Library, 1867-1972; and Volumes, 1866-1952. The most extensive of these series is the General Hospital History. It contains information ranging from newspaper clippings, photographs, correspondence, reports, research notes, and numerous other items. The Buildings and Grounds section contains photographs, blueprints, and information about the institution's property and facilities. The information about the Library pertains exclusively to the library's collections and activities. This section includes numerous photographs of events and individuals along with correspondence and reports. Volumes contain information regarding the institution's spending proclivities and patient account records in addition to other information.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:**

The St. Peter State Hospital began in March 1866 when the Minnesota State Legislature responded to the need for an asylum by passing "an act for the establishment and location of a hospital for the insane in the state of Minnesota, and to provide for the regulation of the same."<sup>1</sup> The act also created a board of trustees and appointed six commissioners responsible for recommending a permanent location for the state's hospital. A number of Minnesota communities vied for the facility and each claimed to be the most attractive village. However, on 1 July 1866, the commissioners made their recommendation. They opted for St. Peter as the permanent site. Citizens of that community purchased a 210 acre farm for \$7,000 which was given to the state for the purpose. Shortly after the commission's report was filed, the board of trustees purchased the Ewing house in St. Peter for temporary use until construction was completed on the permanent hospital. The board of trustees estimated that the refurbished Ewing house with accommodations for fifty patients would exceed the state's demands for years.

The Minnesota State Hospital for Insane accepted its first patient on 6 December 1866 and received more patients from Iowa on 28 December. In its first annual report to the governor, the board referred to the problem that would reoccur in the hospital's history for over the next 100 years. The original estimates of the board had proven incorrect as overcrowding had become the foremost problem two months after the hospital opened. In the spring of 1867, after a reorganization of the board of trustees, construction began on a temporary frame building adjacent to the Ewing property and when completed would house an additional fifty patients. In 1867, the board adopted the "Linear Plan" for the permanent hospital consisting of a center building with attached sections.

During the following ten years, construction proceeded on the permanent hospital while the board reluctantly expanded the accommodations of the temporary hospital to relieve the problem related to the increasing patient population. By 1876, construction ended. The new facility was capable of accommodating 500 patients and the valuation of the property was placed at \$563,251.69. Because of the increasing number of patients, the hospital needed to continue operating the temporary buildings even though they needed extensive remodeling.

The problem of overcrowding was exacerbated in by a disaster on 15 November 1880 when fire destroyed the hospital's north wing before being contained. There was no insurance to cover the loss, and officials voiced concern over the possibility of another disaster. In response, the board recommended fireproofing the entire complex by replacing gas lights for electric lights and abandoning the temporary wood buildings.

Throughout the 1880s the hospital expanded. The north wing was rebuilt, two detached structures were erected to the north and south of the main facility, tunnels were built beneath the complex for the distribution of food, and a piggery, corn crib, and greenhouse were built. By 1892, the hospital's farm had expanded from the initial size to 810 acres, and numerous patients helped work the land. Besides providing food and employment opportunities, the farm was an economic necessity. Produce raised by patients and staff lowered the institution's food costs. However, the building projects had little effect in abating the institution's overcrowding by 1896. In response to similar conditions at the State Hospitals in Rochester and Fergus Falls, two new hospitals opened in Hastings and Anoka, Minnesota.

In 1906, the Board of Control, the new body of directors, recommended that patients considered dangerous or criminally insane be placed in a separate building located near one of the mental institutions where they could be given proper care. Legislators agreed and appropriated funds for a facility in St. Peter. By the spring of 1911, four separate institutions existed on the St. Peter campus: the mental hospital, the detention hospital, the hospital for tuberculosis insane, and the newly completed hospital for the criminally insane.

World War I necessitated stringent economic measures. Reductions in food, clothing, and other supplies mean that only the immediate needs of the patients could be satisfied. Inflation and a shortage of labor also affected the hospital, and in 1918, the influenza epidemic caused the death of thirty-two patients and one employee severely impacted the institution's population.

The postwar period brought prosperity, expansion, and new methods of treatment. Even the Great Depression had little negative impact on the institution because the Works Progress Administration provided funds for construction of a needed addition to the hospital's facilities. By the summer of 1939, the Board of Control was abolished and the Division of Public Institutions was created. This division within the Department of

Social Security was responsible for the administration of the state's institutions while the remaining duties of the Board of Control were transferred to the Department of Social Welfare. After World War II, the institution continued to expand its facilities and enlarge its staff. By 1972, the St. Peter State Hospital consisted of over sixty buildings.

Historical Information was obtained from the collection and:

*Annual Reports of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Minnesota Hospital for Insane*, 1867-1869, 1873, 1876, and 1880.

*Biennial Reports of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Minnesota Hospital for Insane*, 1882-1888 and 1890-1896.

*Biennial Reports of the Board of Control of State Institutions*, 1904, 1906, 1910, 1918, and 1934-1938.

*Biennial Reports of the Division of Public Institutions*, 1948, 1950, and 1952.

*Minnesota Legislative Manual*, 1941.

#### **SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

The St. Peter State Hospital Collection is divided into four series: General Hospital History, 1856-1974; Buildings and Grounds, 1855-1972; Library, 1867-1972; and Volumes, 1866-1952. These papers were originally collected by the institution's librarian, Elizabeth Seaquist. Seaquist's basic organization has been retained.

#### **General Hospital History, 1856-1974**

This is the most extensive series within the collection. It contains information on the hospital ranging from newspaper clippings, photographs, correspondence, reports, research notes, newsletters, and numerous other items. Some subjects included are the hospital's centennial celebration, hospital programs, hospital history, and AFSCME strike materials.

#### **Buildings and Grounds, 1855-1972**

The buildings and grounds section contains photographs, blueprints, and information about the institution's property and facilities.

#### **Library, 1867-1972**

The information about the library pertains exclusively to the library's collections and activities. This section includes numerous photographs of events and individuals along with correspondence and reports.

#### **Volumes, 1866-1952**

The volumes contain information regarding the institution's spending proclivities, daily work records, and patient account records in addition to other information.

#### **RESTRICTIONS:**

There are no restrictions on use of this collection for research purposes. The researcher assumes full responsibility for observing all copyright, property and libel laws as they apply.

**COLLECTION CITATION:**

This collection should be cited as:

St. Peter State Hospital, St. Peter, Minnesota. Collection, 1855-1974. SMHC Manuscript Collection 103, Southern Minnesota Historical Center, Memorial Library, Minnesota State University, Mankato.

**ACQUISITION:**

St. Peter State Hospital donated this collection in November 1972.

**PROCESSED BY:**

Archive's staff processed this collection in September 1977.

Jeff A. Jenson developed the finding aid in April 2002.

Mee Xiong updated the finding aid in December 2015.

Mee Xiong made additions to the collection in May 2016.

**OCLC AND RLIN:**

After checking the OCLC and RLIN national databases in April 2002, it has been determined that there are similar manuscript collections about St. Peter State Hospital, St. Peter, Minn. available at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN. The collections at the Society are about the Hospital but are different than this specific collection. The Minnesota Historical Society's inventories are available upon request.

**LCSH SUBJECT HEADINGS:**

St. Peter State Hospital, St. Peter, Minn.

St. Peter State Hospital--History.

Minnesota Hospital for Insane--History.

<b>SMHC Manuscript Collection 103</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
<b>General Hospital History, 1856-1974</b>		
"An Evaluation of a Course in Abnormal Psychology for Employees of the St. Peter State Hospital," by B.P. Grimes, et al., undated	15	4
Bartlett, Cyrus K. "A Brief History of the Minnesota Hospitals for Insane," 1893	3	7
Biennial Reports, 1890, 1896, and 1900	10	3
<i>Biennial Reports of the Superintendent, 1904-1910</i>	31	9
Biographies, Letters, and Photographs, undated	19	4
Centennial, Correspondence, 1966	18	3
Centennial, Miscellaneous, Newspaper Clippings and Programs, 1966	18	4
Centennial, Photographs, 1966	18	5
Centennial, Photographs, 1966	18	6
Centennial, Photographs, 1966	18	7
Centennial, Registry Book, 6-10 September 1966	19	1
Centennial, Singers, 1966	19	2
Centennial, Speakers, 1966	19	3
"Concepts of Psychopathy: A Review of the Professional Literature on Psychopathic Personalities," by Robert F. Jesness, 1952	26	1
Correspondence, 1862-1870 (Photocopies)	4	1
Correspondence, 1864-June 1866	4	2
Correspondence, July 1866-February 1870	4	3
Correspondence, 1870-1884	4	4
Correspondence, 1885-1889	4	5
Correspondence, 1890-1891	4	6
Correspondence, 1892	5	1
Correspondence, 1893	5	2
Correspondence, 1894-1895	5	3
Correspondence, 1896-August 1898	5	4
Correspondence, undated and September 1898-1899	5	5
Correspondence, 1900-1902	6	1
Correspondence, 1903-1905	6	2
Correspondence, 1906	6	3
Correspondence, 1907	6	4
Correspondence, January-July 1908	6	6
Correspondence, August-December 1908	7	1
Correspondence, 1909-June 1912	7	2
Correspondence, August 1912-1913	7	3
Correspondence, 1914-1915	7	4
Correspondence, 1916-1919	7	5
Correspondence, 1920-1921	7	7
Correspondence, 1922-1930	8	1

Correspondence, 1931-1942	8	2
Correspondence, 1950-1959	8	3
Correspondence, 1960-1969	8	4
Diploma, John O. Hoglund, 1894	Oversize	1
Hospital Programs, 1946-1960	15	7
Hospital Programs, 1961-1963	16	1
Hospital Programs, 1964-1969	16	2
Industrial Therapy, Miscellaneous Publications, 1959	15	6
Insurance Policies, 1867-1876	8	7
Insurance Policies, 1896	9	1
Insurance Policies, 1896	9	2
"Laundry Survey," May 1954	30	5
"Manual of Industrial and Occupational Therapy," undated	30	7
"Mental Health Newsletter," Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, 1963-1968	26	6
Miscellaneous, Hospital Publications, 1943-1968	31	1
Miscellaneous, Papers, 1869-1891	4	7
Miscellaneous, Papers, 1892-1899	5	6
Miscellaneous, Papers, 1900-1907	6	5
Miscellaneous, Papers, 1908-1919	7	6
Miscellaneous, Papers, 1929-1969	8	5
Monthly Reports, 1920-1958	10	4
"Murder Under Twenty One: A Study of Juveniles Admitted to the Asylum for the Dangerous Insane Following Homicidal Assault," October 1947	31	10
"The New Era," Script, undated	16	3
Newspaper, <i>The Tribune</i> (Minneapolis), November 19, 1880	Oversize	
Newspaper Clippings, 1878-1895	19	5
Newspaper Clippings, 1915-1949	19	6
Newspaper Clippings, 1950-1951	20	2
Newspaper Clippings, 1952-August 1954	20	3
Newspaper Clippings, September 1954-1956	20	4
Newspaper Clippings, 1957-August 1958	20	5
Newspaper Clippings, September 1958-June 1959	21	1
Newspaper Clippings, July-October 1959	21	2
Newspaper Clippings, November 1959-February 1960	21	3
Newspaper Clippings, March-June 1960	21	4
Newspaper Clippings, July-December 1960	21	5
Newspaper Clippings, January-June 1961	22	1
Newspaper Clippings, July-December 1961	22	2
Newspaper Clippings, January-May 1962	22	3
Newspaper Clippings, June-October 1962	22	4
Newspaper Clippings, November 1962-April 1963	22	5
Newspaper Clippings, May-October 1963	23	1
Newspaper Clippings, November-December 1963	23	2

Newspaper Clippings, February 1963 (Investigation)	23	3
Newspaper Clippings, March-May 1963 (Investigation)	23	4
Newspaper Clippings, June-August 1963	23	5
Newspaper Clippings, January-April 1964	24	1
Newspaper Clippings, May-November 1964	24	2
Newspaper Clippings, December 1964-June 1965	24	3
Newspaper Clippings, June-December 1965	24	4
Newspaper Clippings, January-September 1966	25	1
Newspaper Clippings, October-December 1966	25	2
Newspaper Clippings, January-June 1967	25	3
Newspaper Clippings, July-December 1967	25	4
Newspaper Clippings, January 1968-June 1969	25	5
Newspaper Clippings, Scrapbook, ca. 1948	20	1
Patients Pay and Allowance Advisory Committee, Booklet, ca. May 1968	25	6
“Phelps Hall Stairway Traffic Survey,” December 1954	30	6
Photograph Album, 1950-1954	17	1
Photographs Miscellaneous, 1950-1954	17	2
Photographs, People, 1894-1898	16	6
Photographs, People and Events, 1955-1957	17	3
Photographs, People and Events, 1958-1959	17	4
Photographs, People and Events, 1960-1961	17	5
Photographs, People and Events, 1962	17	6
Photographs, People and Events, 1962	17	7
Photographs, People and Events, 1963-1965	18	1
Photographs, People and Events, 1965-1966	18	2
Photographs, People and Grounds, 1930-1938	16	7
Photographs, People, Places and Events, 1940-1949	16	8
Publications, Miscellaneous, 1927-1959	16	4
Publications, Miscellaneous, 1939-1965	26	2
Publications, Miscellaneous, 1960-1969	16	5
Publications, Miscellaneous, Related to Mental Health Institutions, 1944-1950	26	7
Publications, Miscellaneous, Related to Mental Health Institutions, 1951-1968	26	8
Quarterly and Annual Reports, 1888-1891	9	5
Quarterly and Annual Reports, 1892-1895	9	6
Quarterly and Annual Reports, 1896-April 1899	10	1
Quarterly and Annual Reports, July 1899-1901	10	2
“The Recreator,” 1938-1949	12	4
“The Recreator,” 1950-1951 and “The Voice of Patience,” 1950	12	5
“Recreator,” 1952-1953	12	6
“Recreator,” 1954-1955 and “Information Issue,” 1953-1955 and 1866-1954	13	1
“Recreator” and “MSH Eagle,” January-May 1963	14	4



“Recreator” and “MSH Eagle,” June-December 1963	14	5
“Recreator” and “MSH Eagle,” January-August 1964	14	6
“Recreator” and “MSH Eagle,” September 1964-September 1965	15	1
“Recreator,” “MSH Eagle,” and “Notes from the Remot’s,” October 1965-February 1967	15	2
“Recreator,” “MSH Eagle,” and “Notes from the Remot’s,” March 1967-April 1969	15	3
“Recreator” and “The Voice of Patients,” May 1956-June 1958	13	2
“Recreator,” “The Voice of Patients,” and “The Eagle,” July 1958-March 1959	13	3
“Recreator,” “The Voice of Patients,” “MSH Eagle,” April-December 1959	13	4
“Recreator,” “The Voice of Patients,” “MSH Eagle,” November 1961-April 1962	14	2
“Recreator,” “The Voice of Patients,” “MSH Eagle,” May-December 1962	14	3
“Report,” Minnesota Security Hospital, 5 March 1964 and “An Introduction to St. Peter State Hospital Minnesota’s Oldest Hospital for the Mentally Ill,” 11 March 1964	15	5
Reports, Alcohol and Drugs, 1969-1970	24	5
Research Notes, 1856-1868	1	1
Research Notes, 1869-1871	1	2
Research Notes, 1872-March 1874	1	3
Research Notes, April 1874-1875	1	4
Research Notes, 1876-1877	1	5
Research Notes, January-May 1878	2	1
Research Notes, June 1878-1 January 1879	2	2
Research Notes, 8 January-February 1879	2	3
Research Notes, March-December 1879	2	4
Research Notes, 1880	2	5
Research Notes, 1881	2	6
Research Notes, 1882	3	1
Research Notes, 1883	3	2
Research Notes, 1884-1899	3	3
Research Notes, 1901-1902	3	4
Research Notes, 1921-1939 and Newspaper Summary 1930-1940, undated	3	5
Research Notes, 1954-1964	3	6
Research Papers, “St. Peter State Hospital, 1865-1909” and “St. Peter State Hospital, 1866-1961” by Elizabeth Seaquist, undated and 1961	3	8
Speeches, by Governor Luther W. Youngdahl, 1948 and Director of Division of Public Institutions Carl J. Jackson, 1948?	3	9
“St. Peter State Hospital News,” 1958-January 1959	10	5
“St. Peter State Hospital News,” February-July 1959	10	6

"St. Peter State Hospital News," August-December 1959	10	7
"St. Peter State Hospital News," January-July 1960	11	1
"St. Peter State Hospital News," August 1960-January 1961	11	2
"St. Peter State Hospital News," February-September 1961	11	3
"St. Peter State Hospital News," October 1961-1962	11	4
"St. Peter State Hospital News," 1963	11	5
St. Peter State Hospital, Women's Department. <i>Rules for the Governance of Sub-ordinate Officers and Nurses</i> . 1895.	31	8
"Story of St. Peter State Hospital," by Dr. G.H. Freeman, undated	20	6
"Strike Plan," 1 November 1974	19	7
"The Voice of Patients" and "MSH Eagle," January-July 1960	13	5
"The Voice of Patients" and "MSH Eagle," August 1960-February 1961	13	6
"The Voice of Patients" and "MSH Eagle," March-October 1961	14	1
Vouchers and Receipts, 1866-October 1869	8	6
Vouchers and Receipts, November 1869-1880	9	3
Vouchers and Wood Contracts, 1882-1884	9	4
"Weekly Bulletin," Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, 1957-October 1959	26	3
"Weekly Bulletin," Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, November 1959-1961	26	4
"Weekly Bulletin," Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, November 1962-1969	26	5
Weekly Menus, 1951-1953 and 1961-1962	11	6
Weekly Menus, 1963-1965	12	1
Weekly Menus, 1966-1968	12	2
Weekly Schedules, 1962-1966	12	3
<b>Buildings and Grounds, 1855-1972</b>		
Asylum for the Dangerous Insane, Notes, Correspondence, Clippings, and Photographs, 1890-1909	27	1
Blue Prints and Map, 1910-1966	Oversize	2
Employees Residence, Stewards Office, and Laundry, Notes and Photographs, 1890-1964	27	2
Ewing House, Notes and Photograph, 1855-1936 (Temporary Hospital)	27	3
Geriatrics, Psychopathic Building, Bartlett Hall, Pexton Hall, Phelps Hall, Shantz Hall, and Tomlinson Rehabilitation Center, Notes, Clippings, and Photographs, 1936-1972	27	4
Miscellaneous, Buildings, Grounds, and Utility Building, Notes and Photographs, 1870-1967	27	5
North and Sough Flats, Recreational Building, Cottage X, Detached Ward North and South, and Detention Hospital, Notes, Correspondence, Clippings, and Photographs, 1869-1967	27	6
Permanent Hospital, Notes, Correspondence, and Photographs, 1867-1967	27	7

<b>Library, 1867-1972</b>		
Clippings from Hospital Publications, 1940-1962	29	5
Clippings from Hospital Publications, 1963-1967	30	1
Correspondence, 1891-1915	28	1
Correspondence, 1916-1959	28	2
Correspondence, 1960-1965	28	3
Correspondence, 1966-1972	28	4
Miscellaneous, Institutional Library Materials, 1909-1940s	31	3
Miscellaneous, Institutional Library Materials, 1953-1968	31	4
Miscellaneous, Institutional Library Materials, 1971-1972	31	5
Monthly Activities, 1950-1964	29	4
Monthly Reports, 1909-1945	29	1
Monthly Reports, 1946-1951	29	2
Monthly Reports, 1952-1959	29	3
Newspaper Clippings, 1915-1972	30	4
Photographs, 1930-1962	30	2
Photographs, 1963-1968	30	3
<i>Quarterly</i> , State Board of Control, 1908-1920	31	6
<i>Quarterly</i> , State Board of Control, 1927-1936	31	7
Research Notes, 1867-1950	28	5
Research Notes, 1951-1972	28	6
"Survey of the St. Peter State Hospital Library," Dorothy Waddingham, May 1966	31	2
<b>Volumes, 1866-1952</b>		<b>Volume</b>
Account Book (steward), 1875	34	11
Account Book (steward), 1881-1883	34	12
Building and Current Expense Ledger, 1866-1873		32
Building Expense Ledger, 1874-1879		33
Check Record (steward), 1874	34	10
Criminal Ward Patient Accounts, 1916-1930		48
Current Expenses Ledger, 1888-1889	33	20
Current Expenses Ledger, 1890-1891	33	21
Current Expenses Ledger, 1892-1893	33	22
Current Expenses Ledger, 1894-1895	33	23
Current Expenses Ledger, 1895-1896	32	24
Current Expenses Ledger, 1898-1899	32	25
Daily Dietary Record, 1879-1890		46
Daily Dietary Record, 1886		47
Daily Expense Journal, 1866-1873		26
Daily Expense Journal, 1875-1880		27
Daily Expense Journal, 1880-1883		28
Daily Expense Journal, 1884-1887		29
Daily Expense Journal, 1887-1888		30
Daily Record of Meat Consumption, 1877-1878	34	14

Daily Work Record (carpenters and patients), 1905-1909	34	5
Daily Work Record (carpenters and patients), 1909-1911	34	6
Daily Work Record (carpenters and patients), 1913-1915	34	7
Daily Work Record (carpenters and patients), 1918-1919	34	8
Daily Work Record (carpenters and patients), 1922-1924	34	9
Expense Book (wood purchased), 1885	34	16
Expense Book (food and kitchen supplies), 1884	34	17
Expense Book (food and kitchen supplies), 1886-1887	34	18
Expense Record, 1884-1894		19
Furniture and Furnishings Ledger, 1903-1912		34
Journal, 1873-1876		35
Journal, 1876-1879		36
Library Inventory, 1888	34	4
Monthly Expense Book, 1867-1878	34	15
Monthly Expense Record, Property Evaluation, 1901-1925		31
Patient Accounts Ledger (men), 1916-1930		49
Patient Accounts Ledger (men), 1921-1930		50
Patient Accounts Ledger (women), 1908-1930		51
Patients Ledger Record, 1867-1878		45
Petty Cashbook (steward), 1890-1896	34	13
Reports of the Visiting Board, 1867-1885	34	2
Reports of Dr. Bartlett to the Governors, 1868-1887	34	3
State of Minnesota Fire Protection Survey, St. Peter State Hospital, 1952	34	1
Time Record, 1913-1919		44
Treasurer's Voucher Record, 1885-1890		37
Voucher Record, 1882-1885		38
Voucher Record, 1885-1888		39
Voucher Record, 1891-1894		40
Voucher Record, 1894-1897		41
Voucher Record, 1897-1900		42
Voucher Record, 1900-1902		43

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<sup>1</sup>*First Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Minnesota Hospital for Insane, 1867, p. 4.*