

Collection #
SC2938

INDIANA HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, CIRCULAR AND NOTE, 1857

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 Folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1857

PROVENANCE:

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION
RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection
must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS: P0010, John C. Jack Householder Collection, ca. 1920-1981
contains photographs of Central State Hospital; also IHS has
several annual reports of hospital commissioners and board
members.

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 1957.0420

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indiana Hospital for the Insane (later known as Central State Hospital), was the first state-operated psychiatric hospital in Indiana. It opened in 1848 and was located on West Washington Street in Indianapolis. In April 1857, due to lack of funding from the state legislature, hospital superintendent James S. Athon announced the closing of the facility. All patients were discharged to their home counties. Enough funds were procured in order for the hospital to reopen the following fall.

The Indiana Hospital for the Insane initially relied on moral therapy, a treatment popular in antebellum America; however, it later turned to medication and individualized treatment of patients on a case-by-case basis. In 1889, the state established three more psychiatric institutions and the Indiana Hospital for the Insane became known as Central State.

By the late 19th century, Central State housed nearly 2,000 patients. Issues of overcrowding, insufficient funding and patient abuse were not uncommon. The hospital was officially closed in 1994. The Indiana Medical History Museum is now housed in the Old Pathology Building located on the former hospital grounds.

Sources:

Dwyer, Ellen. "Central State Hospital," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds. Indiana University Press, 1994. 397-398.

Indiana Medical History Museum, accessed November 1, 2012, <http://www.imhm.org/>.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains a circular released by the Board of the Indiana Hospital for the Insane concerning the April, 1857 closure of the facility and the release of patients. The document includes a note to the Clerk of Randolph County from James S. Athon, Hospital Superintendent, in regards to the conditions of three female patients who were presumably released to the care of Randolph County.

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Circular and note from James S. Athon, Indiana
Hospital for the Insane Superintendent, to Clerk of
Randolph County, 1857.

CONTAINER

Folder 1

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 2938).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.