



Jacksonville Area Genealogical  
& Historical Society

416 South Main  
Jacksonville, Illinois 62650  
217-245-9623  
www.jaghsil.com

“ Just like our ancestors, we too will fall out of living memory and be forgotten  
It will take a future genealogist to find us again.  
Make it a good find.”

- Stephen Robert Kuta

Jacksonville Area Genealogical & Historical Society  
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Annual Membership \$25.00 per year (January – December)

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**Jacksonville Area Genealogical and Historic Society**  
**416 South Main**  
**Jacksonville, IL 62650**

**Hours of Operation**

**Tuesday Evening 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Friday 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

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## RECCOMENDED READING: The Woman They Could Not Silence

By Kate Moore

Published by Sourcebooks Naperville, IL 60567

2021

This is a true story of Elizabeth Packard who was unjustly committed to the Illinois State Hospital for the Insane by her husband who was threatened by her intelligence, free thinking and independence in 1860.

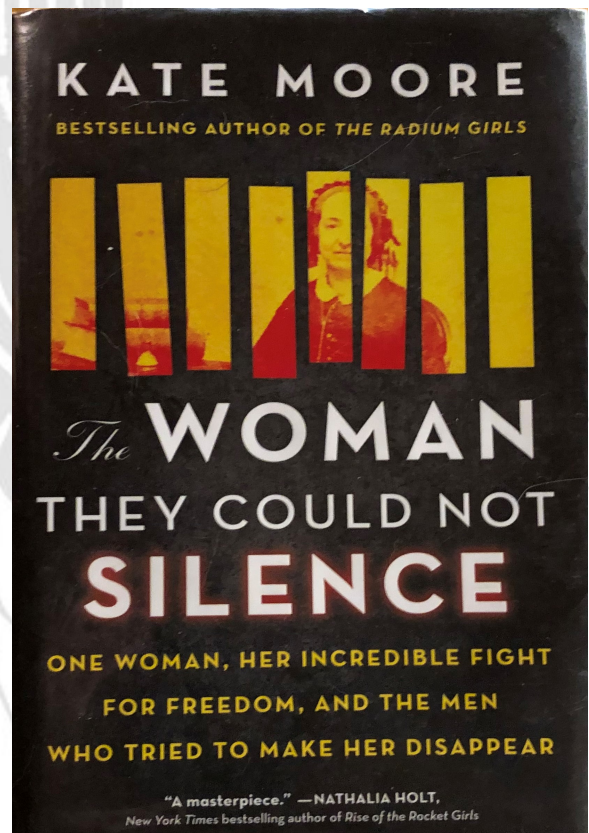
The hospital had horrible conditions and housed many women who had no business being confined in such an institution.

Elizabeth fought back against her husband, against the hospital administration and against the laws of the time.

This is an amazing book that will really touch those who have connections to Jacksonville and the Jacksonville area.

Anne Jackson, Secretary

JAGHS



Thanks to the generosity of our members, we were able to purchase a new sign for the building.

Here is what we had...AND WHAT WE HAVE!





| <b>BOOKS FOR SALE - Postage is \$5.00 for most books</b>  |         |
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| Ten Generations of My Simmons Family History by Ida Harper Simmons  | \$20.00 |
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| History of Will Co IL 1878 (reproduction by Unigraphis 1973)  | \$20.00 |

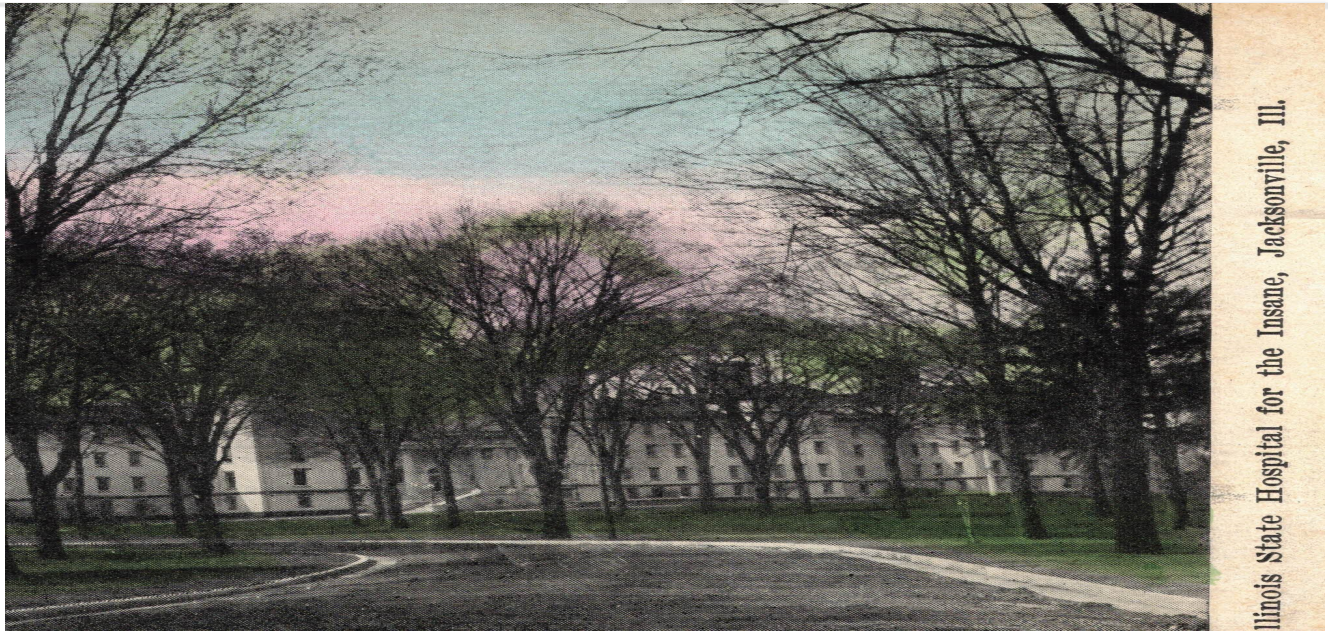


Volunteers have been working hard to reorganize the library. Stop in and see our progress





## Topic of the Month: Illinois State Hospital for the Insane



CREATION OF THE FIRST ILLINOIS STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE  
BY LAW OF 1847, ACCEPTED FIRST PATIENT 3 NOVEMBER 1851 A.D.

Miss Dorothea Dix in her "Memorial to the Senate and House of Representatives of Illinois" urged their serious consideration of the afflicted condition of an increasing class of insane sufferers, whose healthful exercise of their intellectual faculties were withdrawn, incapable of self-government, and self-care. As a result the Assembly passed a Law in 1847 stating "there shall be established, within four miles of the Town of Jacksonville, County of Morgan, an institution to be known as the Illinois State Hospital for the Insane." Joseph Morton, James Dunlap, John J. Hardin, John Henry, Samuel D. Lockwood, William G. Thomas, Bezaleel Gillett, Nathaniel English and Owen M. Long constituted a body corporate as trustees. The first building, under Superintendent Dr. James M. Higgins, was opened to accept the first patient, Sophronia McElhiney, McLean County 3 November 1851.

Florence Henderson— Jacksonville Area Genealogical Society

# Medical changes

## **Patient therapy has changed radically in 150 years**

**BY TAMMY TABOR**

Journal-Courier

Before the creation of state hospitals, insane asylums were established as a way to protect the public from the mentally ill.

Little was known about the cause of mental illness, its prevention or treatment. Patients were confined within the walls of an institution, behind barred windows and locked doors. Mechanical or drug restraints were common.

In response to rising concerns, state hospitals were built as a way to care for those with mental illnesses in a more humane manner, and hopefully to cure the patient along the way.

'They were built with the best intentions, as curative places,' said Dr. Richard Newman, president of Newman Clinic and a board certified psychiatrist.

But they became custodial, rather than curative.

'State hospitals primarily sheltered and separated people from society,' Dr. Newman said, 'not so much by design, but because treatments were not effective.'

Initially, Dr. Newman said, state hospitals thought they were going to cure people and send them back into society. Before medicines, treatments were physical in nature, including electric shock therapy and hydrotherapy.

Electric convulsive treatment, commonly known as electric shock therapy, was the first method that patients really responded to. The problem was that those administering the treatment did not know how many treatments a person should receive.

'There were people who had hundreds of treatments,' he said. 'Now it is rare to see someone who has had 30 in their lifetime.'

In the 1950s came the introduction of medicines that controlled involuntary behavior and put patients in a more rehabilitative state. This was followed by a change from institutional to community based care, which Dr. Newman said was driven by two things.

The first factor, he said, was a feeling that people were better off closer to home and not sent across the state to a facility. The other issue was money. There were states where the largest employer was mental health agencies.

'It became important to reduce the numbers of people in state hospitals because those people could be cared for more cost-efficiently in community-based arrangements,' he said. 'But you still have to have facilities for those who can't make it in community-based facilities.'

The Jacksonville Developmental Center now serves people whose primary diagnosis is mental retardation or developmental disabilities.

Dr. Newman said there are no medications that specifically help mental retardation.

'We're trying to provide a stable and protective environment, where they can be nurtured, so they can meet their potential,' he said.

This article by Tammy Tabor was published in the Jacksonville Journal Courier on March 2, 1997. Thank you to the Jacksonville Journal Courier for allowing us to reprint this article.



## Change big part of JDC's long history

BY BUFORD GREEN

*of the Showcase*

The Jacksonville Developmental Center, despite a number of name changes during its long existence, is still remembered by many as the Illinois State Hospital. That is only one of many distinct changes in the facility that has strongly impacted the Jacksonville area over the past century and a half.

A brief look at the history of the institution at 1201 S. Main St. shows some of the drastic changes in both the field of treatment of the mentally ill and the look of the facility.

Talk of establishing a hospital for the treatment of mental illness first began here in 1845. Soon thereafter, a local committee got a kick-start in that direction by the presence of legendary reformer Dorothea Dix, who was traveling throughout this part of the country in an effort to achieve establishment of mental hospitals.

Dix lobbied the state legislature in December of 1846, after visiting penitentiaries, poor houses and jails to document how the mentally ill were being treated.

The Act of Incorporation, which established "as soon as after the passage of this act as shall be practicable, at or within four miles of the town of Jacksonville... an institution to be styled and known as the Illinois State Hospital for the Insane" was approved March 1, 1847.

The original seven-member board purchased 160 acres of land for \$3,270. The first building, "Old Main," was built on land one and one-fourth miles south of the Morgan County Courthouse. Dr. James M. Higgins of Griggsville became medical superintendent of the hospital in 1849 at an annual salary of \$800.

The hospital got its first patient Nov. 3, 1851. A woman from McLean County was admitted with a diagnosis of "extreme jealousy" and not discharged until 16 years later.

Early treatment at the hospital included fresh air, activities and exercise, quite limited when compared to today's treatment methods.

Inpatient population grew quickly, with simple admission requirements. Residents often remained at the hospital for several decades.

The original building included four wards capable of accommodating almost 400 patients. The hospital had only 82 patients in 1852, with eight attendants.

In 1876, with a patient population of 1,200, the hospital began adding a building known as The Annex, which was constructed in two projects in 1886 and 1892. The three-story building was regarded as the largest, continuous three-story building in the world, being a quarter-mile long.

Both Old Main and The Annex were demolished, along with many other buildings, a number of years ago.

The turn of the century saw many changes in the mental health picture, as the psychiatry field grew and changed its focus.

The facility had a peak population of 3,616 in 1952. The introduction of new medicines which were effective in reducing the involuntary aggressive behavior of psychotic patients meant many patients were discharged much earlier than previously. The patient population dropped to 1,690 10 years later and to 366 in 1977. The February 1997 population was 299.

With medications, improved inpatient and outpatient treatment methods and concerns about the size of state hospitals across the nation, the census began to decline as the length of stay was greatly reduced.

Also, in the 1960s, alternative care facilities meant residents could be moved back into the community, and some patients who had been at the State Hospital for 40-50 years were removed from the facility.

In 1960, services to people with mental illness and/or mental retardation were assigned to the newly created Department of Mental Health. That same year, a \$150 million bond issue was passed to provide funding to community-based agencies and upgrade or build facilities operated by what was later to be called the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

In 1973, the facility underwent another change in direction to providing residential service for developmentally disabled patients. Community-based agencies, in partnership with state-operated developmental centers and mental health centers, completed the service continuum for people with disabilities.

During the peak of the JDC, the facility was virtually self-sustaining, "a city within a city."

Several decades ago, the hospital included over 100 buildings and several hundred acres. The hospital had its own dairy farm (where the Prairieland Heritage Museum is now located), its own kitchen (and an underground tunnel system for delivery), a bowling alley, gymnasium, numerous out buildings and its own power and utility system. The hospital had baseball and softball diamonds and bandstands, or gazebos, for concerts on the grounds. Two of the gazebos have been restored and are still on the grounds of Community Park, with a third torn down and restored and placed in front of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where it still stands. Much of the original hospital grounds was eventually sold or given away as the population dropped. The state sold, actually gave, the city 62 acres which were turned into Jacksonville's Community Park. Other land was turned into the Prairieland Heritage Museum and other land was sold. Many of the older buildings have been demolished, while others have been rescheduled for renovation and improvement in the near future.

The current JDC mission statement reads: "Our mission is to ensure the respect and dignity of persons with disabilities and enable them to achieve personal goals."

"We have received offers to help from many, many people. They want to get involved and they are very excited."

Hurt says the event is "simply a celebration of past, present, and most importantly, the future. The sesquicentennial will emphasize all aspects of services and support, with the main theme the needs of people with disabilities and how they are to be served at the Jacksonville Developmental Center."

About that future, Hurt says it looks good. "We are a smaller facility than it once was, with approximately 300 residents receiving support and service. The number of staff has been steady for some years now. We do envision there will be some further reduction in the number of residents, but we see no decline in staff. That will mean a better staff-to-resident ratio."

The JDC, with an annual budget of approximately \$20 million, a figure that has been stable in recent years, has a staff of the equivalent of 525 full-time employees.

Hurt has been amazed, during the planning of the celebration, at how much the JDC has impacted so many in the community.

"When we look back and talk to groups and individuals, I can't go anywhere I don't hear someone talk about the association their families have had with this facility, either as employees or those receiving services. Often it is both. Thousands and thousands have lived or worked at the Center. I think the public certainly recognizes it as a major segment of the community."

The current JDC campus is 97 acres after the state turned over another 62 acres to Jacksonville for use as the Community Park several years ago. Another one acre on Lincoln Avenue is used for Immanuel East Cemetery, where former residents who died at the facility are buried.

JDC chaplain Calvin Forman is chairman of the Sesquicentennial Task Force, and he, too, has been surprised at how many have come forward to help with the celebration planning.

"The task force has done a great job," Forman said. "We started working on this in May of 1995 and have been meeting each month since. We divided into four teams, with a chairperson for each team. I just can't thank them enough for the work they have done."

Celebration organizers are trying to make the event self-supporting, and "we have done pretty well so far," said Forman.

Ted Hawk is fund-raising chairman, and his group has put together a number of special items, including special sesquicentennial license plates, mugs, sweatshirts, t-shirts and a cookbook. The cookbook, coordinated by Carolyn Clayton, has been the biggest seller so far. A sesquicentennial quilt will be raffled off during the summer.

Recording artist Mary Chapin Carpenter has sent memorabilia to be sold at a silent auction. Carpenter recorded a song, "John Doe No. 24" about a former JDC resident whose identity could not be determined, in the 1940s. He was found wandering the streets of Jacksonville before entering the facility.

Campus events chairpersons are Diana Pennell and Betty Pennell, who have organized some event for each of the next six months. Jan Little has coordinated the construction of two sesquicentennial gardens.

Bill Curry has organized a time capsule event. Tina Verdbin has led the media group, along with assistant facility director Peggy Davidsmeyer and Peggy Pennell. Brenda Pennock and Sharon Killebrew have worked on an historic display featuring old photographs.

"Before I began working here (six years ago), I didn't realize the impact JDC has had on this community, and I am sorry for that," said Forman. "It has touched so many lives and I am grateful to be a part of that team."

"We have many who are committed to caring, to carrying on the mission of Dorothea Dix. We invite the community to celebrate with us."

The Jacksonville State Hospital complex, a landmark for 130 years and a symbol of the community's social sensitivity, will soon fall beneath the wrecker's ball to make room for the city's new park.

Allowed to deteriorate through years of neglect, "Old Main" stands at the center of what was once a community within a community, a home for generations of the mentally afflicted — some of whom spent 50 years and more within its gates — and a provider of jobs for thousands of area workers.

The Jacksonville State Hospital was created by the General Assembly in 1847 as a result of efforts by prominent Jacksonville citizens and the persuasion of Dorothea Dix, a 19th century crusader who traveled throughout the United States to plead for decent care for the mentally ill.

In her plea 'to the legislators In January 1847, an appeal made difficult by ill health which prevented her from addressing the lawmakers in the Capitol, Miss Dix drew upon the case of a Morgan County man to illustrate the need for humane care of the mentally ill.

Meeting the legislators in small groups while lying ill, Miss Dix told them that while touring Illinois "scenes of misery have met my view which no language, however vividly combined, can adequately describe."

One of those scenes was the plight of a Morgan County resident named Fanning who she found "confined in a roofed pen" about eight feet by eight feet constructed of unchinked logs.

"He was without bed and without clothes; his food, of the coarsest kind, was passed through a space between the logs; No better," said a neighbor, "than hogs are fed."

The unfortunate's pen was cleaned every week or two in mild weather, not so often in winter, she continued. Neighbors would enter the cell and tie the man up while others flushed it out with pails of water.

A pit was dug in the floor of the pen so that the man could huddle beneath ground level, during the winter. Despite this crude provision for shelter from the cold, both the man's feet had frozen and fallen off.

With that kind of evidence before them, the legislators in March 1847 authorized construction of the Jacksonville State Hospital and enacted a one-fifth mill property tax for three years to pay for the building, which was modeled after that of the Indiana state hospital, at a cost not to exceed \$60,000, which was soon found to be inadequate.

By 1852, the hospital had admitted 138 patients, 73 men and 65 women, under a quota system which allowed each county to send at least one patient to the hospital. The average monthly population that year was 63.

The average stay per patient was about six months as hospital officials made room for new patients by discharging those who they determined had benefitted as much as they could from care within the institution.

By 1876 the patient population was 1,200. To accommodate the increasing numbers, "The Annex," a quarter of a mile long and said to be the longest continuous three-story building in the world, was completed on the west side of the grounds in 1892.

The patient population peaked in 1952 with 3,616. It was during the 1950's that chlorpromazine, a drug which suppresses psychotic symptoms, came into use and patients were returned to their communities.

The Jacksonville State Hospital, which had more than 1,000 patients in 1970, virtually stopped admitting psychiatric patients in 1973, a function which was taken over by the McFarland Zone Center in Springfield.

The institution, now the Jacksonville Developmental Center, now is exclusively devoted to care of developmentally disabled people.

Written by Oliver Wiest and originally published in the Jacksonville Journal Courier on Dec 5th, 1983. Thank you to the Journal Courier for allowing us to reprint.

**ORIGINAL PUBLICATION DATE:** October 18, 2004

## **MENTAL GIANT**

One of Illinois' pioneer psychiatrists played a role in two Jacksonville medical institutions in the 1840s. This early medical doctor was Edward Mead. Dr. Mead was born in Leeds, England, in 1819 and came with his family to the United States in 1831.

About 1838, he began studying medicine under the direction of Dr. Robert Thompson, a prominent physician and an instructor at the Medical College of Ohio. He graduated from the school in 1841 and soon thereafter went to Europe to continue his medical studies.

Roughly a year later, Dr. Mead returned to the United States and is believed to have settled in St. Charles, west of Chicago, for it was there, in 1842, he married Minerva Baird.

"During the years he lived in the country west of Chicago he carried on an extensive practice among the settlers," wrote a biographer of Dr. Mead. "He was called on to do all sorts of medical and surgical work in the primitive cabins without assistance. The roads were often only trails, and travel was usually on horseback. ...He had the excitement on at least one occasion of being chased for many miles by wolves."

While studying medicine, Dr. Mead developed an interest in mental illnesses, and he tried to help those afflicted with mental illness after he began practicing medicine in Illinois.

Dr. Mead was appalled by the living conditions of so-called "insane persons." Mentally ill people were sometimes sent to county poorhouses or kept in filthy "pens" that had no protection from insects and the elements.

In 1845, Dr. Mead accepted a position on the faculty of the Illinois College Medical School in Jacksonville. The late Dr. Carl E. Black, a longtime Jacksonville physician and medical historian, wrote that one of the reasons Dr. Mead was chosen to teach at the local medical school was because of his interest in treating those with mental illnesses.

Even before Dr. Mead arrived in Jacksonville, local civic leaders such as Judge William Thomas and lawyer-politician John J. Hardin had been working to establish a mental hospital in the city.

Jacksonville proponents of the plan to build such an institution found an outspoken ally in Dr. Mead for their campaign. Dr. Mead made several speeches explaining the need to properly care for and treat mentally ill people in Illinois.



Later in 1845, Dr. Mead and other members of the IC Medical School faculty were named to a committee to develop plans for having a private hospital built in Jacksonville. However; when those plans failed, the committee turned to the Illinois Legislature for help and to ensure success with legislators, a local businessman contacted Dorothea Dix, a well-known reformer who had helped establish institutions for mentally ill people, the deaf and the blind in the East and the South.

Dix assisted the Jacksonville delegation in its appeal to the Legislature to establish a state mental hospital in Jacksonville. The hospital, which originally was known as the Illinois State Hospital for the Insane, was founded in 1847 and began treating patients in 1851.

Dr. Black, however, believed that Dix and Dr. Mead played lesser roles in bringing the mental hospital to Jacksonville than they have been given credit for.

"The admirers of Dr. Mead overlook the fact that his invitation to the Medical School in Jacksonville was, in part, to secure his aid in forwarding a project on which the members of the faculty of that school, and influential citizens of the community, were well advanced," wrote Dr. Black. "... His main effort in Jacksonville was to secure the establishing of a private (mental) institution, of which he probably expected to be the head and when the project failed, he left the community"

Dr. Mead resigned his professorship IC's Medical School in 1847 and Moved to Chicago: to open a private mental hospital. After managing the Chicago hospital for a few years, Dr. Mead taught obstetrics at the Cincinnati College of Medicine and Surgery.

Later, Dr. Mead founded mental hospitals in Cincinnati and Massachusetts. In 1883, he drowned when his ship wrecked on the coast of Pico Island in the Azores.

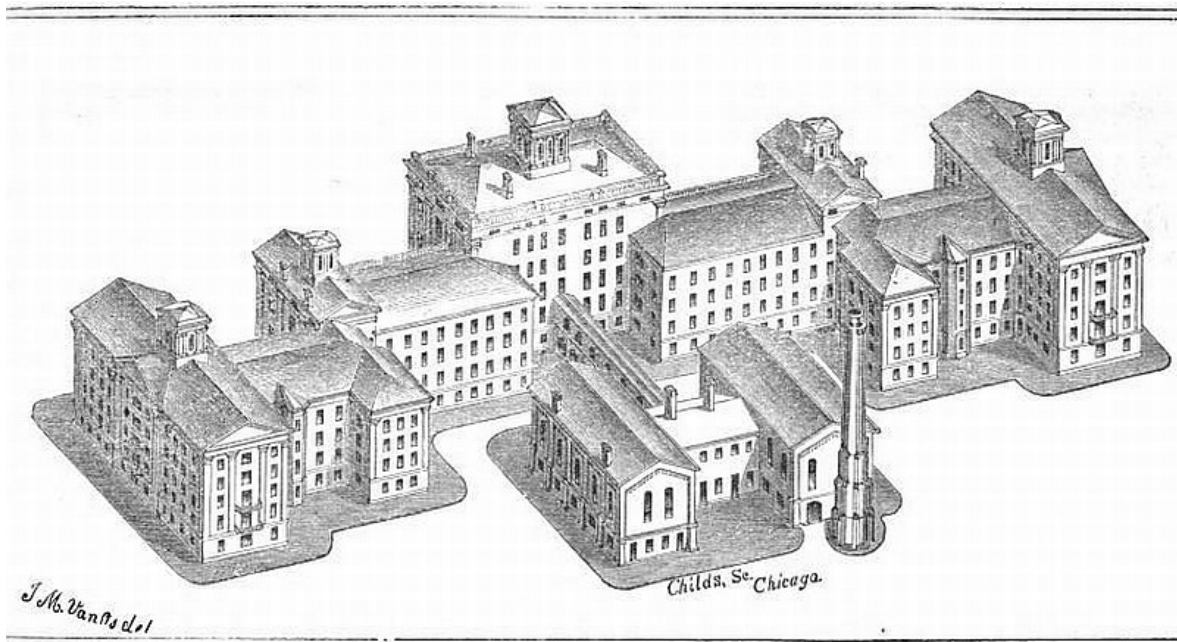
Thank You to the Jacksonville Journal Courier for allowing us to reprint articles. The original publication of this article, written by Greg Olsen, was Oct 18, 2004.



MAIN BUILDING.



Employee Bldg, Jacksonville State Hospital 1912-1913



REAR OF HOSPITAL FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.



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**Family Search** – The largest free genealogy website in the world.  
<https://www.familysearch.org/>

**National Archives** – Federal military, census, immigration, land, naturalization records and more.  
<https://www.archives.gov/>

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**DAR** – The Daughter of the American Revolution website has a genealogy section with information on starting a family tree.  
<https://www.dar.org/>

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