

Greystone Played a Significant Role in the Evolution of Mental Health Treatment

The State Division of Property Management and Construction, in consultation with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (NJHPO), is taking steps to preserve the cultural history of Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital. The Division plans to create a web site interpreting the history of Greystone. The site will feature historic information about the hospital, including images and other research.

The team working on this research project previously created an award-winning, interactive web site for Picatinny Arsenal in Dover, N.J. The Picatinny web site explores the historic districts of the facility and includes a digital inventory of all historic district structures and documents those slated for demolition.

An enhanced narrative history of Greystone and additional large-format photography will be filed with the NJHPO in accordance with Historic American Building Survey guidelines. Interpretive signs also will be placed on the Greystone property to tell the hospital's story to visitors at the park. The following brief timeline summarizes Greystone's story.

131 YEARS OF PSYCHIATRIC CARE



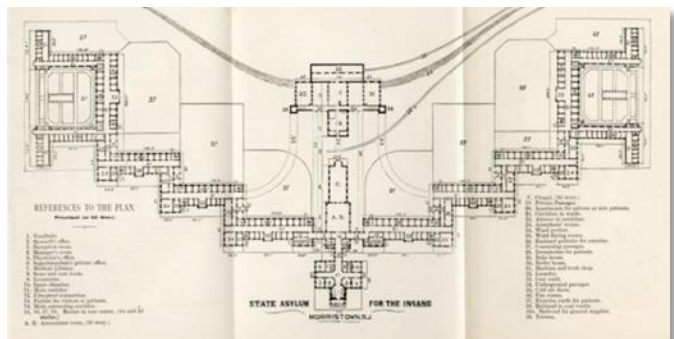
Detail from *Perspective View* published in hospital *Annual Reports*.

The architectural history of Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital stretches from the 1800s through 1956, when the Abel dormitory, the last major addition to the campus, opened its doors. The Morris Plains campus contained a mixture of Victorian-era and 20th-century buildings.

However, by 2008, the hospital was in serious disrepair and closed that year after 131 years of use. A new Greystone – a modern, 450-bed hospital with several residential cottages – opened nearby on July 16, 2008.

Early Years

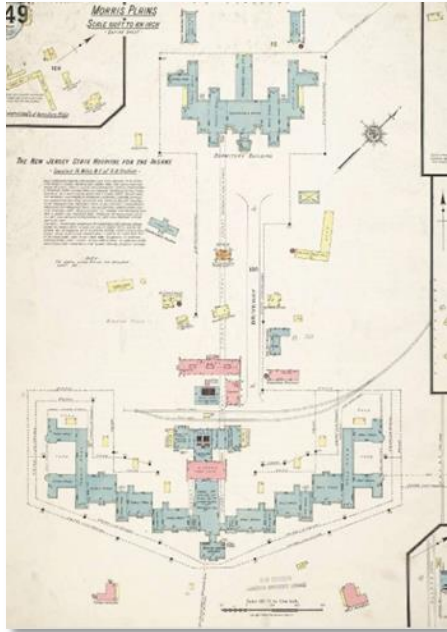
1876 – The Main Building is sometimes referred to as the Kirkbride Building after Thomas S. Kirkbride, a 19th century pioneer in mental health who vetted the designs for Greystone, which opened in 1876. He was a founding member of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane (AMSAII) — a forerunner of the American Psychiatric Association.



Floor plan published in hospital *Annual Reports*.

The first patients arrived from Trenton in August 1876. The hospital took patients from Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Union and Warren counties.

1895 – Patients from Hunterdon County were admitted.



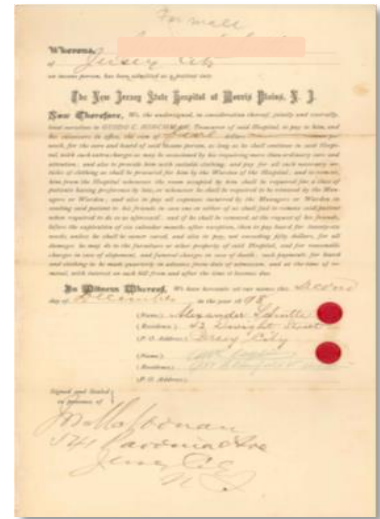
Map of Greystone Hospital, Sanborn Map Co., 1918. Princeton University Library.

1901 – The Dormitory Building was opened. External elements evoked the 1876 main building; the interior had large dormitories and day rooms—inaugurating dormitory-style patient housing, the new norm.

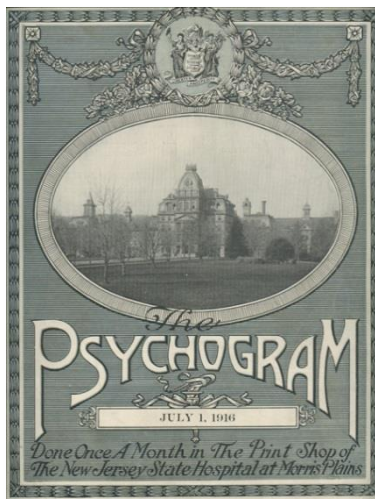
1904-1918 – Staff housing, support structures, and special-purpose buildings were built.

Patient Mix

1910 – Private patients made up 10 percent of the resident population but accounted for 24 percent of revenue received for patient support. Private patients became increasingly important to the hospital’s bottom line. However, the hospital was ill-equipped to treat and house certain patients, such as convicts and the criminally insane.



Private patient bond guaranteeing payment.



Front cover, first issue of *The Psychogram* magazine.

Men and Women of Letters

1916 – The hospital launched its own magazine, *The Psychogram*. Patients described themselves—in correspondence and in articles and poems published in the hospital magazine.

1918 – The hospital opened its own morgue to move burial preparation out of the line of patients’ sight. Patients produced burial robes and shrouds in the hospital sewing rooms.

1923 – A tax supported an ambitious 10-year construction plan. New buildings signaled changes in treatment, care, and residential space. The opening, during the 1920s, of the Clinic and Reception Buildings reoriented Greystone’s front door.

1920s – Occupational therapy began to flourish at Greystone with its emergence as an administrative department. The expanding roster of divisions included Men’s and Women’s Arts and Crafts, Textiles, Print Shop and Bookbinding and Patients’ Garden.



Patients at work in the print shop, 1919.

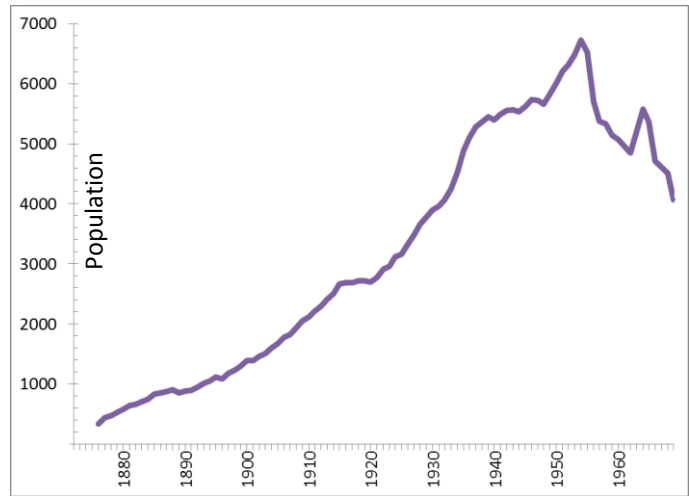
Farm-to-Table Eating

1930s – Greystone relied on its own farm-to-table agricultural operation— fields, gardens, a greenhouse, a dairy and a piggery. Patients were employed to produce food for the hospital’s dining rooms, flowers for its reception halls, and silage and willow for sale.

1940s – Volunteers supported the hospital and its mission and civic groups sponsored events and outings. The Greystone Park Association, established in 1948, organized fund-raising drives.

1954 – The hospital reached its highest resident population – 6,719 people.

1971 – *The Park Bench*, a patient-produced literary journal first issued in 1971. Patients used their own frames of reference, including the number of the ward on which they were housed.



Resident patient population by year.

The Long Decline

Late 1950s-2008 – The long demise of the original campus occurred during this time, a period characterized by a dwindling patient population, aging buildings, recurrent scandals and *Doe vs. Klein*, a class-action lawsuit that led to 25 years of court monitoring.



Flowers on steps of Main Building at closing.

2008 – The year the original campus closed its doors. A photograph taken by a staff member from the 2008 closing ceremony shows patients and staff had placed flowers on the steps of the main building. Large-format photographic negatives will be retained by the Library of Congress as a record of the structure.



Detail from HABS photograph taken in 2015.