

Barre History Collection

**Washington County Sanatorium
Records, 1952-1960
BHC 244**

Volume: 0.25 linear feet
Inclusive dates: 1952-1960
Records Types: Minutes, news clippings, correspondence

Introduction

This collection documents the State of Vermont's attempt in 1960 to find a use for the vacant Washington County Sanatorium building in Barre, Vermont.

Institutional History

From 1921 to about 1960, the Washington County Sanatorium occupied the large, brick building, which, in 2015 would be 260 Beckley Hill, Barre, Vermont. The facility is not located in Barre City, but rather in Barre Town. Originally, the sanatorium served residents of Vermont suffering from tuberculosis. Its location presented an added benefit to the residents of the Barre area because the local granite industry created many respiratory problems for its workers. A directory of sanatorium facilities published in 1923 showed the facility charged \$17.50 per week for care.

With the departure of the sanitarium organization in 1960, the building became empty. Governor Robert T. Stafford appointed a committee to find a buyer for the land and buildings based on several proposed uses of the facilities. Paul H. Guare served as chairman of the committee. Proposed uses included office space, a nursing home, or a research facility.

In approximately 1968, the empty building became the home of the Carmelite Monastery. The first entry for the Monastery in the Barre – Montpelier town directory appears in the 1969 edition. The Carmelite Monastery occupied the building for many years, but with declining membership, the group merged with other orders from Beacon and Saranac Lake, New York, at their new home in Beacon, New York. In the fall of 1997, the order sold the land and building to Washington County Mental Health. As of 2015, the building housed the Children, Youth, and Family Services department of Washington County Mental Health.

Scope and Content

Most of the collection deals with the preparation of the facility for sale on the open market. Several state agencies developed studies and proposals to convert the empty sanatorium to their own purposes. Other agencies offered data as part of the study. In a letter from September 1960 (folder 5), Mr. Ted Bermingham, director of the State of Vermont Development Commission, indicated the state owned the property the sanatorium occupied. He also questioned a \$200 expense to have the property appraised by an outside consultant instead of

relying on state workers to do the job. William M. Grier suggested his firm, Previews, Inc., prepare a four-page brochure to feature the property. Grier pointed out the brochure would add to the costs, he also included a sample brochure from another property sold by Previews. The appraisal proposed several possible uses of the property. One of the uses listed in the appraisal referenced the Catholic Church and the usage of the site as a convent, another use as a manufacturing facility.

Related Collections

- *The Randolph Sanatorium: A General Hospital*, 1931; Call 362.11 R159
- Wright Family Papers, 1835-1965, Doc 296 and MSA 57-59 (contains letters from a sanatorium in Pittsford, VT)
- Lena D. (Caverzasi) Sheridan Scrapbooks, 1927-1940, MSB 65-66 (mentions Washington County Sanatorium)
- There is a photograph of the hospital in F-Hospitals-Barre; there may be additional photographs in the VHS's postcard collection and in the Barre History Collection's photograph collection.

Inventory

- BHC 244:01 Correspondence, possible future uses of sanatorium facilities, 1960
02 _____, Guare to Central Vermont organizations, 1960
03 State Unemployment Compensation Commission Study (of building)
04 State Department of Social Welfare Study (of building)
05 Appraisal package, by Previews, Inc., Boston, Mass.
06 Newspaper Articles
07 Sanatorium Committee Report, 1960
08 Washington County tuberculosis Hospital Bond, 1952

Harry Harrington
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