

February 23, 1951

108 Patients Due Today at Willowbrook

**They're First of 700
Slated to Come Here
From Sampson Base**

The first 108 of an eventual 700 mental patients formerly housed in the Sampson Naval Training Base, Geneva, N. Y., by the state Department of Mental Hygiene, are due to arrive at the Willowbrook State School before night-fall today, it has been announced.

At the same time, Dr. Harold Berman, Willowbrook's director, announced that two buildings, formerly part of Halloran VA Hospital, have already been returned to the state for use by the school. One of these buildings, Building 25, is already being used to accommodate small children, he said.

Dr. Berman said the child-patients have been removed to the former Halloran building so that Willowbrook's Building 22 could be cleared to accommodate the incoming mental patients.

The Sampson patients are coming here in conjunction with an "emergency situation" brought on by a move by the Air Force to take over the old Sampson Base, which has been used as a hospital for several years by the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Measure Called Temporary

The housing of such patients at Willowbrook, designed primarily for the treatment of the mentally retarded, has been described as a "temporary measure" by Dr. Newton Bigelow, state commissioner of mental hygiene, who said the department "does not intend to change the nature of Willowbrook State School."

The arrival of the new patients will add to 2,165 already being treated at Willowbrook. This is 100 more than were being treated there last December. More than 600 persons are currently employed at Willowbrook.

The return of Buildings 25 and 29 placed former Halloran buildings under state jurisdiction for the first time since Halloran's Operation Closedown, under which the facility must be returned to the state by March 21, was first announced early last month. It is expected that a third building, Building 27, will revert to the state within a week.

He noted that in 1947 Staten Island had 890 adults in state hospitals and 178 children in state schools. This, he commented, is a very low number for a community of Staten Island's size.

Dr. Berman discussed some of the work at Willowbrook State School. He was introduced by Dr. Samuel Reback, Island neurologist and a member of the VNA medical advisory committee.

Miss Noela Patricia Cawley of 364 Edison street, New Dorp, and Mrs. Mary Finnegan of 5 Raymond avenue, West Brighton, received two-year service pins from Mrs. Jacob Stein, chairman of the nursing committee. Both staff nurses joined the VNA staff in December, 1947. The awards are given to public health nurses by Mrs. Ellsworth B. Buck, a former treasurer of the association.

Guests Introduced

Guests introduced were Dr. Dorothy Oppenheim, borough health officer, and Harry Cassidy, president of the Staten Island Community Chest.

The invocation was given by the Rev. Dana U. Pierce, rector of St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church, Stapleton. The Rev. John J. McEvoy, pastor of St. Clement's Church, Mariners Harbor, gave the benediction.

The hostess committee for the meeting was composed of Mrs. Joseph H. Diamond, chairman; Mrs. Stein, Mrs. William H. Pott and Mrs. Vincent G. Smith. Mrs. William Y. Daly, president, presided.