

WILLOWBROOK'S CITY OF 6,000

Ways to Avert Retardation Hunted

By ALFRED G. HAGGERTY
FOURTH OF FIVE ARTICLES

When advances are made in the struggle against mental retardation, Willowbrook State School and its staff are likely to be in the foreground. A four-pronged attack under way at the state facility is probing the mysteries of mental retardation, seeking its causes and possible cures.

One part of the attack involves a research staff which is doing endocrine studies in an attempt to find the causes of retardation.

Another is the work done by the hospital's doctors and a team from the New York University Medical School on diseases which are linked with retardation.

A third part is the research work done by staff physicians either on their own or as a segment.

The fourth prong, which may someday be the most important, involves plans for an institute for basic research in mental retardation to be constructed on the grounds of Willowbrook.

THIS RESEARCH is a time-consuming task which may at times seem to be yielding nothing. Yet every avenue of approach which leads to a dead end opens up other areas of investigation.

The research staff, under the direction of Dr. Max Reiss, occupies one entire floor and has the latest equipment for its work. A large collection of laboratory animals is used to test various theories. Metabolism, blood circulation and thyroid disturbances are among the objects of current study into the causes of retardation.

Except in rare cases, mental retardation can now be neither cured nor prevented. In the case of one rare type, it can be prevented if an infant is put on a special diet early enough.

THE WORK being done in conjunction with NYU is probing diseases such as German measles, mumps, chicken pox and infectious hepatitis and their connections with retardation.

Willowbrook has already gained widespread recognition for its work in the testing of the measles vaccine, which has been found virtually 100 percent effective. It completely eliminated the disease from Willowbrook.

Meanwhile, individual doctors with their own theories and methods of research are probing the problem from still other directions.

WHILE THE possible future results of the research institute for mental retardation are obvious, the very existence of such plans discloses a marked change in the attitude toward

mental retardation over the past 20 years.

While the federal government did not spend one cent on research into retardation before World War II, it is now expected to provide \$2 million toward the expected \$7.5 million cost of the institution.

Although the exact status of one entire floor of special rooms of the institution is for the confinement of patients retarded, a large part of the plans for the institute is for the care of those who became unmanageable and difficult to handle.

Now, only a few scattered rooms are kept for this purpose. These are necessary because

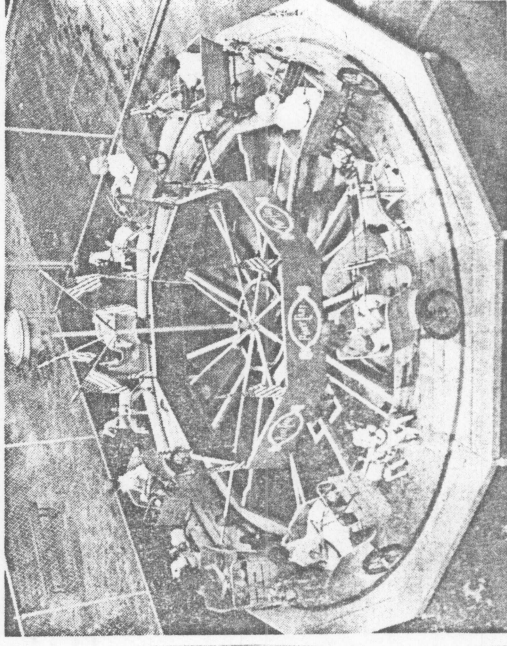
of the possibility that they are always patients whose tranquilizers do not have the anticipated effect.

A by-product of this progress in the treatment of mental retardation is the tranquilizer. Treatment is that the section formerly used for these patients is now freed for other uses in treating and training other patients.

So, while Willowbrook works constantly to improve its methods of caring for the mentally retarded, a large part of the operation is assigned to the task of solving the problem and preventing what causes the affliction and how it can be prevented and cured.



KEEPING FIT — Physical fitness is not overlooked at Willowbrook State School. Here a class of older boys does calisthenics under the direction of a physical education teacher. The fitness program also includes a wide variety of sports, including games between teams of the various state schools.



GIDDYUP, HORSEY — Well, these are only one of many ways for children to have fun at Willowbrook State School. There's also a carousel and a ferris wheel.