Willowbrook

A city within A city

Thursday, February 17, 1972

Willowbrook State School is like an enormous puzzle. One can, like the dailies, throw periodic pieces of it out to the public and hope for change. But any hope for lasting revision can only come with an informed public. With this intent, the Register begins the first of an extended series of articles dealing with this city of over 7,000 patients and staff members. Read it on page ten. (Clarke)

staten island REGISTER

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Over 7,000 people cohabit Willowbrook State School at some time every hour of the day. When one claims conditions are horrible at Willowbrook, it is not one story .... it is well over 7,000 stories.

With an interest in those conditions dating back to our own four part series on working conditions in 1970, the Register is again beginning a series to probe the reasons why everyone seems to agree on conditions, but no solution seems forthcoming.

Register reporter Felix Clarke began delving into conditions almost two months ago. Twice we held up publication to gather more data. Research continues, and so will this extended series.

Editorially, we have refrained from final conclusions on Willowbrook conditions. We feel it is a time to gather the conclusions of those at Willowbrook, or connected with it in some way, rather than add a flurry of our own to the already cluttered list of accusations and counter-accusations.

To this end, we urge you to read the articles on page ten and think about them as a beginning, rather than a conclusion to the Willowbrook story. Tentatively, there will be four such articles. This first presents much of the raw data that future articles will attempt to explain..... through interviews and evaluation.

It is our feeling that together, as a community, it is more important to understand conditions at Willowbrook than to judge them. Only with understanding can there be any hope of correcting what one New York writer has termed, "Our final shame."