

# Search goes underground

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Beneath the sprawling Willowbrook estate of the Staten Island Developmental Center lies an underground maze of tunnels that a figure in the Jennifer Schweiger case was familiar with.

A transient who fits the description of the mildly retarded man seen walking with the missing 12-year-old Westerleigh girl just prior to her disappearance lived in a campsite he set up in the SIDC woods for at least the past few years. He also has figured in the investigation of the disappearances of three other Staten Island children.

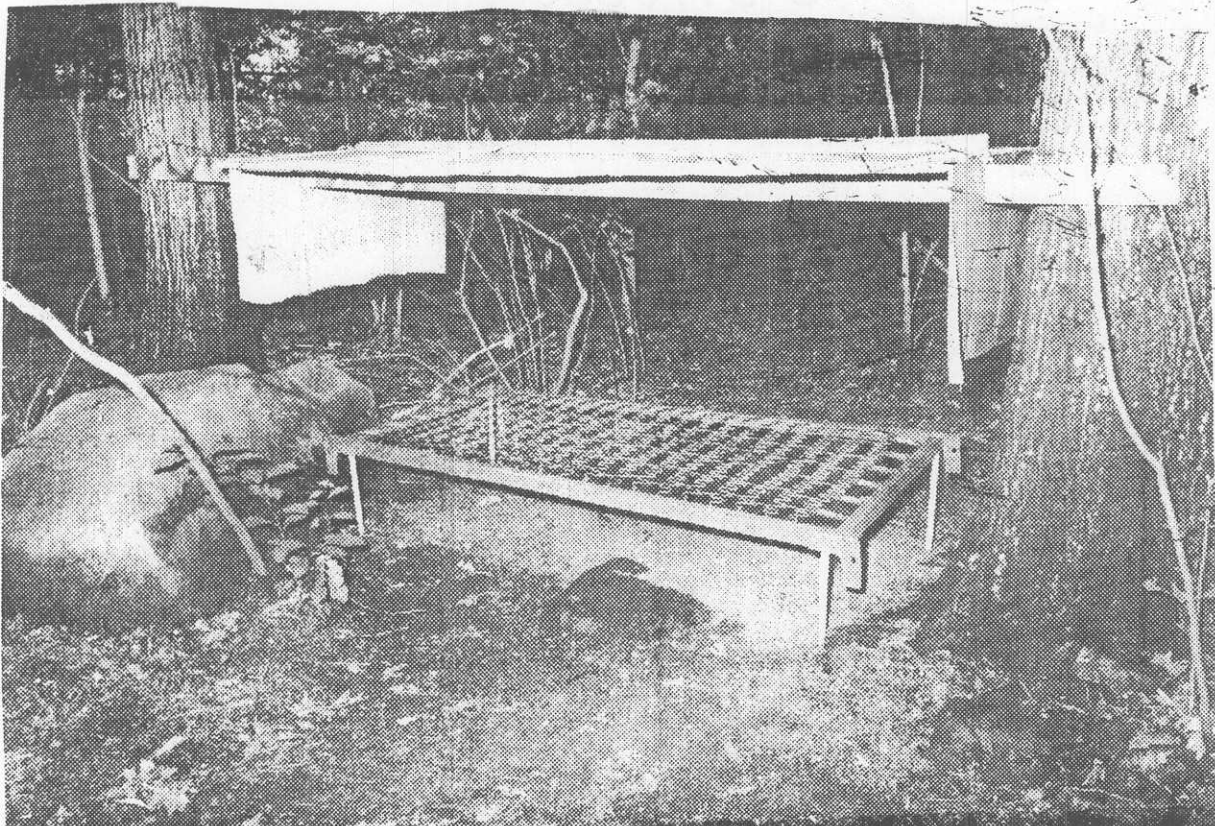
Police insist there is no evidence that a crime has been committed in connection with Jennifer's disappearance and publicly say no one is being singled out for investigation.

The transient who was questioned by police reportedly spent winters inside one of the abandoned kitchen buildings and worked at the center in the 1960s. He had access to a complex web of subterranean passageways that investigators have searched for the Down's syndrome child last seen July 9.

Back in the 1960s, when SIDC was the notorious Willowbrook State School, more than 6,000 mentally retarded patients were crammed into the facility meant for 4,500. There were two main kitchens each serving about eight buildings.

Each kitchen had underground hallways, like bicycle spokes, that reached the outer residence halls. Workers would wheel food trays to and from each dormitory. There are no walkways from

*Page 1  
of 2*



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Police say that a transient they have questioned during their search for Jennifer Schweiger lived at this makeshift campsite on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center.