

The following is a work sample for reparative redescription of an existing finding aid in ArchivesSpace created as an assignment in a graduate archives course.

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Redescription

Collection 1:

Craig Colony for Epileptics Medical Library (1896–1988)

Suggested Revisions:

Outdated/harmful language:

1. Remove “Epileptics” instead of people with epilepsy or epileptic people, except in the proper name of the institution
2. In historical note:
 1. ~~“fertile land, forests, and rolling hills”~~
 2. ~~“the famed landscape architectural firm”~~ aggrandizing white men
 3. ~~“For the estimated 1,000 epileptic patients in New York’s oft-cramped poor houses and asylums, this model of care was revolutionary.”~~ “This novel model adopted by the Colony was different from other institutions in New York at the time, where people with epilepsy often experienced crowded conditions at mental health facilities or shelters.”
 4. Remove the word “patient” when referring to people with disabilities unless their relationship to a doctor is being discussed.
 5. Remove “care” as sometimes people feel it does not accurately describe their experiences as residents of an institution.
 6. Replace the word “colonists” with residents
3. In scope and contents:
 1. American people with epilepsy
 2. ~~“collaborated to rescue and preserve as much of the collection as possible.”~~
 3. ~~“sexual health and venereal disease sexually transmitted infections”~~
 4. ~~“women’s health and gynecology”~~ “women’s health, and obstetrics/gynecology.”

Proposed additional names/agents (LCSH):

1. Craig Colony (Sonyea, N.Y.) <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n2013186552>
2. Craig Colony and Hospital (Sonyea, N.Y.) <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no2016044202>
3. Craig Colony School and Hospital (Sonyea, N.Y.) <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no2016044038>
4. Groveland Correctional Facility <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no2008048550>
5. Letchworth, William Pryor, 1823-1910 <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n50050361>
6. Olmsted Brothers <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n82128883>
7. Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1822-1903 <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n79006585>
8. New York (State). Department of Correctional Services <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n50003278>
9. Peterson, Frederick, 1859-1938 <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no95054544>
10. Robert L. Brown History of Medicine Collection <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no2004096033>
11. Sonyea (N.Y.) <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n2013186553>

Proposed additional subjects (LCSH):

1. Communities--Religious aspects--Shakers <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh2020001782>
2. Developmental disabilities <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85037355>
3. Epilepsy <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85044401>
4. Epilepsy--Hospitals <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85044404>
5. Epilepsy literature <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85044408>
6. Health facilities--Landscape architecture <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh93008192>
7. Medical libraries <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85082970>
8. Medical literature <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85082971>
9. Medicine--United States--History <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh2008107675>
10. Neurology <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85091139>

Revised historical or biographical note:

Historical note:

Craig Colony for Epileptics was founded by philanthropist William Pryor Letchworth (1823-1910), with the assistance of psychiatrist Dr. Frederick Peterson (1859-1938) on an 1,800 acre site in Sonyea, NY. Formerly a Shaker community, the living quarters for those seeking treatment were updated to ensure the comfort of the first residents and New York State secured the services of the Olmstead Brothers, the landscape architectural firm helmed by the sons of Frederick Law Olmstead, to design a master community plan. The firm's preliminary plan interspersed existing structures with new ones, including an administration building, hospital, schoolhouse, workshops, and farmstead spread across the property, all connected to the renovated Shaker "cottages" by tree-lined walkways. This novel model adopted by the Craig Colony was different from other institutions in New York at the time, where an estimated 1,000 people with epilepsy often experienced crowded conditions at mental health facilities or shelters.

Other revised language:

Scope and Contents:

This collection houses 190 volumes that formerly belonged to the Craig Colony for Epileptics Medical Library (1896-1988). Located in Sonyea, New York, approximately 70 miles southeast of Buffalo, New York, the Craig Colony (later known as the Craig Developmental Center) was the second public institution dedicated to the care and treatment of American people with epilepsy. During the mid-1980s, the institution closed as a healthcare facility and planned to liquidate its medical library. UB's librarians and physicians (faculty of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences) collaborated to preserve as much of the collection as possible. The grounds of the former Craig Colony are now part of the Groveland Correctional Facility, a medium-security prison managed by the New York State Department of Corrections. The volumes provide significant historical insight into the institution's intellectual life and the variety of texts collected and used by neurologists who studied epilepsy during the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Titles span 36 main subject areas, including anatomy, anesthesiology, cardiothoracic medicine, cellular biology, child care/pediatrics, conference proceedings/reports, dentistry, dermatology, dietetics/food, diagnostics, disease (general), experimental/alternative medicine, gastroenterology, general medical practice, geriatrics, hematology, hepatology, histology, human behavior, law and medicine, medical administration, medical memoir, meteorology, neurology, orthopedics, otolaryngology, pharmacy/pharmacology, physiology, psychiatry/mental health, sexual health and sexually transmitted infections, social criticism, surgery, therapeutics, urology, veterinary medicine, women's health, and obstetrics/gynecology.

Revision statement:

This finding aid was revised in 2024 to address outdated and/or harmful descriptive language. During that revision, description was changed in the historical note and scope and contents note. The title of the collection was not changed as it refers to the proper name of an historical institution. The use of this title is not an endorsement of the language it contains. Previous versions of this finding aid may be available. For more information about what was amended, please contact us at lib-archives@buffalo.edu.

Summary:

The finding aid for this collection lacks subjects and has only one name/agent. The finding aid was updated to include these with LCSH subjects and names/agents according to the information available in the current finding aid. The descriptive text was updated to change the word “epileptics” to “people with epilepsy” or “individuals with epilepsy” to center personhood in accordance with modern language around disability. The revision note explains that the proper name of the institution was kept the same but with a disclaimer. In the historical note unnecessary words such as “fertile,” and “rolling hills” were removed as they add nothing of research value to the note. Language that aggrandized the achievements of white men was removed such as the words “famed” and “revolutionary.” The phrase mentioning “asylums” and “poor houses” was updated to avoid stigmatizing language. The word “care” was replaced as some people do not feel that the word accurately describes their experiences as residents of an institution. The word “patient” was changed to “those seeking treatment” unless describing a person’s individual relationship with a doctor/provider. In scope note, remove the word “rescue,” as this positions people of authority at UB as heroic. Also language was updated to “American people with epilepsy” and “sexually transmitted infections,” and to separate “women’s health” from ob/gyn.

Sources consulted:

Clemens, A. (n.d.). Yale University Library Research Guides: Reparative Archival Description Working Group: Standardized descriptive notes. Retrieved July 2, 2024, from <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=1140330&p=8382205>

Find and Connect Web Resource Project, T. U. of M. and A. C. U. (n.d.). Content Warning | Find & Connect [Document]. eScholarship Research Centre, The University of Melbourne. Retrieved July 2, 2024, from <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/about/content-warning/>

Guidelines for Inclusive and Conscientious Description (Center for the History of Medicine at the Francis A. Countway Library of Harvard Medical School)—2020. (n.d.). <https://wiki.harvard.edu/confluence/display/hmschommanual/Guidelines+for+Inclusive+and+Conscientious+Description>

Guidelines for Writing About People With Disabilities | ADA National Network. (n.d.). Retrieved July 2, 2024, from <https://adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing>

Inclusive Description—Society of American Archivists Description Section. (n.d.). <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/description-section/inclusive-description>

Collection 2:

Amherst League of Women Voters records

Suggested Revisions:

Outdated/harmful language:

1. In historical note:
 1. "The National League of Women Voters was established in February 1920, six months before the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, which gave women the right to vote following a seventy year struggle." **Change to:** "The National League of Women Voters was established in February 1920, six months before the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. The 19th Amendment was ratified after seventy years of activism by women's voting rights groups, beginning in July 1848 with the Seneca Falls convention. The 19th Amendment prohibits the United States and its states from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex."
 2. Clarify historical timeline of local and national leagues

Proposed additional names/agents (LCSH, if available):

1. League of Women Voters (U.S.) <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n80002303>
2. League of Women Voters of Erie County <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n82084461>
3. League of Women Voters of New York State <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n79128182>
4. Levine, Adeline <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n81139475>
5. Moliterno, Valerie, <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no2005000783>
6. Radt, Clarine

Proposed additional subjects (LCSH):

1. Audiocassettes <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh87003914>
2. Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.) <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85027084>
3. Constitutional amendments--United States <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh87005351>
4. Photographs <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85101195>
5. Publications <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh2004003366>
6. Scrapbooks <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85118923>
7. Video tapes <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85143214>
8. Voting--United States <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh2008113310>
9. Women--Political activity <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85147597>
10. Women--Suffrage <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85147346>
11. Women--Suffrage--United States--History <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh2008113725>

Revised historical or biographical note:

Historical note:

The National League of Women Voters was established in February 1920, six months before the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. The 19th Amendment was ratified after seventy years of activism by women's voting rights groups, beginning in July 1848 with the Seneca Falls convention. The 19th Amendment prohibits the United States and its states from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex.

Circa 1926-1927, the Amherst League of Women Voters was formed. Circa 1996, the Amherst League of Women Voters merged with the Greater Buffalo Area League of Women Voters (now known as the League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara).

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara promotes political responsibility through its Voters Service and Citizen Education activities. Members register voters, organize candidates' forums, publish voting guides and disseminate general information on the legislative process and the function of government on the local, state, and national levels. The League supports positions but never supports a candidate or political party. Members are, however, urged to work as individuals in partisan activities.

Other revised language:

Scope and Contents:

This collection houses 24 boxes and 1 scrapbook enclosure containing the business records, meeting minutes, correspondence, publications and other records and media of the Amherst, N.Y. League of Women Voters (now known as the League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara) from 1910 until 2001. Includes clippings, correspondence, minutes, publications, reports, and media encompassing scrapbooks, audio tapes, photographs, and video tapes.

Administrative note:

Contains numerous newspaper clippings throughout files that should be photocopied for preservation and scrapbooks that are in fragile/poor condition.

Revision statement:

This finding aid was revised in 2024 to address outdated and/or sexist descriptive language. During that revision, description was changed in the historical note. Previous versions of this finding aid may be available. For more information about what was amended, please contact us at lib-archives@buffalo.edu.

Summary:

The finding aid for this collection was deficient in both agents/names and subjects. Additional names and subjects (LCSH) were added where available. In historical note, the first paragraph was changed to update possible sexist language. Instead of "gave women the right to vote" the phrase "The 19th Amendment prohibits the United States and its states from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex" was substituted to avoid framing the events in a sexist manner wherein women (or any other sex or gender) were granted the right to vote by men. The 19th Amendment simply recognized their right to vote. Additional detail was added to clarify the timeline of when the Amherst League of Women Voters was formed, and when it merged with other organizations. In the scope and contents note, more detail was added to better describe the contents of the collection. The sentence about the condition of clippings and scrapbooks was moved to an Administrative note that would still be visible to researchers who might handle them, but is more appropriately addressed to archives staff processors/preservationists.

Sources consulted:

19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote (1920). (2021, September 21). National Archives. <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/19th-amendment>

Clemens, A. (n.d.). Yale University Library Research Guides: Reparative Archival Description Working Group: Standardized descriptive notes. Retrieved July 2, 2024, from <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=1140330&p=8382205>

Inclusive Description—Society of American Archivists Description Section. (n.d.). <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/description-section/inclusive-description>

League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara—Our History (LWVBN). (n.d.). Retrieved July 2, 2024, from <https://lwvbn.org/members/history.html>

Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. (2024). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nineteenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution&oldid=1230606676