

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Utica State Hospital Main Building
other names/site number Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center

2. Location

street & number 1213 Court Street not for publication
city, town Utica vicinity
state New York code N.Y. county Oneida code 065 zip code 13502

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

health care
mental hospital

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

health care
mental hospital

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation random limestone ashlar
walls brick, faced with limestone

roof standing seam metal

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The following building description is taken from notes by an unknown Oneida County Historian in 1970 and a detailed Feasibility Study by Crawford and Stearns, Architects, of Syracuse, New York, done in 1985.

The exterior appearance in 1843 was much the same as it is today. The structure is 550 feet long and averages 50 feet in depth. The projecting center portico is 120 feet long and is dominated by six huge fluted columns of limestone in the Doric style. Each column is 48 feet high and 8 feet in diameter at the base. The material of the exterior walls is Trenton limestone, which was quarried nearby and transported by teams to the building site. The stone is beautifully dressed, and its rich deep gray color is harmonious with the stately design. The center portico section is four stories while the wings are three.

The center and end portions of the exterior design are emphasized by pilasters which extend the height of the structure. Behind the huge columns of the portico, pilasters divide the wall into bays and these pilasters extend around the sides of the projecting center section. The ends of the building also are enhanced by four pilasters extending across the facade of each end wing. A simple, bold entrance with Greek Revival motif carries the huge scale of the main building down to human scale. This device allows the individual to identify with the building. The entrance is gained by a short flight of limestone steps. The front steps, 85 feet wide, are made of large cut stones, and have weathered but have recently been restored. The door itself is flanked by two Doric columns in antis. The windows retain their original double hung form. Each section incorporates sixteen panes for a total of thirty-two panes of glass per window. In the wings, larger double hung windows are found with a total of forty-eight panes in each window.

The original structure incorporated improved heating and ventilating plants. Hot air wood-burning furnaces in the basement provided heat for the building. Ventilators opening from the rooms to flues in the walls allowed air to circulate constantly. Hot and cold running water was supplied to each floor, the cold water coming from the roof while the warm water was pumped by a steam engine from basement storage tanks. In 1850 a listing of accommodations included: 380 single rooms for patients, 24 bathing rooms, 24 closets and 24 water closets. The center section

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D NHL # 4

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

1838

1857

1903

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Clark, William, designer

Downing, Andrew Jackson, landscape architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The massive Main Building at Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center was the first "state asylum for the insane poor" in New York and one of the most powerful architectural statements in the Greek Revival style built during America's middle nineteenth century years. Henry-Russell Hitchcock wrote that:

No European public edifice has a grander Greek Doric Portico than that which dominates the tremendous four-story front block of the Lunatic Asylum in Utica of 1837-1843, designed by no architect, according to the records, but by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, William Clark.¹

When it was completed, the main building was the largest of its kind in the country and according to an 1843 Utica city directory was believed to be better adapted for the purpose of an insane asylum than any other in the world.

A history of the Institution's beginnings appears in a commemorative report which the Institution published in 1943:

In 1836, the medical profession brought its pressure to bear on the Legislature with a petition from the Medical Society of the County of Oneida, which was drawn up and presented by a Utica physician, Dr. Charles B. Coventry. ... Twenty-eight memorialists signed the petition in which a fervent appeal was made for the erection of a proper asylum to provide support and medical care for the pauper insane.

The immediate result of the cooperative effort of the medical men was the passage March, 1836, of "An Act to Authorize the Establishment of the New York Lunatic Asylum." A commission was appointed with authority to expend \$10,000 for a site and to contract for the erection of an asylum at a cost of not more than \$50,000. There was some delay over the selection of a site, but in 1837 the present location, including 130 acres of land on the western boundaries of Utica, was purchased for \$16,300 of which the State paid \$10,000 and citizens of Utica raised \$6,300.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A

18	479420	4772470
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

18	479290	4772090
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

18	479610	4772340
Zone	Easting	Northing

D

18	479150	4772260
Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses the original building and that part of Olmsted's landscape of the hospital that are currently on site.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Pitts

organization History Division NPS date 2/14/89

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housed the offices of the Asylum, dining room for patients, and offices. Today this area houses administrative functions. The fourth story, which occurred only in the center area, contained a large room 93' x 36'. The basement contained the kitchens and laundries. In 1857 a fire severely damaged the interior of the structure. It was rebuilt, and today it stands in good condition with many early details visible. A brick addition has been made to the building at the rear of the center section.¹

The Greek Revival main building was completed at a cost of \$285,000. The complex consists of 10 building sections. The stone portion of the facade which forms the central block (actually brick with limestone facing) was originally intended to be one of four identical structures forming a huge quadrangle. Cost prevented the construction of the other stone buildings and the complex was completed with the construction of brick wings to the rear of the central stone block. In addition to the fine dressed limestone, the brick beneath is hand-molded, sand-struck common brick sealed with a high quality mortar.

SECTIONS 1, 2, AND 3 -- Main Building and East and West Wings

They are all brick masonry faced with limestone veneer. The walls are 24 to 26 inches thick. The stone veneer is laid as coursed ashlar 12 to 24 inches in height. The cornice and decoration is subdued, even severe.

Section 1

The main entrance projects out and above the wings, and there are six enormous Doric columns with a pediment above. This block has seven floor levels and measures 42,000 square feet. On July 14, 1857, a large fire destroyed the interior. By October, the roof was replaced without the cupola and what stands today has changed very little. The block was used for administration, dining and assembly.

Section 2

Part of the original building block, this section was always used for the housing and treatment of psychiatric patients, and it was included in the women's hall of the entire building complex. Referred to as the "South Wing," it is set back 28 feet from the central block. There is a wooden solarium of three stories at the east end. The central corridors are 13 feet wide and run, 227 feet to the solarium end wall. On either side of the hallway are patients' rooms, measuring 9-1/2 feet by 10 feet, each with a single window.

Section 2 also has an appended greenhouse to the south of the Solarium (1847) that was damaged by the fire of 1857 and was rebuilt shortly thereafter.

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Section 3

Also an integral part of the original building (1838-1842). This wing has also always been psychiatric patients' wards: this "North Wing" was for male patients. The solarium at the end of this wing has a glassed-in stone verandah (1884) with a greenhouse appended to it. In 1880, the male wards were extensively rebuilt by architect I.G. Perry.

SECTIONS 4, 5, AND 6

These southern wings of the main block are brick and were built about the same time as the main section. They were originally planned as single structures that would form a square courtyard. They were built as contiguous ells with walls 20 inches thick on a limestone foundation.

Section 4

Built during the second major building campaign (1844-47) this is the original brick extension of the Women's Wing. The east facade was constructed with a shallow pedimented and pilastered projection at each end echoing the main block. The wings that were to be appended did not extend from the end of the wings but rather were built at midpoints of the wards (100 feet from the end walls). The new wings measured 38 feet by 250 feet. There were also more dormitory and group oriented rooms in Sections 4 and 5. Section 4 encloses 39,000 square feet. There are larger windows and greenhouses placed periodically for light; the largest is over 200 feet in length.

Section 5

Section 5 is a mirror image of Section 4 and it doubled the size of the "Men's Wing." These two wings were to be the sides of a Grand Courtyard but Section 6, when completed, closed in a much smaller courtyard than the original plans indicated. Both 4 and 5 are raised slightly higher than the front block, eight steps making the transition. This wing, like 4, is much brighter with cross spaces that are day rooms, solariums and a large dining hall. The wing is 31,000 square feet, the central corridor being 12 feet by 234 feet. This addition doubled the hospital's capacity to treat male patients.

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Section 6

Building 6 completes the square and forms the quadrangle. Since it is opposite the Main Block, it contains an entrance for vehicles. A pair of elliptical arches which support the north and south facades of this wing spring from molded limestone corner capitals. This is the only exterior double brick arch through which traffic can drive in the area of the Old Main Building. The west portion of this building is at least twice the size of the east side and the floor levels differ considerably. The building rises two stories and forms the interconnected structures that housed "violent" patients. Fan and boiler rooms and shops were built during the 1850s and 1860s. Building 6 encompasses 14,400 square feet.

Section 7

Original plans (1857) indicate that this wing replaced an earlier one being constructed for "violent male patients," when the fire interrupted construction. By 1883, Section 7 was planned for and construction probably took place in the 1890s, but Sections 7, 8, 9, and 10 have been changed in the 20th century. Now used as shops.

Section 8

This section is connected to Section 4 of the Women's Wing by a 21-foot wide ward space at the southeast corner of Section 6. Providing about 2,000 square feet on each of two floors, this wing leads directly to the large work rooms to the south. The total interior square footage today is 14,338. The exterior has a shallow pitched roof and open gables but is unmistakably part of the whole 1857 complex. The interior has been redone in the 20th century. The building is now used for maintenance shops.

Section 9

A large, two-story space of 4,784 square feet also built in 1857. The exterior is the same red brick Greek Revival style of the Old Main Building. Today it is known as the Patient Cafeteria (until this part of the Institution was closed) and it intrudes into the original planned courtyard. It is an active storage area today. There is a brick bridge on the second floor leading to Section 10, which was added comparatively recently.

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Section 10

This was the last section to be built (1903) as part of the original complex. It encloses 10,000 square feet of space. It is an unadorned brick building with a four-story, square brick chimney. The structure was the kitchen and staff dining room. Ramping down below ground and into the Section 1 basement is the small railroad tunnel which connected the kitchen to the various dining rooms in the wards.

The Old Main Building was closed in 1978 and the patients were moved to newer buildings on the grounds. A recent, thorough feasibility study has been compiled by Stearns and Crawford, Architects, of Syracuse, N.Y., and, although they found there is a great deal to be done, these buildings are in good condition.

Footnote:

¹ Reports of the Oneida County History Division, 1970, p. 1.

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An impressive structure, intended to provide accommodations for 1,000 patients, was originally designed by William Clarke, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. The plans called for four large buildings, located at right angles to each other with the ends connected by lattice-work, the whole enclosing an octagonal area of 13 acres. Grey limestone from Trenton and Little Falls was the building material chosen, and the architecture was in the then popular Classic Revival style, with massive Doric columns adding impressive dignity to the main facade.

Curiously enough, no contract for the construction of the asylum was made either before or after its commencement, and, by the end of 1838, \$46,000 of the appropriated \$50,000 had been spent on foundations alone for the four buildings. With the probable cost mounting beyond expectations, it was decided the immediate needs of the State's "insane poor" did not demand the completion of all the proposed buildings. In May, 1840, \$75,000 was appropriated to finish the main building, the foundations of the other three to be roofed over for protection. Many years later, the stones of those foundations were used to build a carriage house, now the hospital garage. Two subsequent appropriations of like amount were made, bringing the total cost to the State to \$285,000.

In April, 1842, a Board of Managers was organized, and it assumed charge of the institution. Five leading citizens of Utica were among its nine members, including Dr. Coventry who had been chiefly instrumental in stimulating the remiss Legislature to favorable action. The asylum was not yet furnished and also needed a water supply, a more complete drainage system and various other essentials before it could be opened for the admission of patients. Recourse to the State treasury was again necessary. An appropriation of \$16,000 was made by the Legislature to cover the required expenditures.

The board was greatly aided in the duties of organizing the management of the asylum by Dr. Amariah Brigham, whom it had appointed physician and superintendent. During the summer and autumn of 1842, work went forward with all possible speed.²

Utica was then a rapidly growing young city surrounded by rolling farm land. The town of 15,000 was growing due to trade along both the Erie and Chenango Canals and later the railroads brought even more prosperity. With the amenities of civilization came an interest in scientific advancement and the medical men of the city and county requested an asylum for the area, the first such in New York state. The first patients were admitted January 16, 1843, although the facility was not entirely completed. The Annual Reports describe in detail the plans and construction. Water for the Asylum was at first drawn from a huge

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well on the grounds. Later water was drawn from number 5 lock of the Chenango Canal and waste water went into an underground channel to the Erie Canal. Oil lamps furnished light and heating was by large wood-burning furnaces probably invented and installed by Utica's own John Carton, a furnace manufacturer. The grounds were famous for their beauty -- 20 acres of gardens, and beyond an institutional farm complex. Andrew Jackson Downing, the leading landscape designer of the day, was invited to submit plans for the grounds and we see today some of the original design in the beautiful avenue of trees which flanks the approach to the Main Building.

Dr. Amariah Brigham, the first superintendent of Utica Hospital, was a crusader for the treatment of mental illness as a disease. He believed the "insane" needed moral and medical treatment and he used rest, quiet, seclusion, diet and care as cures and promoted "non-restraint" -- there were no dungeons or chains. However he did use the famous "Utica Crib," a mechanical device for restraint when continued rest was needed. Shaped like a crib, it had a lid which could be fastened over the patient at night. It was made of wood and metal. It was used in hospitals for over 40 years. Brigham also advocated the "cult of curability" and believed in occupational therapy and work, establishing vocational shops, farming and gardening programs. For a number of years the patients wrote, edited and printed their own magazine, Opal. Here at Utica, Dr. Brigham began to publish the American Journal of Insanity, the first periodical in its field.

William Clarke, designer of the building, was born in Danvers, Massachusetts, in June, 1776, and began a career as a carriage maker in Pittsfield, Mass. ... Settling in Utica, Clarke became a leader of the Community, being elected President of the Village of Utica in 1824 and again in 1828. This was during a period when Utica was experiencing rapid growth. Clarke was a Director, appointed by the State, in the Bank of Utica. Appointed as a Commissioner of the New York State Lunatic Asylum in 1827, Clarke had superintended the erection of the Bleeker House which became part of Bagg's Hotel, and had designed and built two brick structures on Genessee Street. His death occurred in 1841, before completion of the Asylum.

In addition to William Clarke, two other Commissioners superintended construction of the hospital. They were Francis Spinner and Elam Lynds.... In 1854 Spinner was elected to represent Herkimer and St. Lawrence counties in the United States Congress. During Abraham Lincoln's term as President, Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, appointed Spinner as Treasurer of the United States.

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An excerpt from a speech given by Mr. John O. Hoadley of Boston at the First Supper of the Half Century Club in 1882 reflects Clarke's and Spinner's connection with Utica State Hospital.

Mr. Clarke ... had drawn a plan, or set of plans, of a lunatic hospital to be built at Utica, his plans had been approved by the Governor, and the work had been begun under his supervision as the acting member of a Board of Commissioners; and I had been detailed by the Chief Engineer, with the consent of the Canal Commissioner, as by statute provided, to furnish all needful engineering assistance, surveying, leveling, measuring quantities of excavation and brick and stone masonry, and instrumental work of all kinds.

The third Commissioner was Elam Lynds who had been involved with at least two other State institutions before he was assigned to the Utica project. In 1825 he was at Auburn State Prison where he was a harsh disciplinarian and finally was asked to leave. He took a crew of prisoners from Auburn in 1825 to Ossining where they built Sing Sing Prison. Probably Lynd's experience in the construction of stone structures was a leading factor in his involvement with the hospital.

Other known individuals who were involved in the construction of the building include George O. Bussey, who, in December 1844, submitted estimates for finishing aspects of the structure and until 1846 continued to work on the hospital. William Jones, master mason, is known to have worked on the building as well as Tobias Johnson, also a mason, and C. O. Nye (Wye), a master carpenter.³

When the Utica Asylum was planned at the mid-century, Greek Revival style in architecture was at its height. In the prosperous valleys of New York state, the latest vogue would be for Post-Jeffersonian Greek and included the symbolism that characterized the style. American towns were named Sparta, Athens, Ithaca, Troy, etc., and civic architecture was meant to embody the great success of the American experiment of democratic government. It was an optimistic style of architecture.

Many examples of civic building in this style have not been well preserved. Talbot Hamlin wrote that:

at least one superb example remains--the Utica Insane Asylum. It was one of the famous asylums of its time (1838). The part existing is but one side of the great quadrangle originally planned. Yet, even as it is, its great scale, the rightness of its proportions, the quiet dignity of its detail, and its powerful, monumental Greek Doric portico give it a distinction, a beauty, that is outstanding.⁴

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Americans came to regard the Greek Revival as a Golden Age, or, as the architect William Strickland would note, a "Marble Age." Neoclassicism was a romantic statement of faith in the promise of a new nation.

Footnotes

- 1 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1958), p. 86.
- 2 Lucy Clark and George M. White, A Century of Progress at Utica State Hospital, 1843-1943 (New York: Utica State Hospital Alumnae Association, 1943), pp. 4-5.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 5-7.
- 4 Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944; Dover Reprint, 1964), p. 70.

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Bibliography

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et seq.

Bagg, M.M. Pioneers of Utica. Syracuse, 1892.

Crawford, Randall T., and Carl D. Stearns. "Utica Psychiatric Center, Old Main Building." Syracuse, N.Y., 1985.

Gardner, Deborah S. "The Design of Sanity: The New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica." 1972. (Unpublished paper.)

Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1944; Dover Reprint, 1964.

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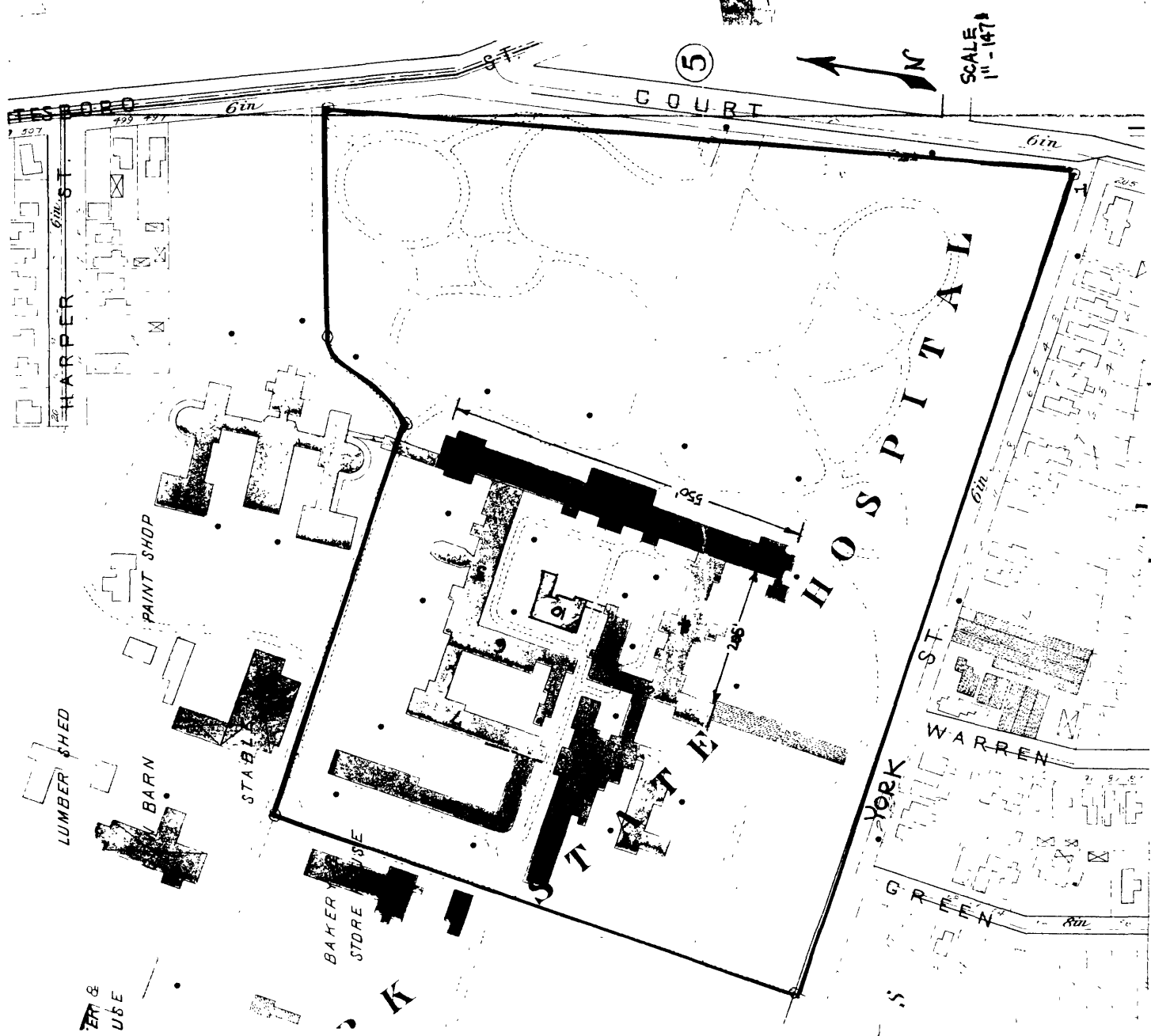
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Boundary

Beginning at the northwest corner of Court Street and York Street, northwest on York Street 1300 feet to an interior drive. North along said interior drive 820 feet, then along another interior drive southeast 616 feet to a "Y" in the interior drives, then northeast from the "Y" on an interior drive 175 feet, then running east 245 feet along another interior drive to its intersection with Court Street. Then along Court Street 1130 feet to the point of beginning at the intersection of Court and York Streets.

City of New York (Practical, Inc. - Miller & Co, 1896)



SCALE
1" = 147'



5

TESSBORO

COURT

HARPER

LUMBER SHED

PAINT SHOP

BARN

STABLE

BAKER STORE

HOSPITAL

WARREN

GREEN

USE

K

YORK