

The second archive I conducted was the archive of the Public Library Queens situated in Jamaica, a neighborhood in the east of Queens. Another good one and a half hour travel with public transport from where I lived. Next to more leaflets and newspaper clips I found a.o. publications of Hillside Hospital itself. I.e. “Memories & Milestones”, a magazine published by the Office of Archives Hillside Hospital. The Office of Archive was an internal archive of Hillside Hospital founded by Silvia Bakst in the late 1980s which focused on the early decades of Hillside Hospital after it relocated from Hastings to Glen Oaks/Queens, where it still is, in 1941. Further in my research I learned that the archive was quite extensive including video material from the construction period, oral histories of many employees and the directors of the hospital, images and reports of historic moments.

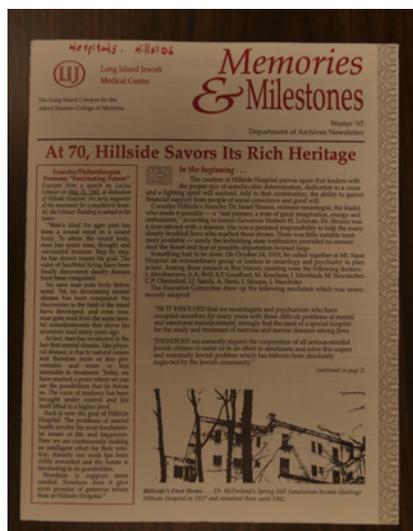


Archive of Queens Public Library in the basement of its central building in Jamaica/Queens

State Is Helping Hospitals To Boost Psychiatric Care



Image of a newspaper clip. A room at Hillside Hospital in the 1940s



Memories and Milestones, 1997, magazine on the history of Hillside Hospital and, at this moment, already merged with Long Island Jewish Medical Center, a general hospital



Morris Lowenstein Pavilion, ca. 1950, photographer unknown, from the archive of the architect Louise Allen Abramson

One of the starting points of my research was, as mentioned earlier, the unnamed nurse on whose observation the insights of Dr. Klein were built. In the process of my research I found long and detailed lists of all the employees of the Hospital from the period of the experiment. It was convincing to see and understand how many services, tasks and work from all kinds of departments was/is necessary to provide and guarantee care for patients and for research can be done. This was definitely a significant moment in my process and led me to think more closely about medical and scientific accomplishments in relation to the classic narrative of individual achievement.

Parallel to my work in the archives I contacted the PR department of Hillside Hospital which deals with external requests. I was in brief contact with Hillside PR already in preparation to my trip to NY. My first impression was that the hospital is quite positive and open to my research and requests. This was premature and unfortunately the impression was wrong. Across weeks and eventually month did I contact different people within the hospital administration about my research. With time and more research in the archives I formulated three concrete requests for which I needed (and hoped for) support as well as permission. 1) to visit the hallway on the ground floor the M. Lowenstein Pavilion; 2) help to find the internal archive of Hillside Hospital which since the retirement of Silvia Bakst is lost; 3) to interview current care and housekeeping staff on their working routines in relation to the architecture of the Lowenstein Pavilion. In order to get in touch with the staff I needed the help and permission of the hospital administration.

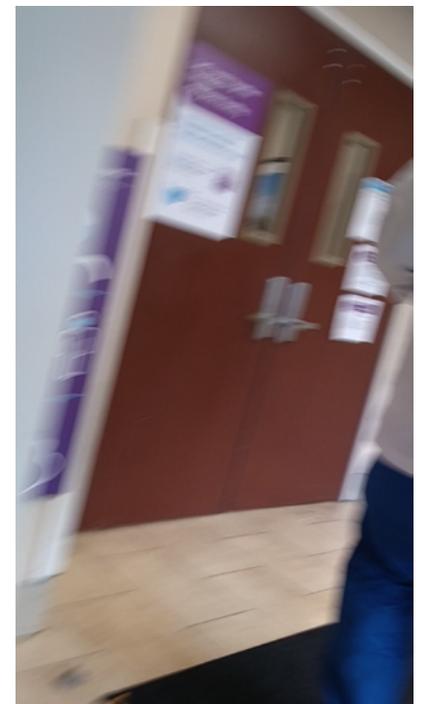
All my requests were formulated carefully and with consideration to privacy and integrity of the patients and personal as well as potential COVID19 measures. Unfortunately, my requests were rejected or ignored despite repeated presentations of my intentions and research and initially expressed interest of different employees in different positions of the internal hierarchy (the directorship, head of housekeeping, head of nursing, ...).

I can only speculate on the reasons for this. In conversations with colleagues (among other the former leader of a artist in residency program in a mental health facility) I was told that the mistrust (lack of trust) towards outsiders and the fear of unwanted material to surface is a quite common attitude in institutions in the US.



Morris Lowenstein Pavilion 2022

During my stay in NY I visited the Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks several times in person. Hillside is by now part of Northwell Health, a private company that runs several hospital in the state of New York. The premises of Hillside is fenced off completely and security is stationed at all entrances. Without permission it is almost impossible to enter. On my last trip I brought a folder full of hand-outs about my research and an open call for interviews. Equipped with this folder I managed to eventually (and surprisingly) gain access onto the premises of Hillside and even the Morris. Lowenstein Pavilion. The folder, I assume, lead the security to believe I was there for a job interview. I was guided to the first floor of the pavilion where the offices of the nursing department is located to present my requests. This visit, one floor above the hallway in which the changed behavior of a patient, observed by a nurse, lead to the appearance and thus “the birth of panic disorder” (Felicity Callard), was the physically closest I came.



Secretly filmed visit of the Morris Lowenstein Pavilion. Behind this door lays said hallway in which 60 years ago the changed behavior of a patient manifested. Observed by a nurse it lead to the distinction of the panic attack and te fear of having another panic attack. This distinction would play a significant role in creating/establishing panic disorder as a clinical diagnosis.

Conclusion: my research trip to New York, the work in and with the different archives, the communication with Hillside Hospital and the relating procedures, the resistance, the limited course of actions and movements of employees and, consequently, my own and my research's movement, the personal visits (as far as possible), the conversations with librarians, fellow researchers and Carlos R-P. (former director of the artist in residency program at Kings County) progressed my research in a way which would have never been possible from afar.

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