



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

An Inventory of Its Willow River Camp Files

PARTIALLY RESTRICTED

For details, see Administrative Information.

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

Agency: Minnesota. Dept. of Corrections.
Series Title: Willow River Camp files.
Dates: 1951-1990.
Quantity: 1.75 cu. ft. (2 boxes).
Location: See Detailed Description section for box locations.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF THE WILLOW RIVER CAMP

The Willow River Camp opened in 1951 as a minimum security prison for young men under the jurisdiction of the Youth Conservation Commission. In 1959, jurisdictional authority was transferred to the newly-formed Department of Corrections. Inmates were received solely from the State Reformatory for Men (St. Cloud). Inmates worked on forestry projects for the adjoining General C. C. Andrews Nursery until 1972 when a vocational program was introduced. This program had training in welding, machine tool, truck driving, auto-truck mechanic, and truck trailer repair. In 1977, a proposal to close the facility, relocate the program at Sauk Centre, and replace it with a high security prison was considered and, ultimately, rejected. In 1988/1989, administrative management of the facility was transferred to the combined Minnesota Correctional Facility-Willow River/Moose Lake. The Willow River site continues to be used as a minimum security facility.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE FILES

Files documenting the operation of this correctional camp for young men. Included are superintendent's (1951-1988) and assistant superintendent's (1964-1986, incomplete) correspondence, daily log books (1977-1980), records of the Citizen's Advisory Committee (1951-1963) and Building Fund (1965-1987), camp policies and procedures manuals (1951-1954, 1986), a training school checklist (1952), inmate interview records (1951-1953,

incomplete) and escape reports (1964-1990), a Division of Youth Conservation parole and probation manual (ca. 1964), statistical data on admissions and discharges (1951-1989), descriptive reports and articles (ca. 1954-1960), and postcard photographs of the dormitory and mess hall, Camp No. 1 (1960s).

RELATED MATERIALS

St. Cloud State Reformatory. Inmate case files, Willow River Camp, [ca. 1952]-1972 (cataloged separately).

INDEX TERMS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

Citizens' advisory committees--Minnesota.
Convict labor--Minnesota.
Escapes--Minnesota.
Juvenile corrections--Minnesota.
Parole--Handbooks, manuals, etc.--Minnesota.
Prisoners--Vocational education--Minnesota.
Probation--Handbooks, manuals, etc.--Minnesota.

Organizations:

General C.C. Andrews State Nursery (Minn.).
Minnesota Correctional Facility--St. Cloud.
Minnesota Correctional Facility--Willow River & Moose Lake.
Minnesota State Reformatory for Men.
Minnesota. Dept. of Conservation.
Minnesota. Youth Conservation Commission.
Willow River Camp (Minn.)--Photographs.

Types of Documents:

Picture postcards--Minnesota.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Restrictions:

Most of these records contain private information on individual inmates admitted less than 75 years ago. Restricted records are noted on the box list. Researchers may apply to use those records in accordance with the State Archives access statement.

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the cited item and folder title here]. Minnesota. Dept. of Corrections. Willow River Camp Files. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:

Accession number(s): 988-112; 999-41; 2002-47

Processing Information:

Appraisal note: The records of the Willow River Camp represented an opportunity to document a very specific rehabilitation program for youthful offenders at a detailed level and in a relatively small quantity. The paucity of program documentation for other young offender programs, coupled with the lack of administrative records from the St. Cloud Reformatory for Men, encouraged the preservation of log books and correspondence that may not have been retained for a larger, more structured facility. This appraisal decision is not intended to set a precedent for the preservation of these files.

Processed by: Cheri Thies, October 1996; Duane Swanson, January 2002

PALS ID No.: 0900042011

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below. Each file consists of one folder unless specified otherwise.

Location	Box	
117.K.15.7B	1	<p>Citizen's Advisory Committee, 1951-1963. 2 folders. OPEN Minutes, July 1951 - November 1955. Correspondence, 1951-1963. Kept by Mrs. Otto (Lucille) Reuer, Secretary-Treasurer of the committee, primarily concerning the annual fund drive and Christmas Party for the camp residents.</p> <p>Training school checklist, 1952. OPEN Brief comments made about the facility during an inspection visit by the Commission on Youth. Includes statistical information on inmates, employees, buildings, supplies, condition, and cleanliness.</p> <p>Photographs, [1960s?]. 2 items in 1 folder. OPEN Postcard photographs of the dormitory and mess hall at Camp 1, Willow River.</p> <p>Camp policies/rules/regulations, 1951-1954. OPEN Manual-type notebook containing layout of camp, rules, policies, and correspondence regarding operation.</p> <p>Camp policies and procedures, 2nd edition, 1986. 3 folders. OPEN Revised version of the 1951 rules and procedures, with sample forms.</p> <p>Department of Corrections. Division of Youth Conservation. DYC Probation and Parole Manual, [ca. 1964]. 2 folders. OPEN</p> <p>Proposed camp closing, 1977. OPEN Correspondence and reports regarding a proposal to close the camp, convert it into a high security prison, and transfer this program to Sauk Centre. Contains population projections and correspondence about local objections to the closure.</p> <p>Building Fund correspondence and projects, 1965-1987. 3 folders. OPEN Contains inspection reports, building requests, correspondence between facility staff and architects, and office memos regarding building plans.</p>

Location	Box	
117.K.15.7B	1	<p>Reports and articles, [ca. 1954]-1960. 5 items in 1 folder. OPEN</p> <p><i>Minnesota Youth Conservation Commission. Forestry Camp at Willow River</i>, undated.</p> <p><i>Y.C.C. Forestry Camp</i>, [ca. 1954].</p> <p><i>Willow River: A YCC Forestry Camp</i>, November-December 1955. Written by A. Whittier Day and George H. Weber; reprinted from American Journal of Correction.</p> <p><i>Youth Conservation Commission Camp No. 1, Willow River, Minnesota</i>, [ca. 1958].</p> <p><i>A Report to the Governor on Accomplishments of Y.C.C. Camp No. 1 Willow River, Minnesota</i>, April 21, 1960. Written by Will C. Turnbladh.</p> <p>Superintendent's correspondence, 1951-1988. 38 folders.</p> <p>RESTRICTED</p> <p>Correspondence principally of Lester N. Haedt (camp director, 1951-1953), Thomas P. Redmond (camp director/superintendent, 1954-1963), Ralph L. Nelson (superintendent, 1963-1987), and Gothriel LaFleur (superintendent, 1987-1988). Contains special incident and accident reports, memos of planned social events, and letters regarding business transactions with local companies, administrative policies, and staff information. A substantial amount of the correspondence is with the Central Office of the Department of Corrections.</p> <p>1951-1983. 33 folders.</p>
117.K.15.8F	2	<p>1984-1988. 5 folders.</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent's correspondence, 1964-1972, 1976-1978, 1981, 1986. 11 folders. RESTRICTED</p> <p>Correspondence principally of Willard S. Alm (1964-1978) and James Gerdes (1981, 1982) regarding operations and policies of the camp, especially incident and accident reports.</p> <p>Log books, 1977-1980. 5 volumes in 5 folders. RESTRICTED</p> <p>Daily entries made by the staff to communicate with each other about problems, incidents, transportation, and inmate activity.</p> <p>February 1977 - February 1979. February - August 1979. March - August 1978. August 1978 - December 1979. December 1979 - October 1980.</p> <p>[The reason for two sets of logs is unknown.]</p>

Location	Box	
117.K.15.8F	2	Interview records, 1952-1953. RESTRICTED Very scattered.
		Statistics, 1951-1989. 3 folders. RESTRICTED Compiled statistics (1951-1970), annual list of admissions (1951-1989), and annual list of discharges (1951-1989). Some of the lists record a reason for admission and discharge.
		Escape reports, 1964-1990. RESTRICTED Reports and follow-ups on inmate escapes. [0.25 cu. ft., legal, empty]