



The State and the mentally ill;: A history of Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, 1830- 1920,

Gerald N Grob

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The State and the mentally ill;: A history of Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, 1830-1920, Hardcover - 1966 This study of a pioneer state hospital for the mentally ill projects a brilliant and dynamic interpretation of the interacting evolution of psychiatric theory and practice, state policy, and public attitudes with respect to mental illness. In 1830 Massachusetts established Worcester State Hospital, the prototype of the modern state hospital in the United States, and pioneered the development of a system of such hospitals that has served as a model for the rest of the nation. Associated with Worcester over the years were such persons as Horace Mann, its principal founder, Samuel B Woodward, one of the organizers and first president of the American Psychiatric Association, and Adolf Meyer, perhaps the most influential American psychiatrist of the twentieth century. In its own right Worcester is one of the country's distinguished institutions, and its history is an important contribution to the history of medicine in the United States. But this study is not most notable as an illustration of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes's famous dictum that "medicine, professedly founded on observation, is as sensitive to outside influence, political, religious, philosophical, imaginative, as is the barometer to atmospheric density." Dr. Grob shows how therapy and administrative policy responded to pressures created by industrialization and urbanization and the increasing ethnic heterogeneity of the country. He shows the effects on the hospital system of the increasing political reliance on the state rather than the locality. And he illuminates the changing public attitude toward mental illness as it was affected by religious beliefs, scientific theories, and the demands of evolving American society.

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Otis Key:

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