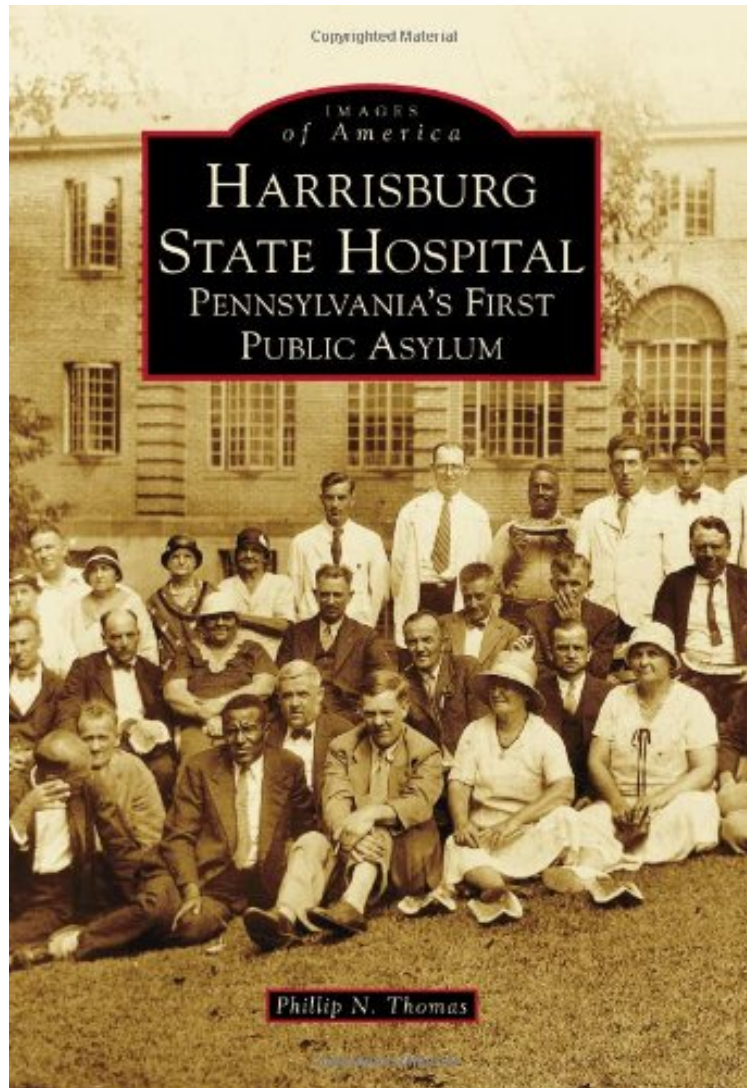


Harrisburg State Hospital: Pennsylvania's First Public Asylum (Images of America)

Phillip N. Thomas

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Harrisburg State Hospital opened in 1851 as the Pennsylvania State Lunatic Hospital, the first public institution in the state. Situated atop a hill overlooking the Susquehanna River, the original building was an early example of a Kirkbride design hospital. The facility closed in 2006 after serving the commonwealth for 155 years. Harrisburg State Hospital: Pennsylvania's First Public Asylum presents a pictorial history of the hospital from the first year of only 12 patients through the peak of state care, when the population reached over 2,500 in the 1950s. Harrisburg State Hospital was an innovative leader in the treatment of the mentally ill, pioneering new methods of therapy even before they were common practice. It was a community and a home for those whom society could not otherwise care for.

About the Author Phillip N. Thomas discovered Harrisburg State Hospital in 2007 after taking up a hobby photographing abandoned buildings. After his visit, he would go on to create a website dedicated to the hospital, doing the same two years later for the state hospital in Danville. This book is his culmination of five years of research into the history of Harrisburg State Hospital.