

**County of Los Angeles-Superior Court**

PSYCHOPATHIC PROBATION DEPARTMENT

205 S. BROADWAY - ROOM 1012 - LOS ANGELES 12, CALIFORNIA

October 1, 1946

Honorable Board of Supervisors  
Los Angeles County  
501 Hall of Records

Subject: Annual Report

Gentlemen:

The Psychopathic Probation Department of the Superior Court submits its annual report, covering the fiscal year 1945-46.

Respectfully submitted



(MRS.) GENEVIEVE DODGE

Chief Psychopathic Probation Officer

gd/ps

## SUMMARY

Due to the shortage of public and private sanitarium facilities, it has been necessary to limit the petitions filed with the County Clerk, to those mentally ill cases most urgently in need of help.

During the fiscal year 1945-46 there were 4482 patients entrusted to the supervision of the Psychopathic Probation Department by the Superior Court.

There is an unusually large proportion of elderly people in Los Angeles County, many of whom become senile, thereby increasing the problem of sanitarium placements. When completed, the new psychopathic unit at Rancho Los Amigos will be of material help.

Rehabilitation of those mental patients having a favorable prognosis, is one of the principal aims of the department. Cooperation with the County toward that end has been outstanding in the case of certain sanitariums equipped to apply modern, approved treatment.

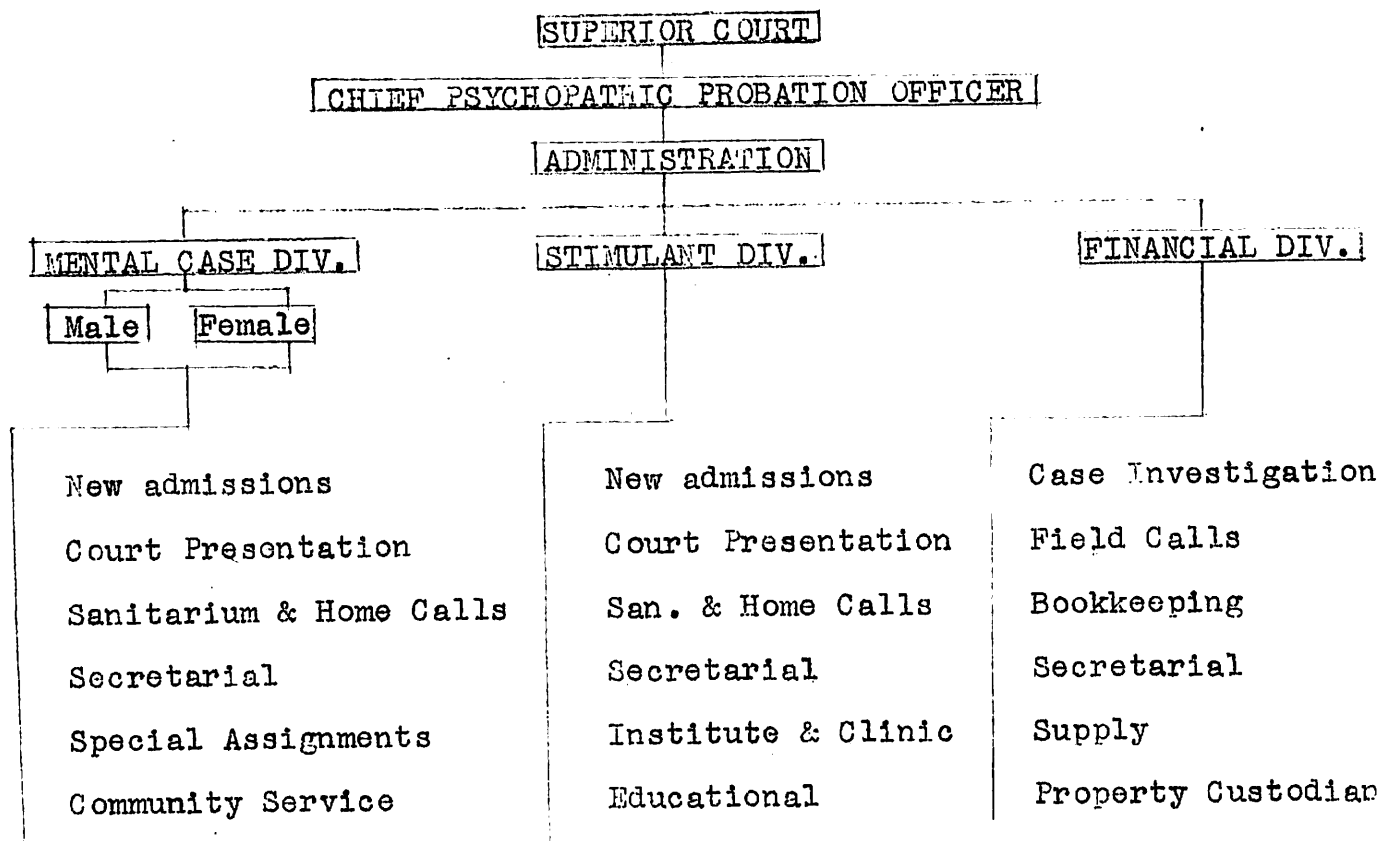
Young, mentally deficient patients who are capable of performing simple, routine tasks, can now be placed at Pacific Colony in considerable numbers, thereby relieving the County. However, additional State facilities are required for custodial and older patients of this type.

Rehabilitation work with alcoholic patients has received a stimulus through association with organizations in other parts of the country, and the application of modern methods.

During 1945-46 the department spent \$104,481.84 for board and care of 4459 patients placed in private sanitariums an average cost per patient day of 84 cents.

Statistics submitted showing number of Psychopathic Court hearings and disposition of cases, as well as probation case load data, together with the County's cost for private sanitarium care.

ORGANIZATION CHART OF PSYCHOPATHIC PROBATION DEPARTMENT



The past year has witnessed the phenomenon of greatly increased popular interest in the problems of the mentally ill. Many magazine articles and books have dealt with case histories and methods of rehabilitation in terms understood by the layman, thereby tending to bring the subject out from under the cloud which has stigmatized the mental patient since the dark ages. Likewise notable is the scientific approach to alcoholism as an illness rather than as a moral problem, and the theory that help is found through understanding cooperation rather than in punishment.

One of the vital concerns of the Psychopathic Probation Department is rehabilitation. A more intelligent attitude on the part of the public toward patients is one of the objectives in which this department is particularly interested.

Since the last prewar year of 1939-40, there has been an increase of about ten per cent in the number of petitions filed with the County Clerk alleging mental illness or the excessive use of stimulants, while the number placed on probation has increased slightly more than three per cent. In view of the fact that the population of the County has increased 25 per cent, it would appear that cases of mental illness and alcoholism have not gone up proportionately, but this is not the case. Due to the extreme shortage of both State and County facilities, as well as private sanitarium space, it has necessary for the County Clerk to drastically screen all requests for petitions and file only on the most urgent ones, thereby holding the case load to a minimum. By the same token, there are undoubtedly borderline cases which could be helped through proper treatment, which are not afforded the opportunity because of the reasons mentioned.

The work of the Psychopathic Probation Department starts as soon as a person is placed in the Psychopathic Ward of the General Hospital

as the result of a mental or stimulant petition. Within five days he is afforded a Court hearing and in the meantime, through interviews with the patient, his relatives or friends, data is obtained by the Psychopathic Probation Officer pertinent to the onset of his present mental condition, past mental and physical history, as well as his financial status.

During the fiscal year 1945-46 the Court heard 4525 new mental and alcoholic cases, and 449 returned probationers, or a total of 4974 cases. Of this number, 1650 new cases were placed on probation which, added to the 2832 cases on probation July 1, 1945, makes a total of 4482.

Therefore, there devolved upon this department during the last fiscal year, the direct responsibility for the welfare and supervision of 4482 persons mentally ill or suffering from the excessive use of stimulants.

Some of these patients are sufficiently stable mentally and physically to live in the community without creating a hazard to themselves or others, so they may be placed on outside probation in the homes of relatives, friends, or in some instances, by themselves. Others require custodial care, and the average number in private sanitariums during 1945-46 was 1422. Still others among the aged group whose prognosis is less favorable or who require more medical attention than the sanitariums are equipped to provide, are placed at Rancho Los Amigos.

One of the major problems that has been faced, and the answer to which is still in the future, is the extreme difficulty experienced in finding room for County patients in private sanitariums. In fairness to them, it must be acknowledged that the sanitariums have faced increasing costs and enlarged facilities have been hampered by shortages of material. In some cases there has been a tendency to give

preference to private patients at rates much higher than paid by the County although, fortunately, this policy has not been universal. There are now 45 sanitariums caring for County patients, ranging in numbers from one to 209.

The following breakdown by age groups of mental patients passing through the Court offers an interesting sid-light on this problem:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
10 - 19	73	62	135
20 - 29	295	252	547
30 - 39	343	396	739
40 - 49	326	326	652
50 - 59	236	284	520
60 - 64	96	92	188
65 - 69	105	94	199
70 - 79	246	286	532
80 plus	149	247	396
	<u>1869</u>	<u>2039</u>	<u>3908</u>

#### THE AGED

The percentage of aged persons to the total population in Los Angeles County is higher than in other parts of the State or Country. In the natural course of events, a certain proportion becomes senile, with or without psychosis, to the extent that their families are no longer able to care for them. This increases the placement problem.

Material relief, at least for a period, is anticipated as a result of a proposed new psychopathic building at Rancho Los Amigos, having accommodations for 100 men and 100 women. The date of completion is problematical due to material shortages, but it is hoped that 12 to 18 months will see it ready for occupancy.

The present psychopathic wards at Rancho Los Amigos are constantly filled to their capacity of 338 men and 225 women, who are mentally ill or deficient. As rapidly as a vacancy occurs through

death, transfer, release or outside probation, it is filled from the waiting list of patients being held in the observation ward at the General Hospital.

#### REHABILITATION PROGRAM

At Resthaven, 63 women who passed through this Court have been given care and treatment. Resthaven is a non-profit sanitarium for the treatment of acute and the milder types of mental illness. The most recent and progressive methods of scientific treatment are employed, including shock therapy, psycho therapy, occupational and recreational therapy, under the supervision of a highly trained psychiatric, medical and nursing staff. Relaxation classes, employing Columbia and Battle Creek methods, are held three times a week, also field trips of an educational and recreational nature. A psychologist is in attendance, making available psychometric tests, Rorschach personality, and occupational guidance tests. A volunteer group assists patients to secure employment and housing, when they are able to make an outside adjustment. Discussion groups and group psycho therapy have also been found of value. Average duration of stay has dropped from 9 to 7.5 weeks, due to the specific therapy available.

Another sanitarium has been generous in donating its total institutional resources for the treatment of acutely disturbed mentally ill women with good prognosis placed at County rates. The majority of disturbed patients become quieter and more cooperative following one to six electro shock treatments. The average number of shock treatments per patient is approximately 20, and the average length of stay in the sanitarium is three months.

Prior to the advent of shock treatment, commitment to a State hospital was necessary for all acutely disturbed patients regardless

of prognosis, who could not afford private sanitarium care. Although the general public is beginning to discard prejudices against State hospitals, the majority of the younger patients, treated and rehabilitated in a sanitarium, find that opportunities to re-establish themselves in self-supporting employment are materially increased if they do not have a commitment record. Although this attitude is regrettable, its importance to a patient and the community, from a mental hygiene and financial point of view, cannot be over-estimated.

Parallel to the study of the treatment and care for the mentally ill, a program for the enlightenment and re-education of the general public in the field of mental illness should be developed. A recovered or improved patient should be able to devote all his personal assets and energies toward remaining well, and again becoming an integral part of community life, without having the added burden of combating misunderstanding and prejudice by members of his community.

In addition to accepting cases for electro shock therapy, the sanitarium under discussion has cooperated with this department in instituting a more intensive rehabilitation program. Their psychiatrists have given freely of their time. Occupational therapy, individual and group psycho therapy, and play therapy have been developed in this sanitarium. The individual and group psycho therapy are carried on directly by a psychiatrist, but lay workers, under supervision of a psychiatrist manage and operate the occupational and play programs. The play therapy stresses taking a part in group activities, thereby learning the simple fundamentals of good social relationships.

This more intensive program has shown results. From July 1, 1945 to July 3, 1946, 120 women, ages ranging from 17 to 65, received electro shock therapy. Of this number, all but 13 have returned home



and have been able to resume their places in the community.

As a result of these studies, a new project for the coming year has been evolved. One of the psychiatrists at this sanitarium plans to devote, free of charge, one or two evenings a month to continue with group psycho therapy for the recovered and improved patients under supervision of the Psychopathic Probation Department,

#### THE MENTALLY DEFICIENT

While there has been a considerable increase in the acceptances of mentally deficient cases for placement at Pacific Colony, there is still a large back-log of this difficult type due to overcrowded conditions. Custodial cases are the type of mental deficients who are unable to attend to their simplest needs,

There is at present little or no difficulty in placing mentally deficient persons who are able to look after themselves and who can perform some simple, routine tasks. Pacific Colony can absorb many of these patients, and in a number of cases this department effected direct placement on an employment basis without cost to the County. Plans are under way to devise a training program of a similar nature for patients who are beyond the age usually accepted at Pacific Colony

In discussions with Pacific Colony it was agreed that if, as they hope, additional bed space is made available during the year, they will not apply this space toward new cases, but will attempt to accommodate those patients on the waiting list which were marked by the County representative as urgent. As of the end of the fiscal year, there were on the male psychopathic ward of Rancho Los Amigos alone, 68 feebleminded cases, of which 28 are under the age of 30 and eligible for Pacific Colony. The task of placing them all (as they

should be) in a State institution, is virtually impossible without entirely new facilities created by the State.

#### ALCOHOLIC DIVISION

Rehabilitation work among those appearing before the Court on stimulant petitions is an important function of this department. During the fiscal year 1945-46, 470 men and 147 women were heard. Of this number, 184 men and 60 women were placed on probation. The average case load was 310.

The case work method employed is to develop a positive plan of cooperation between the patient, the doctors and the family. Particularly in the last phase, notably good results have been obtained through the employment of a woman officer during the past year.

In order to lend encouragement to those who have a sincere desire to overcome their alcoholic problem, this department sponsors weekly meetings for mutual discussion. That they meet a real need is evidenced by the fact that since 1939 their gatherings have continued successfully.

No discussion of this subject would be complete without a work of acknowledgment of the outstanding work being done by Alcoholics Anonymous. Many patients are first brought into contact with that organization as a result of the counsel offered by the Probation Officer.

Los Angeles County may be proud of its position in the forefront of communities adopting the scientific approach to the alcoholic problem which is recognized as the most effective yet developed. During 1945 a staff member of this department was included in the seminar held at Yale University where such national authorities as Dr. E. N. Jellinek led discussions on Studies on Alcohol. A similar program is under

preparation to be held at the University of California at Los Angeles during 1946. There is every expectation that it will be a success and as a result, it is hoped that similar courses of study will become a regular part of the summer sessions at the University.

Future plans include the establishment of a farm where alcoholic patients would work for their care, but at the same time be provided with psychiatric therapy. This conforms with present day thinking that prisons and road camps do not offer much help in rehabilitating alcoholics.

Along this same line of thought, it has been advocated by this department that a diagnostic clinic be established so that the psychopaths might be weeded out and the true alcoholic provided with the therapy he needs. Furthermore, it is hoped that separate wards will be provided for alcoholics in the new Psychopathic Unit now approved.

A breakdown by age groups of the alcoholic cases appearing before the Psychopathic Court, follows:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
10 - 19	0	0	0
20 - 29	17	14	31
30 - 39	138	69	207
40 - 49	193	42	235
50 - 59	89	18	107
60 - 64	16	2	18
65 - 69	13	0	13
70 - 79	4	2	6
80 plus	0	0	0
	<u>470</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>617</u>

## FINANCIAL DIVISION

On December 1, 1945, the guardianship matters formerly handled by this department were withdrawn, to establish the office of Public Guardian. At the same time, the activities of the Financial Division were broadened to include budget matters, more comprehensive records and reports, as well as intensive field work.

Comparative figures are submitted for 1939-40, the last complete fiscal year prior to the war. The decrease in the number of patients paid for in full or part by the County resulted from increased Old Age Security and the better financial status of patients and their responsible relatives. During this period, two increases were made in sanitarium rates, which account for the higher cost per patient day

Not reflected in these figures are reimbursements from patients' estates, relatives and the Public Guardian, which resulted in \$7145.86 being turned over to the General Fund, and \$841.41 to the Bureau of Resources and Collections.

As of June 30, 1946, this department held in trust \$5905.60 to be used for patients' care, burial, or such other purpose as circumstances might warrant.

Further investigation of cases subsequent to the original Court order, revealed assets which reduced County payments by \$959.20 per month. On an annual basis, this would result in a saving of approximately \$11,500.00 although, of course, some deaths occur.

STATISTICS

New Cases Heard in Psychopathic Court During 1945-46

Showing Dispositions Made

	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>SUBTOTALS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
New Cases Heard				
Mental	1869	2039		3908
Stimulant	470	147		617
TOTAL	2339	2186		4525
Placed on Probation				
Mental	573	829	1402	
Stimulant	184	64	248	
TOTAL	757	893	1650	
Dismissed				
Mental	126	93	219	
Stimulant	49	26	75	
TOTAL	175	119	294	
Committed				
Mental	1167	1120	2287	
Stimulant	237	57	294	
TOTAL	1404	1177	2581	4525

In addition to the 4525 new cases heard, 449 returned probationers also came before the Court, making a total of 4974 hearings.

PSYCHOPATHIC PROBATION CASE LOAD DATA, 1945-46

	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
On Probation, 7/1/45			
Mental	1076	1464	2540
Stimulant	205	87	292
TOTAL	1281	1551	2832
New Cases			
Mental	573	829	1402
Stimulant	184	64	248
TOTAL	757	893	1650
Discharged			
Mental	544	494	1038
Stimulant	98	30	128
TOTAL	642	524	1166
Committed			
Mental	92	159	251
Stimulant	32	7	39
TOTAL	124	166	290
On Probation, 6/30/46			
Mental	1013	1640	2653
Stimulant	259	114	373
TOTAL	1272	1754	3026

Carried over from the preceding years were 2832 probation cases which, added to the 1650 new cases, make a total of 4482 persons supervised by this department during 1945-46.

Of the 3026 patients on probation June 30, 1946, 1431 were receiving care in private sanitariums, while the balance of 1595 were on outside probation or at Rancho Los Amigos. The following tabulation shows the method of payment for those in sanitariums:

	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Private Payment, or OAS supplemented privately	384	673	1057
OAS supplemented by County	70	140	210
Paid Entirely by County	27	115	142
Own Funds supplemented by County	5	17	22
Total in Sanitariums	486	945	1431

COST TO COUNTY FOR PRIVATE SANITARIUM CARE

FISCAL YEAR 1939-40

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number of Patients</u>	<u>Patient Days</u>	<u>Cost of Board &amp; Care</u>	<u>Cost per Patient Day</u>
July	669	19,000	\$ 7616.46	\$ .40
August	724	20,463	8938.39	.43
September	719	20,169	9220.15	.45
October	734	21,131	9568.13	.45
November	741	20,996	9891.07	.47
December	750	22,038	9992.85	.45
January	362	9,677	7108.30	.75
February	381	9,667	7338.10	.75
March	409	11,195	8349.18	.74
April	404	10,727	8090.12	.75
May	411	11,334	8499.50	.75
June	<u>413</u>	<u>11,024</u>	<u>8462.93</u>	<u>.76</u>
	6717	187,421	\$103,075.18	\$ .55

FISCAL YEAR 1945-46

July	369	10,436	\$ 8686.61	\$ .83
August	386	10,802	8795.98	.81
September	357	10,101	8303.27	.82
October	367	10,437	8484.17	.81
November	374	10,306	8607.20	.84
December	377	10,706	8850.87	.83
January	374	10,753	8676.77	.81
February	376	9,660	8588.18	.89
March	376	10,584	8434.54	.80
April	375	10,408	9056.57	.87
May	371	10,551	9139.22	.87
June	<u>357</u>	<u>10,119</u>	<u>8858.46</u>	<u>.88</u>
	4459	124,863	\$104,481.84	\$ .84