



# ArchivesSpace

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## **Annette Riley Fry Collection on Letchworth Village 5475441**

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This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 13, 2025.  
Description is written in: English.

### Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor  
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127  
535 W. 114th St.  
New York, NY 10027  
Business Number: (212) 854-5153  
Fax Number: (212) 854-1365  
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URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
<b>Creator:</b>	Fry, Annette R.
<b>Title:</b>	Annette Riley Fry Collection on Letchworth Village
<b>ID:</b>	5475441
<b>ID:</b>	MS#0771
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1907-1976
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1 linear feet 2 boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	A small group of materials documenting the history of Letchworth Village, an institutional care facility for children and adults with intellectual disabilities and neurodevelopmental conditions which operated in Thiells, New York from 1911 until 1996. The materials were collected by the writer Annette Riley Fry in the 1970s, while conducting research for a possible article on Letchworth Village.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Annette Riley Fry Collection on Letchworth Village; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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## Historical note

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In 1907, New York State officials cited the need for the establishment of a facility to care for the "feeble minded and epileptic." The State purchased 2,000 acres of rolling farm country in Thiells, a Rockland County hamlet, to build the facility. In 1909, the facility was renamed Letchworth Village in honor of William Pryor Letchworth, a businessman, philanthropist, and advocate for the village's creation. Letchworth sought to depart from the mission of custodial institutions built during the nineteenth century and instead follow a treatment plan that

would provide education, training and vocations to children and adults with developmental disabilities and other neurodevelopmental conditions. The resident patients (or "inmates", as they are called in annual reports) worked as farmers of the Letchworth land. According to the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the farm produced over one million dollars worth of crops during the 1930s, and it remained active until the early 1960s. Dr. Charles S. Little, who figures largely in these photographs and documents, was the first superintendent of Letchworth. Dr. George A. Jervis, a research scientist at Letchworth, achieved international acclaim for his research into the causes of Phenylketonuria (PKU), a metabolic disease which can cause intellectual disabilities and other health conditions if not treated. While farming activity ended at Letchworth Village in the early 1960s, the facility did not close until 1996.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Annette Riley Fry (1923-2017) was a writer perhaps best known for her 1974 *American Heritage* magazine feature article on the Children's Aid Society's orphan trains, "The Children's Migration." Governor Herbert H. Lehman appointed her head of research of the New York State Democratic Committee in 1950. She married Varian Fry the same year. They had three children. She died in Rochester, New York on November 21, 2017.

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## Summary

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A small group of annual reports, photographs, correspondence, typescripts, and clippings collected by Annette Riley Fry in the 1970s, while conducting research for a possible article on Letchworth Village. These materials document the history of Letchworth Village and address the evolution of care, treatment, and training of people (particularly children) with developmental disabilities and neurodiverse people in the twentieth century. The collection does not contain records of individual resident patients at Letchworth Village. In addition, while Letchworth Village remained in operation until 1996, the most recent materials in this collection date to approximately 1976.

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## Arrangement

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Materials are grouped together by genre and arranged in one series.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Revision Description

Legacy finding aid created from Pro Cite. EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2010-02-16 2019-05-20

### Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

### Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Annette Fry. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--7 Feb. 2005.

## **Existence and Location of Originals**

Many of the photographs in this collection are prints created from negatives held at Syracuse University and the Library of Congress.

## **Processing Information**

Papers processed by Daniel Eshom, June 2005.

## **Processing Information**

Finding aid updated by Celeste Brewer, March 2021. The following changes were made: removal of ableist language, clarification that resident admission records are not included in this collection, and the addition of related materials notes. The collection title was changed to reflect the fact that the materials were assembled by Annette Riley Fry, and are not the institutional records maintained by the staff of Letchworth Village. This information was also added to the scope and content note. Finally, a brief biographical note of Annette Riley Fry was added.

## **Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML maintains ownership of the physical material only. Copyright remains with the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

## **Custodial History**

A group of clippings, speech typescripts, and annual reports from Letchworth Village which make up part of the collection were originally owned by Franklin B. Kirkbride, who was head of Letchworth Village's Board of Directors. Kirkbride was a cousin of Annette Riley Fry, and the materials were given to her by another relative after Kirkbride's death.

## **Accruals**

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact [rbml@columbia.edu](mailto:rbml@columbia.edu) for more information.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

[Charles Benedict Davenport Papers](#): professional papers of the American eugenicist Charles B. Davenport, which includes "a substantial series relating to a long-range study of children carried out at Letchworth Village, Thiles, New York." At the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

### Related Materials

[New York State Governor Monthly Reports and Minutes of Meetings of Boards of Managers of State Institutions](#): reports and minutes of meetings submitted to the governor by boards of managers of state institutions, including Letchworth Village, documenting their visitation and inspection of these institutions. At the New York State Archives, Albany, New York.

### Related Materials

[Willard State Hospital Medical Records](#): Includes medical records of patients transferred to Sampson State School (which was administered by Willard State Hospital) from Letchworth Village. At the New York State Archives, Albany, New York.

### Related Materials

[New York State Commission to Investigate Provision for the Mentally Deficient Photographs of Custodial Institutions for the Mentally Deficient](#): several hundred black and white photographs illustrating conditions at custodial institutions for people with intellectual disabilities and mental illnesses in New York and other states, including Letchworth Village. The photographs were gathered by the Commission to Investigate Provision for the Mentally Deficient to illustrate its final report. At the New York State Archives, Albany, New York.

### Related Materials

[Margaret Bourke-White Papers](#): contains photographs taken by Bourke-White at Letchworth Village circa 1933-1934. Those photographs are likely duplicated in this collection. At Syracuse University Libraries Special Collections Research Center.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Intellectual disability
- Intellectual disability facilities
- Photographs
- Annual reports
- Clippings (Information Artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Letchworth Village (N.Y.)
- Little, Charles S.
- Jervis, George
- Letchworth, William Pryor, 1823-1910
- New York (State). Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
- Fry, Annette R.

## Collection Inventory

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Series I: Contents List	
Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence to and from Annette Fry re: Letchworth Village research and materials, 1975-1976	box 1
Misc. clippings and speeches re: Letchworth Village, 1912-1976	box 1
Photographs of visiting dignitaries, undated	box 1
Photographs by Margaret Bourke-White, undated <u>Physical Description:</u> 14 contact prints	box 1
Negatives, undated	box 1
Photographs of Letchworth Village children, buildings, grounds, undated	box 1
Photographs of individuals involved with Letchworth Village, undated	box 1
Portrait photographs of Dr. Charles Sherman Little by Doris Ullmann, undated <u>Physical Description:</u> 2 mounted photographs	box 2
Annual Reports, 1908-1971	box 2



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