

New York City’s **Public** and **Private** Welfare Systems at the Turn of the 19th Century and 1900 100% Census Data

The history of public welfare in the City of New York in the 19th Century was a complicated combination of public almshouses and workhouses for adults and their children. Private charities and churches built and maintained asylums for orphans and “destitute children.” In 1875 New York State passed the “Children’s Law” that forbid sending children between the ages of 3 & 16 to public workhouses. In turn each County in the State would pay for children’s care in private institutions. The children were sent to the “care of institutions in which their religious faith was taught.” In New York City the law provided public funding for religious institutions. The New York City State Charities Aid Association’s Annual Report for 1897 reported that “the number of children in support in the City of New York in 25 private institutions was 15,331.” The City paid the private institutions \$ 1,683,847, the equivalent of \$ 62 million today.

The 1900 Census for New York City included just Manhattan Island and a section of the Bronx across the river. There were 999 EDs; 33 of these are individual EDs for hospitals and asylums. For example: New York Juvenile Asylum, Mt. Sinai Hospital, Colored Home and Hospital, The Hebrew Sheltering Guardian and the Asylum of St. Vincent DePaul. In the East River are three islands: Blackwell’s (now Roosevelt), Randall’s and Ward’s, each is one ED. On all three the City of New York, over time, built numerous hospitals, a penitentiary, and work and alms houses for the poor. In the 1900 Census the three islands had a total population of 13,468 with 11,671 classified by the census as “inmates” in the various institutions.

This “big data” offers the opportunity to study the public and private social welfare institutions of the largest city in the country. The table below lists the Manhattan EDs, the four Bronx EDs and the EDs for the three East River islands. The 1900 100% Census total population for these 40 EDs is 26,602 which includes staff.

Manhattan – 1900 100% Census – EDs for Public & Private Institutions	Pop.	
ED 1064 City Jail	360	
ED 1065 New York Hospital For Relief of the Ruptured and Crippled	262	
ED 1066 New York Hospital,	305	
ED 1067 German Hospital and Dispensary	147	
ED 1068 Mt Sinai Hospital of the City of New York	322	
ED 1069 Colored Home and Hospital	234	
ED 1070 St Vincent's Hospital, (Sisters of Charity)	358	
ED 1072 St Francis' Hospital (Sisters of the Poor of St Francis)	250	
ED 1073 New York Juvenile Asylum,	906	

ED 1074	Home For the Aged of the Little Sisters of the Poor	288	
ED 1075	Mission of the Immaculate Virgin	365	
ED 1076	Female Academy of Sacred Heart	117	
ED 1077	Five Points, House Industry	384	
ED 1078	Hebrew Orphan Asylum Society of New York City,	845	
ED 1079	Montefiore Home For Chronic Invalids	369	
ED 1080	The Hebrew Sheltering Guardian	923	
ED 1081	Orphans' Asylum Society	192	
ED 1082	Colored Orphan Asylum and Assn For the Benefit of Colored Children	323	
ED 1084	Home For Aged and Infirm Hebrews of New York	231	
ED 1085	Association For Improved Instruction of Deaf Mutes	242	
ED 1086	N Y Institution For Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb	554	
ED 1087	St Lukes Hospital (See After Ed 567)	451	
ED 1088	The Roosevelt Hospital	182	
ED 1089	The New York Institution For the Blind	204	
ED 1090	Willard Parker Hospital (Contagious)	127	
ED 1092	Institutions of Mercy	545	
ED 1093	Society For Relief of Half-Orphan and Destitute Children	228	
ED 1094	Asylum of St Vincent Depaul	250	
ED 1095	Home For the Aged of the Little Sisters of the Poor	315	
ED 1096	St Ann's Home and House of the Good Shepherd	729	
ED 1098	R C Orphan Asylum	536	
ED 1099	N Y Infant Asylum	133	
ED 1101	Sacred Heart Academy	279	
East River Islands			
ED 0668	Blackwell's Island	6,460	
ED 0906	Ward's Island	4,665	
ED 0936	Randall's Island	2,343	
Bronx			
ED 1071	St Joseph's Hospital For Consumptives	342	
ED 1083	Home For Incurables	380	
ED 1091	St Joseph's Institute For Instruction For Deaf-Mutes	138	
ED 1097	Mother House of the Sisters of Charity and Mt St Vincent's Academy	318	
Total Population		Note* includes staff	26,602