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PRESS RELEASE

**Secretary of State Jim Condos Announces
Vermont State Archives Opens State Hospital Records**

Montpelier, VT – Secretary of State Jim Condos announced today that more than forty cubic feet of records from the Vermont State Hospital are now open for research at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA). The records, some of which have been preserved by hospital staff for over a century, were transferred to the State Archives in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene.

“What is preserved in these records,” Condos said, “is the story of the evolution of the State’s approach toward treating some of its most vulnerable citizens – the change over time from practices of isolation and segregation towards ones focused on deinstitutionalization and community-based care.”

According to archivist Mariessa Dobrick, who inventoried and processed the records after they were transferred to VSARA, the records offer a comprehensive view of the State Hospital, located in Waterbury, from when the first patients arrived in 1891 to as recently as 2005. Reports and correspondence of the hospital’s superintendents offer insight into the administration of an institution whose patient population at its peak in the 1930s surpassed that of many Vermont towns at the time. In addition, clinical studies shed light on research done at the hospital, such as the long-term study of the rehabilitation of individuals with chronic schizophrenia. Photographs that once lined the walls at the Waterbury complex are also included with other photographs and artwork that have not been open to the public before.

“These records give voice to the thousands of individuals who were treated at the hospital as well as the staff who cared for them,” Condos added.

The majority of the records are open for research by the public. Some personal information within the records however is closed under the state’s public records laws. Archivists are available to answer questions by phone at 802-828-2308 or by e-mail at archives@sec.state.vt.us.

An online inventory of the records can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/VSH-Records>.

The mission of VSARA, a division within the Office of the Secretary of State, is to provide, protect, promote, and preserve Vermont public records, in collaboration with other public agencies, for the benefit of the public. To learn more, visit www.vermont-archives.org.

Jim Condos is Vermont’s Secretary of State.

