

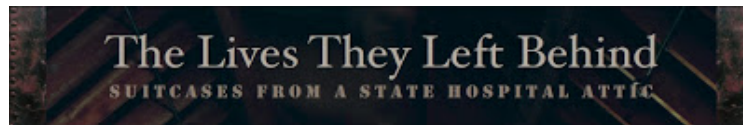
## Exhibits at TCPL

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

The exhibit "The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic" comes to TCPL

For more information about these exhibits, contact Sally Grubb at (607) 272-4557 extension 232 or [sgrubb@tcpl.org](mailto:sgrubb@tcpl.org).



Tompkins County Public Library, together with the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Finger Lakes, presents the exhibit *The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic*. The exhibit will be on display at TCPL from September 30 until November 4. An opening reception will take place in conjunction with Gallery Opening Night on Friday, October 4, from 5:00 - 8:00 PM.

EXHIBIT CATALOGS & BROCHURES

[Hip-Hop : Top 2 Bottom](#)

[Perspectives on Homelessness & the Indigent \(2012\)](#)

[Quilt Exhibit](#)

A YEAR OF ART AT THE LIBRARY

[2013 A Year of Art at TCPL](#)

[2012 A Year of Art at TCPL](#)

EXHIBIT ARCHIVE

For information on exhibits before 2012, visit [TCPL's exhibit archive](#). Individual blog posts since 2012 are archived below.

BLOG ARCHIVE

► [2014 \(7\)](#)

▼ [2013 \(27\)](#)

► [December \(2\)](#)

► [November \(2\)](#)

► [October \(2\)](#)

▼ [September \(3\)](#)

[TCPL Features two important exhibits at October, 4...](#)

[The exhibit "The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcase...](#)

[BANNED! A new exhibit opens](#)

In addition to the exhibit some of the actual suitcases and their contents, on loan from the New York State Museum, will be on display in the Avenue of the Friends' exhibit cases. Darby Penney, one of the developers of the exhibit, will be present at the opening reception and will give a talk at the Library on Saturday, October 5 at 1 PM. On Thursday, October 24 at 6:00 PM, Craig Williams, a curator at the New York State Museum and one-time director of the History Center at Ithaca, will give a presentation about the exhibit and the finding of the suitcases.

This is an emotional exhibit which paints a tragic portrait of the forgotten lives of the people who lived at Willard Psychiatric Center. For a hundred and twenty five years, from 1869 to 1995, the hospital housed thousands of people who were, for various reasons, separated from society. Some were homeless, some could not communicate in English, some suffered from depression or other illnesses, most were poor. Many spent the rest of their lives there, ignored by society and in many cases by their families.

After Willard closed, Craig Williams visited the hospital and found, in an attic, over four hundred suitcases that had been left behind when their owners moved on or died. The New York State Museum has preserved these suitcases and their contents. In 1998, Williams teamed up with psychiatrist Peter Stastny and Darby Penney, former director of recipient affairs, who both worked at the State Office of Mental Health, together with cinematographer Liza Rinzler, to piece together and record the stories and lives of the owners of these suitcases.

Two exhibits and a book resulted from this partnership: Stastny and Darby



[at TCPL on September 2...](#)

- ▶ July (3)
- ▶ June (4)
- ▶ May (3)
- ▶ March (4)
- ▶ February (2)
- ▶ January (2)
- ▶ 2012 (19)
- ▶ 2011 (3)

## SEARCH THIS BLOG




Penney co-authored the book *The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic*; Craig Williams was instrumental in developing the New York State Museum exhibit *Lost Cases, Recovered Lives: Suitcases From a State Hospital Attic* which featured the suitcases and possessions of 12 former Willard

patients; and the traveling exhibit which will be on display at TCPL.

The traveling exhibit *The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic* was developed by The Community Consortium and is circulated by The Exhibition Alliance, Inc., Hamilton, N.Y.

The exhibit at TCPL is made possible by a grant from Janssen Pharmaceuticals and has been co-sponsored by the Mental Health Association in Tompkins County and the History Center. TCPL is grateful to Jean Poland for her work in obtaining this exhibit and to Craig Williams for making the loan of the suitcases themselves possible.

POSTED BY TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY AT [11:46 AM](#)

## 1 COMMENT:



[Dryden Lorna](#) [September 22, 2013 at 10:01 PM](#)

My Grandmother was at Willard until She passed in 1963. Her name was Eliza Carpenter Heffron. I looking forward to the exhibit. Thank You Lorna Burch Kumpf.

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