

San Mateo County Poor Farm

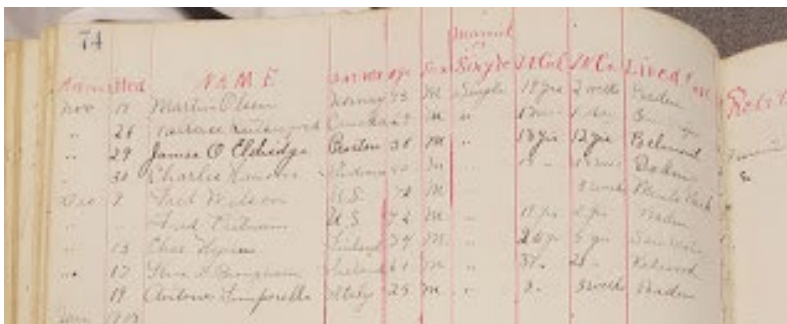


This listing of Inmates and Patients at the San Mateo County Poor/ Relief Farm was created from a variety of sources. There were three registers, the earliest dating from the opening of the farm in 1876. That first register was

relatively well maintained and for many individuals gave quite a bit of information including age, birthplace, how long they had lived in California and how long in the county. Some entries included the reason for the admission, the town where they had been living and their next of kin. Unfortunately, that wealth of information was not carried forward in the later registers.

Besides the three registers, there was a bath list and a series of monthly reports that filled in or supplemented the sparsity of records for the early twentieth century. Gaps still exist. The two later registers, were most likely copied from other records. The handwriting is often close to illegible and the lack of consistency in spelling creates a feeling of basic illiteracy. Census records were also used to provide more information on individuals, in a few cases individuals listed on the farm in the census were not found in any other records.

Many patients were admitted for just a few days. Others were residents for a long time, a few for decades. Many were discharged and readmitted a number of times. This list tries to give the first date of admission and the last known discharge date or the death date. When it is not clear that two entries are for the same person they were not combined even though it seems likely they were in fact the same.



Many of those who are shown as deceased in this list and in the registers

were in fact never residents of the farm, or not so at the time of their death. The farm's cemetery was used as a pauper's burial ground, and those buried there were entered in the register on the date they were buried. An effort was made to find all those who were deceased in the early county death records, the state death index and/or the coroner's index to verify that they were in fact deceased. That the earliest deaths were not found was expected, however, there were death's after 1906 that were not found. It is possible that they died outside the county, and even more likely that the names were so badly spelt that they weren't found, although a search was made in most cases just by death date (but only in San Mateo County).



The Searchable Indexes included here are:

- **County Poor Farm Inmate List** A comprehensive listing of those who were admitted to the San Mateo County Poor Farm / Hospital from its opening in 1876 until 1942. The list also includes those who were buried in the Farm Cemetery even if they were never residents of the Farm. There are some gaps in information but the listing includes over 3700 entries.
- **Record of Orphans, Half-Orphans, etc.** Covering the years 1910-1915, this ledger of Orphans, Half-Orphans and others receiving public support payments is located in the San Mateo History Museum Archives (# 15-182-5 // #5 H2 16). Record of Orphans.pdf 28.86 KB Ledger is in the San Mateo County Historical Association Archives # 15-182-5 // #5 H2 16
- **List of Indigents** culled from reports, registers and lists, this database of those supported by the county of San Mateo includes records from Jan 1904 through Jan 1915. An additional list for 1915 has been added as well as notations from April 1905 indicating how long those receiving payments that month had been on the rolls. For sources used please see County Poor Farm Sources. Indexed by Cath Trindle Indigent Relief Rolls.pdf 27.31 KB
- **County Poor Farm Employees** compiled from Census records and Treasurer's Book located at SMCHA.

Annual Reports and ledgers provide some insight into the income and expenses of the poor farm, mainly in the early part of the twentieth century. The Income and Expense reports and the Contracts are located in the County Record Repository at Tower Road in Cabinet RC5B1 drawers 5, 26 and 27.



The following Indexes or lists were created and are found here as PDF files

- Income and Expenses 1916-1920
- Index to County Poor Farm Contracts
- Income Reports to the Board 1903-1905

The County Poor Farm Source List gives the sources used to compile the county poor farm inmate index. Additional information was culled from newspaper articles. They are identified when used. The early San Mateo Times Gazette is not currently easily accessible in a searchable format. When it becomes available information on the workings of the poor farm should be uncovered. An additional resource that has not yet been located would be the minutes of the Board of Supervisors.