

# Research Report by Adaeze Dikko, Consultant/Cole Fellow 2021

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Regarding Frances Bartow

## *The Primary Resource Documentation That We Have*

- I. Censuses
  - **A. 1870 Federal Census**
    - This is the only census under which Frances is documented as “insane” <sup>1</sup>
    - Note: From 1840 to 1890, Federal Censuses accounted for people with mental, intellectual, and physical disabilities <sup>2</sup>
- **II. Letters from Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow** <sup>3</sup> (we know that Frances was under the care of Dr. John S. Butler, who was the Hartford Retreat’s superintendent from 1843 to 1873)
- NOTE: I’ve picked out informative quotes that might be used as leads for further points of research
  - **A. Letter from Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow; Written: March xx/20 1847; Postmarked: March 23, 1847** <sup>4</sup>
    - “We were very much pleased to hear so good an account of you through the Butlers letter to Mr. Cole.”
      - Thomas Cole and Dr. Butler are corresponding with each other regarding Frances’s condition
    - “I have just received a letter from Miss Church in which she says a great deal about you she says you are looking so much better.”
    - “...give my love to Miss Church.”
      - As discussed in Maureen Hennessy’s “Life at Cedar Grove” Report, the Churches had a close relationship with the Bartows and Coles: “...it seems likely that the Churches were instrumental in bringing Frances Bartow to the Hartford Retreat for treatment.”
      - It is clear that Miss Church frequently visited Frances at the Hartford Retreat.
    - “Why dont you write to us, we have been expecting a letter from you this sometime tell us what you are doing how do you employ your time when you feel well, whether you sew and if your apron suited and how knitting goes on any thing else you have to sa about yourself will be very acceptable to us.”
      - While Harriet sends Frances a handful of letters, it seems that Frances does not often respond to her correspondence.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Cole National Historic Site. *Census Records*. “1870 Federal Census.jpg” Accessed via WeTransfer folder.

<sup>2</sup> Becky Little. “The 1840 U.S. Census Was Overly Interested in Americans’ Mental Health.” *History.com*. <https://www.history.com/news/census-change-mental-illness-controversy>. 15 May 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Cole National Historic Site. *Harriet and Frances*. Accessed via WeTransfer folder.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. “1847-03 Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow.doc”

- The idea of a busy mind aiding in mental illness recovery (especially in women) was very prevalent at the time. This provides an explanation for Harriet's emphasis on Frances filling her time with productive hobbies.
- ***B. Letters from Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow; Written: June 19, 1847; Postmarked: June 19, 1847<sup>5</sup>***
  - "I spent a longer time in the City than I expected when I left you we had some rainy days."
    - Harriet may have visited Frances in the month of June
  - "Dear Franky I hope you are better and will exert yourself to get well, I am sure the delightful rides you have about Hartford cant but benefit you, and the pleasant walks which I hope you take Miss Church said she would for you to take a long walk."
  - "...give our respects to Dr Butler and tell him as he thinks it advisable we wish you to occupy the same apartments, that you, heretofore have done, dont forget to tell him..."
- ***C. Letter from Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow; Written: July 12, 1847; Postmarked: August 13, 1847<sup>6</sup>***
  - "We were pleasd to hear from you and very much gratified to hear that you are getting so much better, we certainly shall be pleasd to have you come home as soon as the Dr thinks you well enough to leave his care, I donot know of any place you could be so pleasantly situated as where you are. So directly under the Dr eye and the advantage of riding evry Day, which you could not have at home."
  - "I hope you will say somthing in your nex of some employment, you have time would not hang so heavy on your hands if you would employ them about somthing, which want employ you mind also. Withe the regular manner in which you live, I am sure you will recover."
- ***D. Letter from Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow; Written: November 9, 1847; Postmarked: November 10, 1847<sup>7</sup>***
  - "We have been been hoping to hear from you ever since Emily returnd, why do you not write to us."
  - "you cannot think Dear Franky how much we think and how anxious we feel about you should have liked very much to have had you come home this Fall. if the Dr had thought it advisable. but do gain all you can this winter for you shall certainly come home in the spring, it will only be five months, and I know you will enjoy yourself better there than you could at home this winter. we shall live very

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. "1847-06-19 Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow.doc"

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. "1847-07-12 Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow.doc"

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. "1847-11-09 Harriet Bartow to Frances Bartow.doc"

quietly and lonely so that you would not have as much to take up your attention. as you want there do get well as fast as possible.”

- “I hope you will walk out as much as possible and then you will find your cloak comfortable and I think it will add very much to your health. if the make of the Apron dose not suit, you must make it over I have sent two Pocket Handkerchief which I have left the hemming for you to do I think you ma[??] like to have something to do.”

- **III. CT Historical Society Archives**

- **A. Digitized**

- **1. *Retreat gazette, 1837 - 08***<sup>8</sup>

- Holds context for the Frances’ life at the Retreat (none of the Gazettes make specific mention of Frances Bartow)

- **2. *Retreat gazette, 1837 – 09***<sup>9</sup>

- Holds context for the Frances’ life at the Retreat (none of the Gazettes make specific mention of Frances Bartow)

- **3. *Report of the physician of the Connecticut Retreat for the Insane, from the opening of the institution on the 1st of April 1824, to the 1st of April 1825***<sup>10</sup>

- Frances was not at the Retreat during this time period, but it would be fruitful to find the physician’s report for 1847 (when we know she was staying at the Retreat)
        - Includes specific information about patient admission date, patient number, age, diagnosis, length of stay, etc.

- **B. For In-Person Viewing**

- **1. *Retreat for the Insane Account Book, 1824-1853***<sup>11</sup>

- May include information on Frances Bartow during her stay at the Retreat
        - Patient name
        - Date of admission
        - Date of discharge
        - Residence

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<sup>8</sup> “Retreat gazette, 1837-08.” *Connecticut State Library Digital Archive*. Volume 1, Number 1 (August 1837).

<http://hdl.handle.net/11134/30002:22236296>

<sup>9</sup> “Retreat gazette, 1837-09.” *Connecticut State Library Digital Archive*. Volume 1, Number 2 (September 1837).

<http://hdl.handle.net/11134/30002:22236301>

<sup>10</sup> “Report of the physician of the Connecticut Retreat for the Insane, from the opening of the institution on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1824, to the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1825.” *Connecticut State Library Digital Archive*.

<http://hdl.handle.net/11134/40002:20066>

<sup>11</sup> *Retreat for the Insane Account Book, 1824-1853*, MS 56441. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut. <https://chs.waldo.kohalibrary.com/app/work/29388>

- Weekly rate for board and medical assistance and by whom payable
- Total board
- Total other expenses
- Number of weeks and days spent at the Retreat
- Remarks (e.g. recovered, improved, no improvement, death, restored)
- **2. *The annual report of the officers of the Retreat for the Insane at Hartford*** <sup>12</sup>
  - Information of interest included:
    - Institution floor plan
    - Impactful changes in the Retreat's ecosystem
      - Programmatic updates
      - Deaths
      - Leadership changes
      - Renovations
      - Economic situation
    - Facility Data
      - Admissions
      - Gender breakdown
      - Attacks
      - Mental illness type
      - Age at admission
      - "Duration of insanity before admission"
      - Movement of population
- **3. *Service at the dedication of the Elizabeth Chapel: at the Retreat for the Insane, December 23, 1875*** <sup>13</sup>
  - Might be a source with more information regarding the relationship between mental illness treatment centers and religion (we do not know if Frances is going to church, but Harriet inquires of Frances' attendance in a letter)
    - Information possibly included
      - Sermon notes
      - Attendee information
      - Church hours and available services
- **4. *More relevant links:***

[https://chs.waldo.kohalibrary.com/app/search/\(hartford%20retreat%20for%20the%20insane\)?pubyear=%5B1800%20TO%201900%7D](https://chs.waldo.kohalibrary.com/app/search/(hartford%20retreat%20for%20the%20insane)?pubyear=%5B1800%20TO%201900%7D)

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<sup>12</sup> The annual report of the officers of the Retreat for the Insane at Hartford, 1842-1852. RC445.C8 H3. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut. <https://chs.waldo.kohalibrary.com/app/work/24038>

<sup>13</sup> Service at the dedication of the Elizabeth Chapel: at the Retreat for the Insane, Hartford, December 23, 1875. 362.21 C753s. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut. <https://chs.waldo.kohalibrary.com/app/work/5338>

- Includes additional documents pertaining to the Hartford Retreat
- Looking for a researcher to take a look at the following documents (all housed at the Connecticut Historical Society)
  - **Next Steps:** Plan an in-person visit to the CHS archive or hire an independent researcher to do so
    - Hire a Researcher: <https://chs.org/research/independent-researchers-for-hire/>
    - In-Person Visit: <https://chs.org/waterman-research-center-registration/>

## ***Representational General Research***

- **I. Difference in Experience and Treatment between Folks with Mental Illness Across Race, Gender, Socioeconomic Status**
  - ***A. Class and Access of Care***
    - There were tiered housing arrangements at the Hartford Retreat <sup>14</sup>
    - Weekly cost of care: \$3 for CT residents
    - Weekly cost of care: \$4 for out-of-state patients
    - Weekly cost of care: \$10 to \$12 for a suite with an exclusive personal attendant
  - Due to the Financial Panic of 1837, the patient population shifted to a larger number of poor mentally ill patients <sup>15</sup>
    - In 1868, the Connecticut Hospital for the Insane opened in Middletown <sup>16</sup>
    - Being the second mental institution in the State, the Middletown Hospital took in the state's impoverished and chronically ill mental health patients <sup>17</sup>
      - **Question:** How was race (specifically anti-Black racism) informing understanding of mental illness diagnosis and treatment?
      - **Question:** How was gender informing understanding of mental illness diagnosis and treatment?
      - **Question:** How can we hold room for the "progressive" approaches to treatment championed by the Hartford Retreat, while acknowledging the violent possibilities of sexist and anti-black practices that were absolutely occurring in these facilities?
  - The Hartford Retreat, thereafter, reverted to an upper-class, resort-like facility <sup>18</sup>
  - ***B. Women and Mental Health***
    - *Lunacy in 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Women's Admission to Asylums in United States of America* by Katherine Pouba and Ashley Tianen

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<sup>14</sup> The Record 2019. Institute of Living: A Division of Hartford Hospital. *Hartford Healthcare*. pp. 2. [https://hartfordhealthcare.org/File%20Library/Publications/Annual%20Reports/IOL-Annual-Report-2019.pdf?\\_ga=2.107883266.1222346514.1594242747-1733234655.1591972697](https://hartfordhealthcare.org/File%20Library/Publications/Annual%20Reports/IOL-Annual-Report-2019.pdf?_ga=2.107883266.1222346514.1594242747-1733234655.1591972697)

<sup>15</sup> Michael Sturges. Hartford Retreat for the Insane Advanced Improved Standards of Care. Connecticut History. 12 July 2014. <https://connecticuthistory.org/hartford-retreat-for-the-insane-advanced-improved-standards-of-care/>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

- Gives some interesting background on trends regarding how women were admitted, released, and diagnosed in 19th century mental health care facilities
  - Immigrant women were more likely to be admitted to care than American-born women <sup>19</sup>
  - Many women were involuntarily admitted from asylums and released on the terms of the men in their lives <sup>20</sup>
  - **Question:** What were the categories of “insane” diagnoses that existed while Frances was a patient at the Hartford Retreat?
  - **Question:** What can we assess from letters regarding Frances’ needs and the worries that family and friends express regarding her condition?
  - **Question:** How does sexism inform the attitude of family and friends regarding Frances’ needs and care?
- **C. Progressive Mental Health Care**
  - *Mad Yankees: The Hartford Retreat for the Insane and Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry* by Lawrence B. Goodheart <sup>21</sup>
    - Have not yet read, but is an extensive look into the care that came out of the Hartford Retreat for the Insane
    - Link: <https://chs.waldo.kohalibrary.com/app/work/16326>
  - “The Hartford Retreat for the Insane: An Early Example of the Use of Moral Treatment in America.” *Connecticut Medicine* 1997; 61:521-527.
    - [this citation added in later by HP when discovered by JG, post report completion]
    - Link: [https://www.unboundmedicine.com/medline/citation/9334506/The\\_Hartford\\_Retreat\\_for\\_the\\_Insane:\\_an\\_early\\_example\\_of\\_the\\_use\\_of\\_moral\\_treatment\\_in\\_America](https://www.unboundmedicine.com/medline/citation/9334506/The_Hartford_Retreat_for_the_Insane:_an_early_example_of_the_use_of_moral_treatment_in_America).

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<sup>19</sup> Katherine Pouba and Ashley Tianen. Lunacy in 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Women’s Admission to Asylums in United States of America. Oshkosh Scholar, Volume I, April 2006. p.102

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Lawrence B. Goodheart. *Mad Yankees: The Hartford Retreat for the Insane and Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 2003. <https://chs.waldo.kohalibrary.com/app/work/16326>