



## Guide to the Rebecca T. Nourse Collection, 1960-1993

### Administrative Information

**Title and Dates:**

Rebecca T. Nourse Collection, 1960-1993

**Repository:**

New Hampshire Historical Society  
30 Park Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
603-228-6688  
<http://www.nhhistory.org/>

**Collection Number:**

2019.054

**Author of Finding Aid:**

Sandra L. Wheeler

**Creator:**

Family of Rebecca T. Nourse

**Language:**

The materials in this collection are in English.

**Extent:**

1 box ; 0.21 linear feet

**Abstract:**

Rebecca Towne Nourse (1928-1993) was an intellectually disabled person who was institutionalized from 1949 to 1972, and then placed in a variety of community foster homes, group homes, sheltered workshops, etc. when people like her were moved out of residential institutions. The collection consists of correspondence to her parents and, later, her sister, from social workers and others responsible for her care first at Laconia State School in Laconia, NH, between 1960 and 1972, and then in a variety of placements around New Hampshire from 1972 to 1983. This collection illustrates the issues involved when people like Rebecca were moved from residential institutions to communities.

## Access and Use

### **Acquisition Information and Provenance:**

The Rebecca T. Nourse collection was the gift of Shelley Brooks, a relative, on July 5, 2018.

### **Processing Information:**

This collection was processed by Sandra L. Wheeler in October 2019. The finding aid was written by Sandra L. Wheeler in October 2019. This finding aid follows the standards set forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

### **Access Restrictions:**

Available for research.

### **Location:**

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

### **Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:**

This collection is on paper and has no special technical requirements for use.

### **Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:**

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

### **Preferred Citation:**

Item title, Rebecca T. Nourse Collection, 2019.054. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

## Collection Overview

### **Biographical Information:**

Rebecca Towne Nourse (1928-1993) was the second daughter of Laurence G. and Lucille A. (Pillsbury) Nourse, born in Massachusetts. Her father was an educator and Superintendent of Schools in Norton, MA. She was born intellectually disabled and was committed to the Belchertown State School in 1949, where she remained until 1961, when she was transferred to the Laconia (NH) State School. When that institution began to move residents to the community in the early 1970s, she was placed in a variety of living situations: foster homes, group homes, etc. Her last years are not documented in the collection, though her death certificate indicates that she died in Concord, NH, in 1993.

### **Collection Scope and Content Note:**

The Rebecca T. Nourse Collection contains correspondence between family members and officials of the Laconia State School, social workers, and others overseeing the care and placements for Rebecca Nourse. It illustrates the issues involved in de-institutionalization and the subsequent efforts to establish, fund, and supervise community resources for intellectually disabled people. Although nothing in the collection was produced by Rebecca herself, her

parents and sister wrote to those responsible for her care about their concerns. Those supervising her care in turn wrote her parents about Rebecca and how she was doing, as well as about their efforts to find safe accommodations and appropriate activities for her.

There is some financial information in the 1960s and 1970s about how Rebecca's care was paid for and what it cost. Folder 8 contains printed material regarding N.H. House Bill 298, "An Act to Limit the Period for which Past-Due Support of Institutional Inmates may be Recovered and the Rate of Support of Inmates at Laconia SS."

As noted above, there is nothing in this collection written by Rebecca herself, nor are there photographs. There is also no documentation of her early years, her eleven years at Belchertown (MA) State School (1949-1960), or her last years (1984-1993), outside of a 1993 death certificate. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst Special Collections and University Archives holds a Rebecca Towne Nourse Collection [call number MS 1023] which also contains materials related to her.

**Arrangement:**

The collection is arranged by genre (bills, correspondence, personal papers, printed matter) and then chronologically.

Contents List

**Box 1**

- Folder 1 Bills, receipts, 1961-1967
- Folder 2 Bills, receipts, 1973-1974, undated
- Folder 3 Correspondence, 1960-1969
- Folder 4 Correspondence, 1970-1975
- Folder 5 Correspondence, 1977-1984, undated
- Folder 6 Personal papers, 1973, 1993
- Folder 7 Printed matter, 1969, 1973, undated
- Folder 8 Printed matter, undated

Subject Terms

**People:**

- Nourse, Rebecca Towne, 1928-1993
- Nourse, Laurence, 1893-1973

**Organizations:**

- Guardianship Trust and Home Program, Inc.
- Laconia State School
- New Hampshire. Department of Health and Welfare

**Subjects:**

- Intellectual disability
- People with disabilities--Social aspects
- People with disabilities--Deinstitutionalization

**Locations:**

Concord, NH

Laconia, NH

Lebanon, NH

**Occupations:**

Social workers