

## Archives

The WWII experiences of Civilian Public Service workers in the field of mental health, led to an awareness of the lack of quality mental health services in the U.S. Kings View Hospital was one of the facilities established by Mennonite Mental Health Services to help address this concern. (Photo courtesy of Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies.)



# Archives Receives Kings View Records

by Kevin Enns-Rempel

The Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies recently took possession of roughly twelve linear feet of records from Kings View Behavioral Health System. The largest portion of the records are minutes from the Kings View Board of Directors and various organizational committees. Also included are a large quantity of photographs, and some other administrative records.

The Kings View story has its origins in the Civilian Public Service experience of World War II. During the war, approximately fifteen hundred Mennonite conscientious objectors served in mental hospitals to fulfill their obligations within the Civilian Public Service program. Many of these workers were shocked at the inadequate—and even inhumane—treatment and conditions of the patients. Out of their experience came a commitment to provide a more com-

passionate form of care for the mentally ill. Following the war, Mennonite Mental Health Services was formed under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee to accomplish that goal. In 1947 MMHS authorized the creation of three mental health facilities, one of which was to be located on the

was completed in 1951. The programs of Kings View expanded over the years, including the establishment of outpatient regional centers in small communities throughout central and northern California beginning in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1990 the original hospital facility was closed and

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West Coast. Appointed as administrator for the West Coast facility was Arthur Jost, who had served in the Utah State Hospital as a Civilian Public Service worker during the war.

In 1948 the committee purchased forty-three acres along the Kings River near Reedley. Construction of a thirty-two-bed facility, known as Kings View Homes,

sold. Today the Kings View headquarters are located in Fresno.

In receiving this collection of Kings View records, the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies will help to preserve the story of this important chapter in post-World War II Mennonite history, and in the history of private mental health care in Central California.