

## Sixty objectors sent to state hospital staff

This article from the Topeka Capital details the work done by sixty conscientious objectors at the Topeka State Hospital. As they had done during World War II, many conscientious objectors of the Mennonite and Jehovah's Witness faiths worked for the state or federal government in lieu of serving in the U.S. military.

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Topeka Capital, Oct. 24, 1952

### 60 Objectors Sent to State Hospital Staff

Will Serve as Aides  
In Psychiatric Work

BY ED CHAPIN  
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Sixty conscientious objectors have been assigned to work as psychiatric aides for two years at Topeka State Hospital "in lieu of" military service, Brig. Gen. Joe Nickell, director of Kansas Selective Service, said Thursday.

The conscientious objectors who have been assigned to the hospital are those whose religion prohibits bearing arms against other men, General Nickell said. Most of those at the hospital are of the Mennonite faith.

Lt. Col. Conway Yockey, selective service manpower director, said Thursday that there are approximately 500 conscientious objectors in Kansas at present, of which 90 per cent are Mennonites. All of them object to military service on the basis of their religion.

Colonel Conway said the Topeka State Hospital is the only state hospital which has been approved by the Selective Service Board for service by CO's in lieu of military induction. The state hospital at Larned has made inquiries about the program, he said.

The men at the Topeka hospital are paid a lower salary than other aides, Dr. John Anderson, superintendent of the hospital, said. They receive \$130 a month and

from this must pay all their living expenses. None live on the hospital grounds, and they must work at the hospital for the same length of time they would otherwise serve in the armed forces.

An acute shortage of male psychiatric aides has seriously threatened the hospital's treatment program recently, Dr. Anderson reported. The assignment of conscientious objectors to the hospital has partially relieved the situation, he explained.

"The shortage of male psychiatric aides has become increasingly acute during the past two years," Dr. Anderson said. "Under civil service, starting salary for aides is \$136 a month which is increased to \$173 after three months' training.

"Many aides, especially men, have left the hospital to take better paying jobs elsewhere. In some instances, especially in the men's wards, we have had only one aide on duty when there should have been three or four.

"In other cases, wards have been left with an aide at night," he continued. "We tried to use women aides in the men's wards but frequently two women were required to do the work of one male aide."

Dr. Anderson said that while there has been a steady flow of applications from women, many have not met the required qualifications. He pointed out that a number of Mennonites have worked at the hospital as aides in the past three years at a low rate of pay as part of their church program.

"They were dedicated people and did an excellent job as aides," he explained. "The conscientious objectors, with the same traditions, also will make excellent aides."

Dr. Anderson said the hospital still needs aides and is welcoming applications. At the same time he credited the assignment of the conscientious objectors to the hospital "as a life-saver for us and our patients."