

The Case of Belchertown State School: Becoming Hotel & Spa

From 1922 to 1992, Belchertown State School served developmentally disabled children in Western Massachusetts for 70 years. Consisting of about 50 buildings on a 845 acre campus, the facility was once rated to support over 700 residents, to which was exceeded in the 1920's. The fate of the hospital followed suit with many of the others in the United States... the overcrowding and poor living conditions were publicized and the institution was finally shut down after investigations. In 1971, an article called "The Tragedy of Belchertown" by Jim Shanks (Springfield Republican, what was then called the Springfield Union) started an investigation by a legislative commission, which led to a series of lawsuits and other legal actions, until the facility completely ceased operations in 1992...

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