

## BIRD S. COLER HOSPITAL

Bird S. Coler Hospital is named after New York City's first Comptroller and former Commissioner of Public Welfare. It is not an emergency or general care facility but, like Goldwater Memorial Hospital, offers primarily chronic and rehabilitative care. In fact, with 775 of its 1,025 beds used for long-term nursing, it is the largest such facility in New York City's public system, serving mostly the elderly and disabled.

The hospital was planned in the 1930s but construction was delayed by World War II until 1949. When it opened in 1952, its first patients were the bedridden inmates transferred from the just-closed Blackwell's Island Almshouse. (Able-bodied Almshouse inmates were transferred to a Staten Island facility.)



*Draper Hall, the main building of the Metropolitan Hospital School of Nursing, built in 1928, which stood where the main building of Coler Hospital now stands*

The complex consists of three buildings: two five-story patient wards each connected to one six-story administrative building, covering 14 acres total. Between 1952 and 1974, Coler Hospital, along with Goldwater Hospital, was one of only three operating island facilities. Coler and Goldwater merged in 1996 to share the same administrative and clinical staff. The patients of Coler-Goldwater Memorial Hospital, in wheelchairs and gurneys, mingle with island residents both casually and through numerous formal events. The biggest of these events is FDR Day, when island residents run games and athletic events for the physically challenged.

*To continue the tour, follow the white and green "Roosevelt Island Historical Walk" signs.*



### *Roosevelt Island Historical Walk*



*Bird S. Coler Hospital, 1999*



*These are two other Metropolitan Hospital buildings which stood on Coler Hospital's current site. Above is the cottage where the Metropolitan's superintendent resided. Left is the Infirmary Nurses Home, which housed hospital nurses before the Draper Hall facility was built.*