Document of the Month: Report of the Commissioners of the Lunatic Asylum, or Indiana Hospital for the Insane, to the General Assembly.

….”I will Speak in reference to the qualifications of a site, which may be enumerated as follows, viz: As regards healthiness, supply of water, elevation, proximity to the place of meeting of the Legislature, and to a large town, a central position in the State, the size and character of the farm, retirement, scenery, and as regards susceptibility of improvement in groves, gardens, & c.”

 - John Evans, June 22, 1845

This paragraph offers a historic look into the beginning of Indiana’s Mental Hospitals, particularly, the beginnings of Central State Hospital. This document is rich with statistical facts and features about causes of insanity (mental illness), occupations, nativity, and other facts that offer a picture of mental illness in Indiana in the early 19th century. For example, in 1853, among the top probable causes of insanity was *religious excitement and anxieties* and *constitutional* (a person’s physical make up). Other statistical tables include the number of patients admitted and released, marital status, diseases, patients’ ages, etc. These and other facts can provide clues and details into the history of Central State Hospital and its role in Indiana for Centuries. Older reports also contain statistical information, but are not as detailed as the early reports. The reports can be found in the Indiana Collection, I 362.2 IC, for the years 1845-1990.