



Photo by Christine McNamara

Susan Annah Currie is a former academic librarian, having worked for close to thirty years at Cornell University and SUNY Binghamton University Libraries. In 2009, she was chosen to be the director of the historic Tompkins County Public Library in Ithaca, New York.

MEMOIR / MISSISSIPPI / HEALTH AND SICKNESS

*A fascinating and personal history of children's public health in the US*

"The Preventorium presents a forgotten and unique aspect of Mississippi's and the nation's history: the institutionalization and caring for children in response to a plague. It is a vivid, compelling account of an extremely challenging and formative experience. Susan Annah Currie's own erudition and careful self-examination of memory and of history form a narrative that is remarkable in its precision and depth."

—Leslie Daniels  
Author of *Cleaning Nabokov's House*

"Susan Annah Currie's memoir provides an intimate view of the preventorium and its aftereffects that last a lifetime. It's a fascinating history and personal story, riveting in its depictions of surviving such an alienating experience. Utterly powerful and moving."

—Helena María Viramontes  
Author of *Their Dogs Came with Them*



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Cover photo of the author by Nell Branton Currie

*A Memoir*

# The Preventorium

Currie  
The Preventorium  
A Memoir  
UP

Susan Annah Currie  
Foreword by Cynthia A. Connolly

## The Preventorium

— A Memoir —

Opened on February 17, 1929, the Mississippi State Preventorium operated continuously until 1976. The Mississippi Preventorium, like similar hospitals throughout the country, was an institution for sickly, anemic, and underweight children. It was established on the grounds of the Mississippi State Tuberculosis Sanatorium in the early years of the twentieth century when tuberculosis was a dreaded disease worldwide. The name *preventorium* meant a place of preventing disease as there was a fear of sickly children contracting TB. The Mississippi Preventorium was one of the last, if not the very last, of these special hospitals for children.

Now closed, the preventorium housed over three thousand children, including author Susan Annah Currie. In this intimate memoir, Currie details her fifteen-month stay at the preventorium. From her arrival in May 1959 at six years old, Currie vividly explores the unique and isolating world that she and children across the country experienced. Her exacting routine, dictated by the nurses and doctors who now acted as her parents, erased the distinction between patients and created both a sense of community among the children and a deep sense of loneliness. While many of the records from the preventorium have been lost, Currie's memoir opens to readers a lost history largely forgotten. Told in evocative prose, *The Preventorium* explores Currie's personal trials, both in the hospital and in the echoes of her experiences into adulthood.