

NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS,
MARION BRANCH, BUILDING NO. 7
(Barracks)
(Ward Building)
1700 East 38th Street
Marion
Grant
Indiana

HABS IN-306-AD
IN-306-AD

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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ADDENDUM TO NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS – MARION BRANCH, BUILDING No. 7 (Barracks)

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Location: 1700 East 38th Street, Marion, Grant County, Indiana.
Building No. 7 faces west towards Flower Street and the rear of Building No. 60.
Building No. 7 is also southeast of the main entrance gate on 38th Street.

The coordinates for Building No. 7 are 40.311106 N, -85.632954 W. These coordinates were obtained in January 2012 and with it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Significance: Building No. 7 was constructed as a barracks for the Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) during 1895-96.

Description: Building No. 7 is a two-and-a-half story red brick Queen Anne institutional building with a symmetrical form and regularly spaced fenestration. It has a long five-part plan with a tall center pavilion connected to end pavilions by hyphens. It is approximately 218 feet long and 50 feet wide. Queen Anne decorative features include patterned brick in the upper section of the center pavilion gable, a corbelled arcature under the center pavilion cornice, and pairs of windows in the end pavilion gables with elliptical arch fanlights. The overall Victorian appearance is diminished by the loss of key features such as porches at the center entrance and wrapping around the end pavilions, chimneys, most of the original wood window sashes and a cupola (Figure 1). There are replacement aluminum window sashes on the first and second floors. The elaborate Queen Anne porches with decorative turned balustrades and spindle screens have been replaced by modest neoclassical porticos or surrounds at the doorways.

The original interior floor plan and finishes have been entirely altered. The original floor plan included a grouping of communal spaces and bathrooms in the center pavilion (later medical offices) and a transverse corridor leading to large open ward dormitories in each wing. These spaces were starting to be subdivided and the porches were removed by 1944 (Figure 2). A one-story kitchen addition was located at the southeast corner by this time. Starting in 1976, Building No. 7 and the three other Franklin Court barracks (Buildings No. 10, 11, & 18) were converted from open ward into four-bed semi-private rooms. Acoustic tile drop ceilings and built-in cabinets were installed to update the space here and the replacement windows were installed at this time. The four Franklin Court

buildings were linked by a one-story brick corridor with ramps designed in 1979.¹ The exterior elevator shaft was built on the west façade in 1981.

History: The NHDVS was a federal institution authorized by Congress in 1865 and charged with caring for Civil War veterans disabled by their military service. Founded in 1889 as the seventh NHDVS branch, the Marion Branch featured a picturesque campus of winding avenues and red brick Queen Anne buildings with wide porches and ornamental balustrades. Building No. 7 was built during 1895-96 and was one of seven barracks with matching Queen Anne designs. By 1930 the NHDVS system had eleven branches and became part of the new Veterans Administration.

The original Marion Branch buildings were designed by the Dayton, Ohio architectural firm of Peters and Burns. Building No. 7 is also attributed to this firm because it has the same Queen Anne design as six other barracks -- Buildings No. 2, 4, and 6 (built 1889-90), and Buildings No. 10, 11, and 12 (built 1896-98). Building No. 7 is one of four barracks grouped around a loose quadrangle called Franklin Court. By 1900 the Marion Branch had twelve large brick barracks including Building No. 7. In 1921, the Marion Branch became the Marion National Sanitarium, a facility dedicated to the treatment of World War I neuropsychiatric cases, including what was then called shell shock and other mental disorders. The emphasis throughout the NHDVS had been shifting from residential campuses to more sophisticated medical care for veterans. Building No. 7 was renovated at this time.

After 1930 the Marion Branch continued to specialize in psychiatric care as part of the Veterans Administration. In 1936, Building No. 7 was designated “Continued Treatment” with 72 beds. Building No. 7 was last used for a Geriatric-Psychiatric Nursing Unit after being remodeled into smaller four-bed rooms. The structure is now part of Marion Campus of the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System. Since vacated during the 1990s, Building No. 7 has fallen into disrepair and is slated for demolition.

Sources:

Board of Managers – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, *Annual Reports*, various years starting in 1867; many volumes include *Proceedings* of the Board of Managers meetings.

Hubbard, Nancy J. “Marion Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Historic District,” Grant County, Indiana. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1999. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

¹ Interconnecting Corridors, Buildings 7, 9, 10, 11, & 18, (20 August 1979) Anatoli Boschenko, Architect and Robert Wilson, Engineers. Drawings in Engineering Services files, Marion VAMC.

Inspector General. *Annual Report of Inspection - National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers*. Washington, DC: GPO, (annual – 1894-1925).

Marion Branch NHDVS – National Military Home, Indiana, c. 1916, Marion VAMC files.

Miller, Jerry. “VA’s Building 10 Gets a New Look,” *Marion Chronicle-Tribune*, 29 December 1976.

National Military Home Indiana. Wabash, IN: Press of the Plain Dealer, c. 1908, Marion VAMC files.

Typescript, Marion VA Hospital Inventory (29 April 1936), Marion and Grant County File, Marion Public Library.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, HABS Historian, 2011

Project

Information: Documentation of selected buildings at the former Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was undertaken in 2011 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs division of the National Park Service, Richard O’Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Kathleen Schamel, Federal Preservation Officer. Project development was coordinated by Catherine Lavoie, Chief, HABS and by Douglas Pulak, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, DVA. The field work was undertaken and the written histories were produced by Lisa P. Davidson and Virginia B. Price, HABS Historians. The large-format photography was undertaken by HABS Photographer Renee Bieretz; an initial photographic survey was completed by HABS Photographer James Rosenthal in 2008. Valuable assistance was provided by James A. Broyles, Project Engineer, Engineering Services, Marion Campus, VA Northern Indiana Health Care System.

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Illustrations:



Figure 1: Barrack No. 7, c. 1916

Source: Marion Branch NHDVS – National Military Home, Indiana, c. 1916, Marion VAMC files

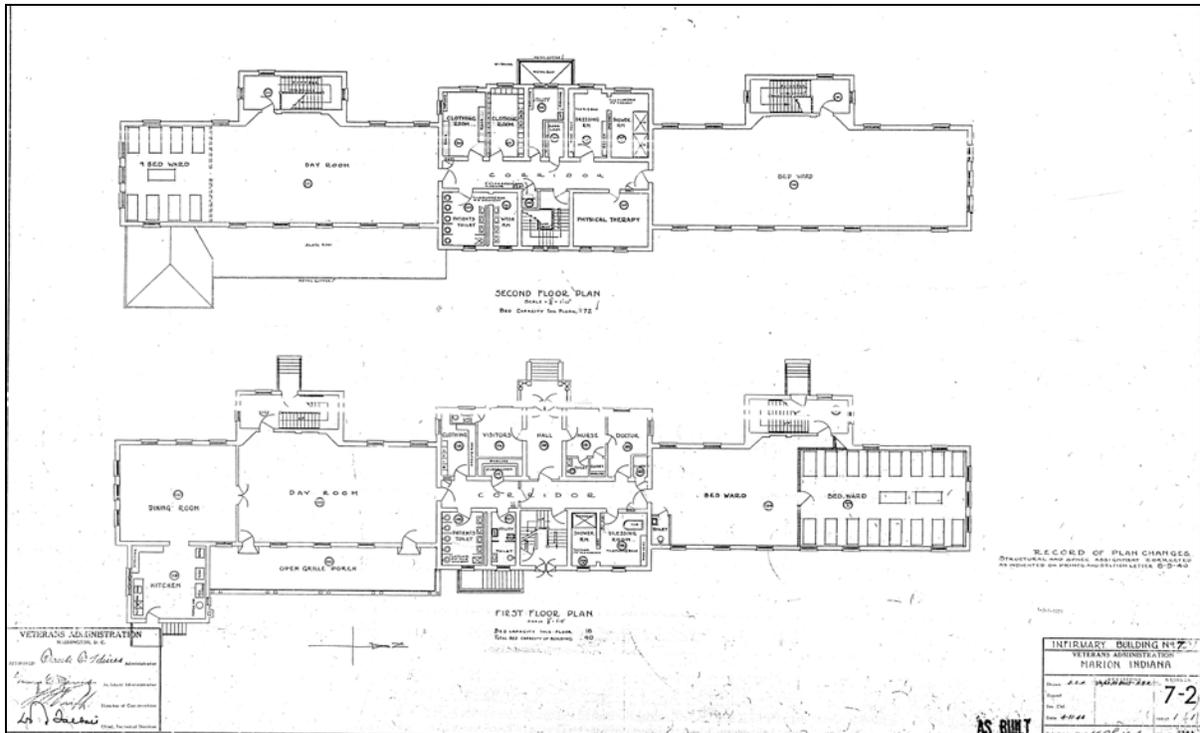


Figure 2: Building No. 7 Floor Plans, 11 April 1944, revised 16 July 1963

Source: PLIARS database, VACO