

NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS -
MARION BRANCH, BUILDING NO. 13
(Guard Barracks)
1700 East 38th Street
Marion
Grant County
Indiana

HABS IN-306-AK
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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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NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS – MARION BRANCH, BUILDING No. 13 (Guard Barracks)

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Location: 1700 East 38th Street, Marion, Grant County, Indiana.
Building No. 13 faces north with its west elevation along Mechanics Avenue.
Building No. 13 is also southeast of the main entrance gate on 38th Street.

The coordinates for Building No. 13 are 40.518567 N, -85.632805 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. 13 was built c. 1902 and used as a guard barracks and ward for the Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS).

Description: Building No. 13 is a two-and-a-half story red brick building with a shallow T-shaped footprint and a cross-hip roof. It originally had Queen Anne decorative features including a cupola, ornamental chimneys, and two-story side porches with elaborate balustrades and brackets (Figure 1). The overall Victorian appearance is diminished by the loss of these features, and brick infill in many of the window openings. Surviving historic features include hip roof dormers with original wood sash windows on the north and south roof slopes and a pressed metal box cornice with curved wood dentils in the eaves. There is a tall, narrow stairwell addition on the rear elevation built in 1973.

The interior was not accessible due to severe mold problems. In 1936 Building No. 13 was divided into 15 rooms. Floor plans drawn in 1938 and revised in 1963 show a center hall entrance on the north side of the first floor leading to the rear ell with four rooms around a short hall (Figure 2). In the main block the plan is arranged around a double-loaded cross hall leading to side entrances. The second floor was similar, except with large open rooms on the east side of both the main block and ell.

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. By 1930 the NHDVS system had eleven branches and became part of the new Veterans Administration.

The exact construction date and original purpose of Building No. 13 are unclear. Although listed in several inventories as built in 1899, annual and inspection reports around that year do not clearly list any new construction that could be this

building. A c. 1908 photograph (see Figure 1) and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps starting in January 1920 confirm that Building No. 13 was used as the guard barracks, or guard headquarters, during the early twentieth century. Inspection Reports for 1900 and 1901 both mention the need for a guard barracks. In 1902 the Inspection Report notes that a guard barrack was to be constructed, but this building is not included in lists of proposed or completed construction in Annual Reports around this time. A large “combination barracks” for elderly veterans was under construction during this period (now demolished) and there was frequent mention of labor troubles and strikes. Perhaps this circumstance led to an unusual construction arrangement for Building No. 13. The 1903 Inspection Report includes an off-hand reference to transfers between the regular barracks and guard barracks. By 1906, the Marion Branch is listed as having fourteen brick barracks; this count likely includes Building No. 13.¹

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. After 1930 the Marion Branch continued to specialize in psychiatric care as part of the Veterans Administration. In 1933, Building No. 13 was designated “Cottage 13” possibly for patient housing. In 1936, the building was used for employee quarters and in the process of renovation. Around 1960 it was designated the “Special Services Building.” Building No. 13 was renovated and used for Nursing Education and Medical Library during the 1980s. The renovations included interior upgrades and removal of historic porches and chimneys. The structure is now part of Marion Campus of the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System. In recent years, Building No. 13 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.

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

¹ Inspector-General’s Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1900), 55; *Inspection Report* (1901), 62; *Inspection Report* (1902), 65; *Inspection Report* (1903), 45; *Inspection Report* (1906), 42. While later inventories have unreliable construction dates, lists of buildings published in the *Annual Report* in 1911 seem to be quite accurate. It seems that Building No. 13 is listed as Barrack No. 14, with a construction date of 1902.

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.

Illustrations:

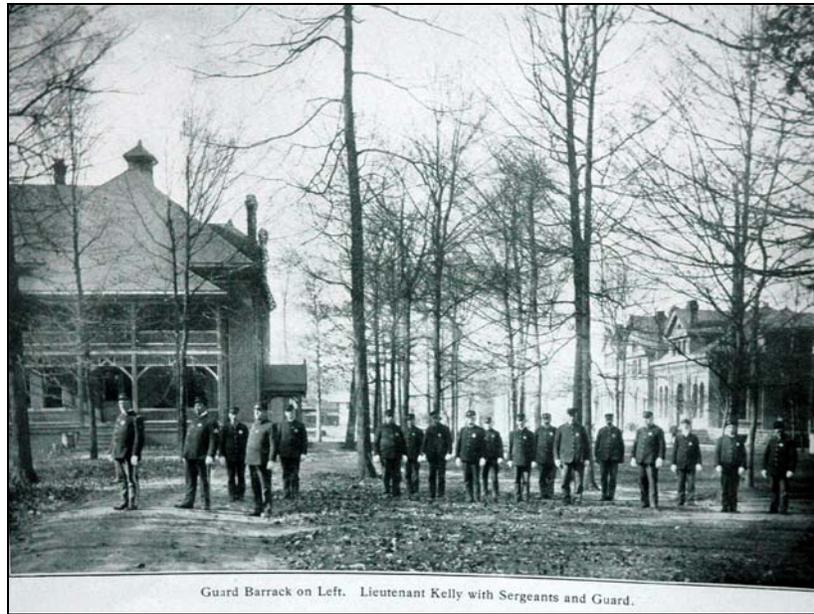


Figure 1: Guard Barrack, View from East, c. 1908
Source: *National Military Home Indiana*, c. 1908, Marion VAMC files

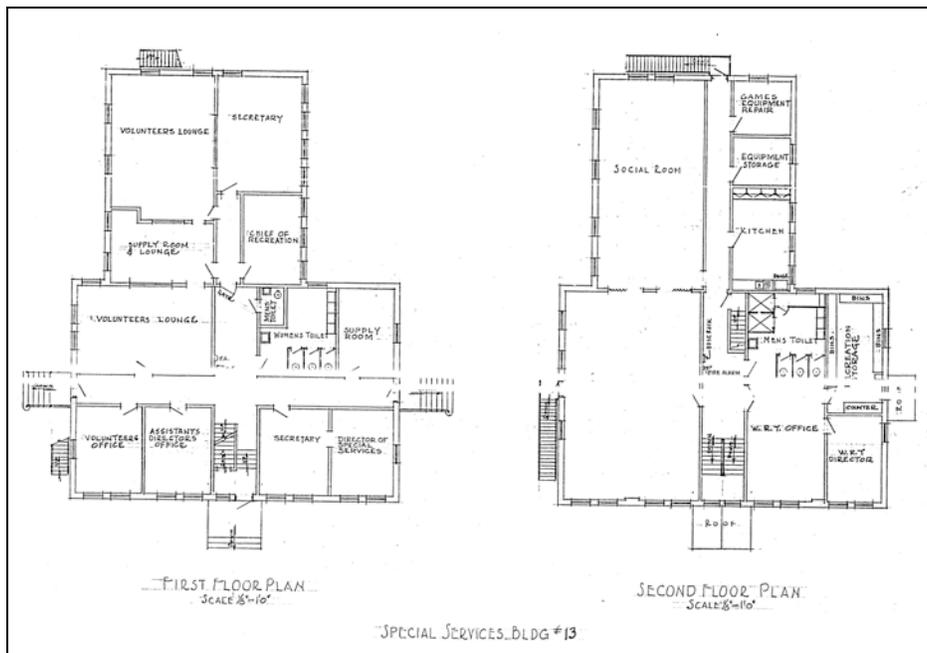


Figure 2: Plan of Building No. 13, Special Services Building,
(10 November 1938, last revised 27 July 1963)
Source: PLIARS database, VACO