

PERCY JONES HOSPITAL COMMANDER'S HEADQUARTERS  
(Little White House Child Care Center)  
100 West Washington Street  
Federal Center  
Battle Creek  
Calhoun County  
Michigan

HABS No. MI-412-A

HABS  
MICH  
13-BATER,  
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Great Lakes Systems Office  
1709 Jackson Street  
Omaha, NE 68102-2571

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
PERCY JONES HOSPITAL COMMANDER'S HEADQUARTERS  
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Location: 100 W. Washington Street (near the intersection of North Washington and Manchester streets), Federal Center, Battle Creek, Calhoun County, Michigan.

Significance: A highly visible part of the current Battle Creek Federal Center complex, this domestic structure is historically significant due to its association with the Battle Creek Sanitarium and the Percy Jones General Hospital.

Description: Built in 1909, this frame building is in good condition. It has been covered with white aluminum siding, and wood and metal trim. Windows are double-hung, and a large porch covers the entrance at the west side of the building. The major portion of the house is two stories in height, with a one-story wing on the north side. A porch shelters the entrance on the west facade.

History: The Battle Creek Sanitarium was founded as a health resort in 1876 by John Harvey Kellogg--renowned doctor, author and health reformer. From its beginning, the Battle Creek Sanitarium gained world-wide prominence in the field of health and medical service. The Sanitarium represented Dr. Kellogg's life work and the embodiment of his health philosophies, which placed emphasis on "biologic living," while developing new foods and methods of treatment for patients.

Dr. Kellogg's brother, philanthropist W.K. Kellogg, served as Director of the Sanitarium for many years. The kitchen of the old Sanitarium building served as a laboratory for the Kellogg's food experiments, which resulted in the development of breakfast cereals and the founding of the Kellogg food empire.

In 1903, the new buildings of the Sanitarium were designed according to the most advanced medical and technological specifications of the day. The 1909 house was originally one of about forty frame cottages on the Sanitarium property used to accommodate its overflow of patients. In 1928 the towers building and dining room were added to the Sanitarium. The completed structure, along with numerous ancillary buildings, represented the epitome of the health reform spa for the wealthy during that era. Many prominent persons received treatment at the Sanitarium, including President William Howard Taft, Henry Ford and Amelia Earhart.

The Sanitarium prospered until the Great Depression, at which time it was placed in receivership and closed. During World War II, the Sanitarium buildings were acquired by the Federal government, which converted the property into the Percy Jones General Hospital. The army operated the 1,500 bed hospital through both World War II and the Korean War, when it served as a center for amputations, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, fitting of artificial limbs, and rehabilitation. Over 78,000 patients were treated at the Percy Jones Hospital during the Army's tenure. It appears that the frame house was moved to its present site in 1942 for use as officers' quarters for the Percy Jones General Hospital.

Percy Jones Hospital was in operation until the fall of 1953, with the exception of a three month period in 1950. For about a year, the property was not occupied. In 1954, the entire complex--consisting of about 20 structures located on a 24-acre site--was designated the Battle Creek Federal Center and placed under the control of the General Services Administration for use by Federal Government agencies.

Since the property's 1954 designation as the Battle Creek Federal Center, the frame house has been occupied by various agency heads or personnel. In 1968 it became the home of the Defense Logistics Services Center's commanding officer. Slated for demolition in 1984, the house was saved by representatives from a local union of Federal Employees. The Little White House Child Care Center was established in the same year. The child care center has occupied the house since that time utilizing the space for both child care and administrative functions. Over the years the Little White House Child Care Center has fulfilled a great need for day care in the area and demand for day care service continues to grow.

Due to this significant growth, it has become necessary to construct a new facility that better accommodates the center's spatial and child care needs. A rehabilitation of and/or an addition to the 1909 structure would not sufficiently address the functional and economic requirements of the center. Unfortunately, as a result of the new facility's siting requirements, it is necessary to raze the frame house in order to effectively accommodate access, parking and playground needs of the new day care center on the existing site.

Sources: Richard C. Frank, AIA. *National Register of Historic Places nomination form for Federal Center--Main Building*. July 1974.

Hasbrouck Hunderman Architects. *Battle Creek Federal Center*, Historic Structures Report. November 1985.

*A Tour Through The Past and Present of the Battle Creek Federal Center*, 1987.

The following repositories were searched for historic photographs of Building 11 (former Commander's Headquarters). Unfortunately no records were found.

Photographic Collections, General Services Administration, Federal Center, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Michigan History Room, Willard Library, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Museum and Historical Collection, Battle Creek Adventist Hospital, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Historian: Jean L. Guarino, GSA Historic Preservation Specialist, 1997.