

NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS,  
MOUNTAIN BRANCH  
(Mountain Home Veterans Affairs Medical Center)  
Lamont & Veterans Way  
Johnson City  
Washington County  
Tennessee

HABS TN-254  
*TN-254*

PHOTOGRAPHS

PAPER COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

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

ADDENDUM TO:  
NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS,  
MOUNTAIN BRANCH  
(Mountain Home Veterans Affairs Medical Center)  
(James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center)  
Lamont Street & Veterans Way  
Johnson City  
Washington County  
Tennessee

HABS TN-254  
*HABS TN-254*

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

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## ADDENDUM TO

### NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH (Mountain Home Veterans Affairs Medical Center) (James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center)

HABS No. TN-254

**Location:** Lamont and Veterans Way, Johnson City, Washington County, Tennessee

The coordinates for the Mountain Home are 36.310645 N, -82.373224 W, and they were obtained through Google Earth in November 2011 with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

**Present Owner:** Department of Veterans Affairs, James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center

**Present Use:** Various buildings on the campus are still used for veterans' medical care and housing while other buildings are leased to the Quillen College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University for use as classrooms, offices, or clinical space.

**Significance:** The Mountain Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) was built between 1901 and 1905. The NHDVS was a federal institution authorized by Congress in 1865 and charged with caring for Civil War veterans disabled by their military service. By 1930 the system had eleven branches and became part of the new Veterans' Administration. The Mountain Branch was the ninth NHDVS branch and the most architecturally accomplished, although the level of design and site planning for all them is quite high. An architectural competition was held to choose the architect, the only time the Board of Managers adopted this approach. The winning design by New York architect Joseph H. Freedlander incorporated the latest ideas of comprehensive design and Neoclassicism as taught by the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in Paris. Freedlander created a hierarchy of communal buildings, barracks, and service functions arranged along a central avenue with picturesque grounds and views south to the nearby mountains.

As a federal facility, the Mountain Home is indicative of the interplay between political patronage in Washington, D.C. and the development of a local jurisdiction. Like all the NHDVS branches, a powerful politician was instrumental in influencing its location. Congressman Walter P. Brownlow of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tennessee Congressional District ably leveraged his

committee positions to bring about selection of his district for the newest Branch. Brownlow successfully emphasized the healthful climate and proximity to underserved veterans in Tennessee and other southern states. Although founded for Civil War veterans of the Union Army, the NHDVS membership had expanded over the decades to include U.S. Army veterans of the Mexican, Indian, and Spanish American Wars. Brownlow served as local manager and later on the NHDVS Board of Managers. Johnson City was a modest railroad town when the Mountain Branch was built, growing swiftly after its completion. Looking specifically at the construction process for the Mountain Branch, one can see the infusion of jobs for local firms and people, the need for local materials and supplies, and the economic growth brought in by visiting contractors, officials, and the Home members themselves.

Finally, Mountain Branch was built at a time of shifting emphasis from residential campuses to medical care for veterans. The importance of the hospitals at the NHDVS Branches had been growing throughout the late nineteenth century as medical care became more sophisticated. The Mountain Branch hospital was built first and planned as a key component in the complex. The needs of World War I veterans with lung diseases such as tuberculosis further pushed the shift to medical care as the most prominent aspect of veterans' services. From 1920-26, the Mountain Branch was redesignated the National Sanitarium, a facility dedicated to the rehabilitation of young veterans of the Great War who suffered from tuberculosis. In more recent years, the continued viability of the facility is largely due to expansion of the VA Medical Center and partnership with the Quillen College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University. Residential services are still provided, but medical care is a much larger proportion of the veterans' services offered here. Throughout its history, the Mountain Home has represented our national dedication to the care of veterans and their changing needs.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, Ph.D., HABS Staff Historian

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1901-05
2. Architect: J. H. Freedlander, New York, NY. Architect D. C. Spencer was the on-site representative for the firm during construction.
3. Original and subsequent uses:
  - 1901-1920: NHDVS, Mountain Branch – residential campus with associated medical, recreation, and service structures.
  - 1920-1926: Mountain Home National Sanitarium – new medical support structures, greater emphasis on medical treatment of tuberculosis.
  - 1926-1930: NHDVS, Mountain Branch – return to more diverse veteran members.
  - 1930-1978: Veterans’ Administration medical and residential services
  - 1978-present: Modernization and expansion of hospital complex, partnership with Quillen College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University,
  - 1997: Name change in James H. Quillen VA Medical Center
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:
  - General Contractor –
  - Hospital group - J. E. Parrish, Lynchburg, VA
  - Mess Hall - I. L. Probst, New York
  - Library, Barracks (four unspecified), completing hospital - J. F. Unkefer
  - Septic system - E. B. Whitman, Williams & Whitman, New York
  
  - Sub-Contractors –
  - Excavation (Railroad siding and hospital) - T. J. Deane
  - Brickwork - S.A. Garland & Co. of Knoxville, \$150,000
  - Slating and tinwork - T. E. A. Sweet, of Bristol
  - Plastering (Barrack No. 1, Hospital group) - Mr. Kendell of Chicago
  - Plumbing and steam heating (Mess Hall and kitchen, hospital group) - Farrell Plumbing and Heating Co., Daniel Farrell, Atlanta
  - “Ironwork” – ventilation pipes in hospital group – Mr. Sweet
  - Mosaic floors and marble wainscot (hospital group bathrooms) – John Marconi
  - Slate, Tin deck, and galvanized dormers (Barracks No. 2) - Bosbury Bros. of Parkersburg, WV
  - Electric Light Fixtures (and installation) - Black & Boyd of New York
  - Hospital electric and hand elevators – Otis Elevator Co.
  - Electrical (hospital group) – Mr. Gaunt
5. Original plans and construction: J. H. Freedlander designed an expansive Beaux Arts campus of French Renaissance Revival buildings for the Mountain Branch. The buildings are arranged formally along three key axes. The main avenue is terminated on the west by the Administration Building and the east by the Hospital – the Mess Hall, and the most ornate “Brownlow” barracks

no. 1 and 2 are widely spaced along this route. A secondary axis to the north is lined by the power plant, chapel, theater and other support structures. The additional barracks are lined up behind the two ornate ones flanking the Mess Hall and connected by pathways. A perpendicular axis bisects the plan through the power plant, mess hall, band stand and down the hill to the main gate at the south. This formal geometry is overlaid with curving roadways down the hilly site, ornamental lakes and plantings. A grove of trees east of the Administration Building contains a less formal arrangement of wood-frame dwellings for officers' quarters. Although additional buildings have been constructed and others demolished over the years, the historic character of this plan is still evident.

6. Alterations and additions: Although many of the buildings have received modernized systems, new interior finishes, or replacement windows over the years, the substantial changes to the complex are contained to the cluster of modern buildings now adjacent to or adjoining the remaining section of the original hospital (Building No. 69 – Hospital Administration), and the large medical library and office building inserted between and attached to Barracks No. 1 and No. 4 (Building No. 119). Some service buildings have been lost, such as the powerhouse, and the grounds altered to accommodate more parking and remove one of the lakes. Like the other NHDVS branches, the Mountain Branch no longer has its original on site farm. These changes do not materially impact the preserved historic character of the original site plan and its French Renaissance Revival buildings.

#### B. Historical Context:

Montgomery Schuyler, the venerable critic for *The Architectural Record*, reviewed the design accomplishments of the latest branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) in an article entitled, “Fortunate Treatment of a Group of Institutional Buildings.” Schuyler was frankly amazed with the quality of the East Tennessee campus compared with his dim view of other similar institutions, stating “until the erection of the Home in Tennessee, just now in question, there was no Soldiers’ Home in the country worthy of much architectural consideration or having much claim to be noticed and illustrated in an ‘Architectural Record.’”<sup>1</sup> His assessment notes the political accomplishment of local Congressman W. P. Brownlow bringing a major federal institution to Johnson City, Tennessee, which only had a population of 4,000 at the time. The Mountain Branch featured over thirty masonry buildings arranged in a formal hierarchy around a central avenue and secondary axes. The architect, J. H. Freedlander of New York, created a design vocabulary that unified the more ornate French Renaissance Revival structures with plainer red brick cousins, most buildings sharing unusual bracketed eaves, mansard roofs, and symmetrical plans. Schuyler wrote:

Evidently the “lay-out” is as practical as it is architectural, and the plan, given the terrain, commends itself at a glance, and still more upon study. The architecture invariably has dignity and solidity. The particular architectural expression is distinctly enough exotic; and this exotic character, which is losing its strangeness,

---

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery Schuyler, “Fortunate Treatment of a Group of Institutional Buildings: The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers,” *Architectural Record* 30, no. 2 (August 1911): 138.

under the evangelization of the Beaux Arts, in the great cities, is especially striking among these mountains. It seems almost to have been adopted with the special view of astonishing the natives. True, any developed architecture would astonish the natives, but there are architectural expressions which would seem less incongruous with the environment than this.<sup>2</sup>

Although Schuyler reveals his urban biases with that last remark, the presence of a complete Beaux Arts complex on the outskirts of a small Tennessee railroad town was quite remarkable.

The National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (renamed National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in 1873) was established by an Act of Congress signed by President Lincoln in March 1865. Federal officials recognized the growing need to care for Union soldiers injured during their Civil War service and subsequently unable to support themselves. This unprecedented federal effort paralleled many state and local initiatives to care for disabled soldiers as the wounded filtered back North after years of fighting. The initial legislation did not specify where the Asylums would be located, but the general understanding was that several sites in different parts of the northern states would be needed. By 1930 when the National Homes were incorporated into the new Veterans Administration, the system had grown to include veterans of multiple conflicts cared for at eleven campuses located around the country.

The historic National Home sites are still part of the vast system of hospitals and other veterans' benefits managed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (the Veterans' Administration was converted into a cabinet-level agency in 1989). There was a long history of Federal pensions and other financial support for disabled veterans, dating back to a 1776 law enacted by the Continental Congress. In 1833 the Bureau of Pensions was created by Congress, thus inaugurating the first federal veterans' benefit bureaucracy. The Civil War would greatly increase the number of veterans and the size of the federal veterans' pension system. Perhaps the most direct stepping stone to the establishment of the National Asylums was the 1862 General Pension Law. Congress established pensions for veterans disabled by injury or diseases during their service. By allowing for disease-related military disability for the first time, Congress greatly expanded the pension system. Historian Patrick Kelly has analyzed the unprecedented the scope of the National Asylums and the veterans' benefits bureaucracy in the nineteenth century as representing a unique social welfare intervention of the federal government in an otherwise laissez-faire era.<sup>3</sup>

The Mountain Branch, the ninth expansion of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, was built between 1901 and 1905. As the first twentieth-century expansion of a peculiarly nineteenth-century institution, the Mountain Branch offers an interesting case study through which to examine several themes. Although all of the National Home branches were built with careful attention to fashionable, attractive architectural design and comprehensive site planning, despite Schuyler's assessment, the Mountain Branch was the most architecturally

---

<sup>2</sup> Schuyler, 145.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Kelly, *Creating a National Home: Building the Veterans' Welfare State, 1860-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2-4, 18. Kelly relates the unusual benefits of "martial citizenship" to the patronage traditions of the late nineteenth century.

accomplished and the only one to receive attention from the architectural press. Schuyler acknowledges the cost limitations and “contradictions” inherent in creating such a campus, but still gives it high praise:

... it should be said with emphasis ... that the buildings, utilitarian and monumental alike, are unmistakably competent and scholarly examples of their respective kinds, and the most architecturally noteworthy of our Soldiers’ Homes is as interesting in detail as it is successful in its general scheme.<sup>4</sup>

An architectural competition was held to choose the architect for this ninth branch, the only time the Board of Managers adopted this approach. Freedlander’s winning Beaux Arts design, as noted by Schuyler, was a unique example of modern Neoclassicism in a largely rural setting. The architect’s comprehensive approach created a collection of complementary buildings within a formal and functional site plan.

As a federal facility, the Mountain Branch was indicative of the interplay between political patronage in Washington, D.C. and the development of a local jurisdiction. Like all the NHDVS branches, a powerful politician was instrumental in influencing its location. Congressman W. P. Brownlow ably leveraged his committee positions to bring about selection of his district for the newest Branch. Brownlow successfully emphasized the healthful climate and proximity to underserved veterans in Tennessee and other southern states. Although founded for Civil War veterans of the Union Army, the NHDVS membership had expanded over the decades to include veterans of the Mexican, Indian, and Spanish American Wars, and regulars in addition to volunteers. Brownlow served as local manager and later on the NHDVS Board of Managers. Johnson City was a modest railroad town when the Mountain Branch was built, but by 1920 the population had nearly tripled. Looking specifically at the construction process for the Mountain Branch, one can see the infusion of jobs for local firms and people, the need for local materials and supplies, and the economic growth brought in by visiting contractors, officials, and the Home members themselves.

Finally, the Mountain Branch was built at a time of shifting emphasis from residential campuses for veterans to medical care. The importance of the hospital within the NHDVS Branches had been growing throughout the late nineteenth century as medical treatment became more sophisticated. The Mountain Branch hospital was built first and planned as a key component in the complex. The needs of World War I veterans with lung diseases such as tuberculosis further pushed the shift to medical care as the most prominent aspect of veterans’ services. From 1920-26, the Mountain Branch was redesignated the National Sanitarium, a facility dedicated to the rehabilitation of young veterans of the Great War who suffered from tuberculosis. In more recent years, the continued viability of the facility is largely due to expansion of the VA Medical Center and partnership with the East Tennessee State University College of Medicine. Residential services are still provided, but medical care is a much larger proportion of the veterans’ services offered here and at most VA facilities. Throughout its

---

<sup>4</sup> Schuyler, 150.

history, the Mountain Home has represented our national dedication to the care of veterans and their changing needs.

### Federal Veterans' Benefits

There were a few, much smaller, federal institutions for disabled veterans that provided some precedent for the National Asylums – the U. S. Naval Asylum in Philadelphia, and the U.S. Soldiers' Home and the Government Hospital for the Insane, both in Washington, DC. The U.S. Naval Asylum for disabled and elderly regular Navy and Marine veterans was authorized first in 1811. Sufficient funds to complete a building in Philadelphia were finally authorized during the 1830s. The first purpose-built structure for the U.S. Naval Asylum was a Greek Revival central building designed by architect William Strickland. This multi-use building included living quarters, dining hall, reading and smoking areas, and a chapel.<sup>5</sup>

The U.S. Military Asylum, redesignated the U.S. Soldiers' Home in 1859, was created by Congress in 1851 after decades of debate. Many national leaders resisted the idea of a national military asylum as too similar to well-known monarchical military asylums such as France's Hotel des Invalides and England's Chelsea Hospital. It was the needs of Mexican-American War veterans that finally forced the issue. The Home was available to disabled and elderly regulars, or to volunteers with at least twenty years of service, who had contributed to its support through pay deductions. The Soldiers' Home administration structure of a board of commissioners, branch governors, secretaries and treasurers parallels the one established for the NHDVS. Initially planned with three branches, the Home was centralized in Washington, D.C. by the late 1850s because of low demand. The Home included a pre-existing Gothic Revival cottage used by President Lincoln as a summer home during 1862 to 1864, and three Gothic Revival/Italianate-inspired structures built between 1851 and 1857. The bucolic grounds on a rise three miles north of the Capitol featured winding paths, attractive plantings, and scenic views.<sup>6</sup>

The Government Hospital for the Insane, soon known as St. Elizabeths, was established by Congress in 1852. Architect Thomas U. Walter designed the main hospital and central administrative building. This institution was founded to care for regular members of the Army and Navy, and residents of Washington, DC suffering from mental illness. St. Elizabeths also featured a naturalistic landscape with attractive views of the capital city from the south. Concurrent with establishing the NDHVS system in 1866, Congress passed an Act allowing for the treatment of Union veterans diagnosed as insane within three years of service at St. Elizabeths. In 1882, a law was passed allowing the National Homes to transfer mentally ill residents to St. Elizabeths.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>A Second Empire hospital designed by John McArthur was added to the site in 1868. Suzanne Julin, "Mountain Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers," Washington County, Tennessee. National Historic Landmark Registration Form (draft), (2008), 23. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C..

<sup>6</sup>Kelly, 12; Judith Gladys Cetina, "A History of the Veterans' Homes in the United States, 1811-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1977), 50-53, 87; Julin, "Mountain Branch," 23.

<sup>7</sup>Julin, "Mountain Branch," 24-25.

None of these institutions would prove to be adequate to handle the demand resulting from the Civil War conflict. Of the three million men who fought in the Civil War, over seventy percent were U.S. soldiers, many of them volunteers. By the end of the war, nearly 282,000 Federal troops had survived a gunshot wound and nearly 30,000 had survived amputation of a body part.<sup>8</sup> The suffering of soldiers from wounds, disease, and psychological stress troubled many civilians who sought to help. Local efforts to provide meals, shelter, or medical care sprang up all around the country, many building on the philanthropy skills of upper class women. Many of the local groups came to be organized under the umbrella of the U. S. Sanitary Commission (USSC), established by order of President Lincoln in 1861. Creation of the USSC was spearheaded by New York City Unitarian minister Henry Bellows and other prominent men in the Northeast. Initially the Commission was charged with monitoring the medical care of Union troops and this mission gradually expanded to include coordinating volunteer efforts, inspecting army medical facilities, providing medical staff, and providing short-term housing and travel assistance for discharged men, among other initiatives.<sup>9</sup>

The USSC would be a major voice in the debate over how to help disabled veterans as the war drew to a close. At the heart of the issue was the question of whether a simple expansion of the pension system or a more complex federal institution was necessary. Many, including Bellows and the USSC, initially resisted the idea of a federal institution for veterans as demeaning, expensive, and un-American. Gradually even the USSC acknowledged that many disabled veterans would not have sufficient community or family help to live independently even with a pension. They conceived a model of three asylums in diverse geographic regions providing shelter, military discipline, and light work that would encourage independence and eventually return the soldiers to society. USSC did not have the funds to put this plan into action and their work was almost completely discontinued by early 1866. However, these ideas directly informed the creation of the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, in spite of the strong anti-institution stance of the USSC.<sup>10</sup>

As originally called for in the 1865 legislation, the National Asylum administrative structure numbered nearly 100 prominent citizens. The sentiment to help veterans and the recognition of their potential political power had resulted in swift passage of the bill without a workable administrative structure or clear direction on the best way to proceed. The Republican-controlled Congress, reacting to growing discontent with delays, amended the original act in April 1866 to create a more efficient and effective 12-member Board of Managers. The Board of Managers included the President of the United States, the Secretary of War, and the Chief Justice as ex officio members and nine men appointed by Congress. The political appointees were often veterans themselves. It was through their efforts that the Board of Managers fulfilled its charge

---

<sup>8</sup> Kelly, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Julin, "Mountain Branch," 26; Kelly, 21.

<sup>10</sup> Kelly, 23, 67; See Cetina, Chapter 3 for a discussion of the debate over institutional versus non-institutional care and the role of the USSC. Care of veterans by the NHDVS also included "outside relief" payments to veterans remaining in their own homes or residing a state-run soldiers' home.

of setting up branches of the NHDVS, conducting regular inspections, monitoring the organization's finances, and reporting to Congress.<sup>11</sup>

Benjamin F. Butler was elected president of the Board at its first meeting in May 1866 and held that position until 1880. Butler was a former Union Army general and controversial Republican politician from Massachusetts. He had the opportunity to exert a great influence on the development of the institution and its early branches in Maine, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Virginia.<sup>12</sup> The Eastern Branch was opened in Togus, Maine on November 10, 1866 to serve veterans in the Northeast. The first of the original branches, the Togus property was a former health resort that offered a number of buildings for immediate use. The Northwestern Branch in Milwaukee also was established in 1866, after negotiations with the Wisconsin Soldiers' Home Society transferred the money and property already acquired by that group to the federal effort. The Central Branch was located outside of Dayton, Ohio in 1867 to be accessible to a large number of veterans in the lower Midwest, western New York and Pennsylvania, and states to the south. The citizens of Dayton donated \$28,000 to the effort, again illustrating local desire to capture the benefits of having a federal facility.<sup>13</sup> The Southern Branch in Virginia was established in 1870 in order to have a branch in a warmer climate and one more convenient to African American veterans from the South. The property included preexisting buildings built for the Chesapeake Female College.

#### Expansion and Changing Philosophy, 1870s

Initially some thought the National Asylums would be temporary and cease to exist as the disabled soldiers were able to return to family or died off. However given the level of investment and effort put into early design and construction for the National Asylums, it seems unlikely that the Board of Managers ever really expected the need for their services to go away. A name change in 1873 from National Asylum to National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers officially acknowledged the long term resident status of most veterans as well as achieving the semantic change long sought by the Board. In 1874, Benjamin Butler wrote of his surprise that the demand for accommodations was continuing to grow, given the history of low enrollment at the regular Army Soldiers' Home in Washington, D.C..<sup>14</sup>

A quasi-military system of drills and inspections sought to maintain discipline among the ranks and the fact that the administrators were also officers added to a hierarchy of authority and procedure.<sup>15</sup> Residents of the home were required to wear a uniform, observe curfews, submit to inspections, and participate in work details if able. Infractions were punished by fines, loss of privileges, or expulsion. Governors, the lead administrator for each branch, stressed that strict military discipline was not expected but rules had to be enforced to ensure a healthful environment for all. Not surprisingly given the large number of men at a typical branch, the rules, particularly curfews and the prohibition on drunkenness, were frequently broken.

---

<sup>11</sup> Kelly, 47-48, 54.

<sup>12</sup> For more on Butler's colorful career and controversial reputation, see Kelly, 83-84.

<sup>13</sup> Julin, "Mountain Branch," 28.

<sup>14</sup> Kelly, 124.

<sup>15</sup> Kelly, 141-48.

The demand for the National Homes continued to grow as the Civil War veterans aged and Congress broadened admission requirements. In 1884 there was a major expansion of the eligibility requirements for the NHDVS branches. Previously proof had to be provided that one's disability was a direct result of military service. Now any honorably discharged Union veteran was eligible for admission, as well as veterans of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. As previously self-sufficient veterans became disabled due to various causes, including the long term effects of their military service or simply old age, the demand for Soldiers' Home admission grew rapidly.<sup>16</sup>

Previously reluctant to expand, the Board of Managers now moved rapidly to establish the Western Branch in Leavenworth, Kansas in 1884, the Pacific Branch in Santa Monica, California in 1887, the Marion, Indiana Branch in 1889, and the Danville, Illinois Branch in 1897. They also authorized a variety of new construction at the existing branches. The events leading to the establishment of a ninth branch in Tennessee followed the typical pattern of initial reluctance to expand, followed by a realization of growing demand and overcrowding in the existing branches, and then location selection guided by the influence of an ambitious member of Congress. In this instance the Spanish American War, beginning in April 1898 with conflicts in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, created a new population of wartime veterans requiring assistance. The Inspector General's report for 1900 raised the question of newly eligible Spanish American War veterans, with the comment that disability rules would be strictly enforced on these younger men. However demand for NHDVS membership still increased.<sup>17</sup>

### Creating the Mountain Branch

Republican Congressman Walter P. Brownlow (1851-1910) was raised in Jonesboro, Tennessee. His formal education was limited to three years, mainly due to his father's death when he was ten years old. Brownlow worked in a number of trades before entering politics – tinner, locomotive engineer, and newspaper reporter. It was newspaper work that brought the young Brownlow to politics. His uncle William G. "Parson" Brownlow was Governor of Tennessee and editor of the *Knoxville Whig & Chronicle*, although reportedly the elder Brownlow refused to give his nephew any assistance. W. P. Brownlow began working as a reporter in 1876. Starting in the 1880s he served in various capacities for the Republican Party, such as delegate to the Republican National Convention, and member and chair of the state and national Committees. He also served as doorkeeper for the 47<sup>th</sup> U. S. Congress in 1881 and postmaster of Jonesboro. Brownlow was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives to represent the First Congressional District, Tennessee in 1896 and reelected every two years until his death in 1910. While the Mountain Branch was his biggest triumph, Brownlow also successfully brought other federal projects to his district. These included a federal building and

---

<sup>16</sup> Kelly 128; Cetina 171, 167. Disabled veterans of the Mexican War and War of 1812 were first eligible in 1871, but there was some confusion regarding how to interpret the law requiring proof of service-related disability.

<sup>17</sup> Inspector-General's Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1900), 7.

National Cemetery in Greenville, federal buildings in Bristol and Johnson City, and a fish hatchery in Erwin.<sup>18</sup>

The *Johnson City Comet* reported Congressman Brownlow's efforts to have a new NHDVS Branch located in East Tennessee in late February 1900. The article describes Brownlow's argument that loyal Southerners, both the high number of Tennessee residents who fought for the Union during the Civil War, and the veterans of subsequent conflicts, deserved a location closer to home. The writer felt that Brownlow had a strong bill that he would be able to successfully push through the Committee on Military Affairs, and the cost of construction and the funds brought by maintenance and the branch occupants would be a great boost to the local economy.<sup>19</sup> When Brownlow presented his bill to the Committee on Appropriations on February 13, 1900, he offered statistical evidence about the loyal military service of Southerners. During the Civil War, 311,579 Southerners, both black and white, served in the Union Army. Brownlow argued that not only did these men serve, but most served for extra long tours, since they could not return to their homes until the conflict was resolved. He also noted that one third of the Spanish-American War volunteers were from Southern states, as well as one third of the Provisional Army currently stationed in the Philippines, a total of over 70,000 men.<sup>20</sup> This argument was often repeated by the press and other commentators.

Historian Tom Lee points out that Brownlow was successfully tapping into cultural beliefs about East Tennessee loyalty that were more myth than fact. The Civil War years were difficult in the mountain South, with divided loyalties throughout the region. At the end of the nineteenth century, themes of sectional reconciliation came to the forefront. A growing tendency to view Appalachian residents as "contemporary ancestors," celebrated the persistence of a Revolutionary heritage in this remote region. The 1780 defeat of the British at the battle of King's Mountain was often cited as a defining moment in the defense of liberty still embodied by mountaineer descendants. According to Lee: "At each step in the mythologizing process, the image of Unionist East Tennessee served the purposes of myth by constructing a history that reinforced a sense of unity with northern audiences and northern capital while obfuscating the complexities and divisions within East Tennessee."<sup>21</sup> Brownlow expertly utilized the perception of East Tennessee loyalty to the political advantage of his district.

Brownlow spent most of 1900 lobbying for his proposal, which was finally signed by President William McKinley on January 28, 1901. Brownlow had enlisted the help of the

---

<sup>18</sup> *Souvenir Book, National Soldiers Home*, Johnson City, TN: Muse-Whitlock Co., Printers, c. 1913, located in PAM Organizations and Clubs, Folder 1-14, McClung Collection, East Tennessee History Center, Knoxville, TN [hereafter McClung Collection, ETHC]. See also Susan Kay Hartman, Thesis H255h "A History of Mountain Home," (Department of History, ETSU, December 1984), esp. 12-15. After Brownlow's death in 1910, he was buried at the center of the circle in the Mountain Branch National Cemetery. His grave, and that of his wife, is now marked by a tall granite obelisk. See also "Buried Beneath Flowers: Brownlow is at Rest," *Johnson City Comet*, 14 July 1910, 1.

<sup>19</sup> "East Tennessee's Claim for a Home – Strong Points for the Brownlow Bill," *Johnson City Comet*, 22 February 1900, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Excerpts reprinted in *Souvenir Book, National Soldiers Home*.

<sup>21</sup> Tom Lee, "The Lost Cause that Wasn't: East Tennessee and the Myth of Unionist Appalachia," in *Reconstructing Appalachia: The Civil War's Aftermath*, Andrew L. Slap, ed. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 314.

Johnson City Board of Trade to write to Grand Army of the Republic posts throughout the country seeking endorsements for his bill.<sup>22</sup> Newspaper accounts, in addition to reveling in the size of the associated appropriations, praised Brownlow's political skills. The *Knoxville Journal and Tribune* reported that the NHDVS Board of Managers initially refused to hear Brownlow's proposal, having just completed construction on the Danville, Illinois branch and already decided that any new homes would be built by the states. Supposedly when Brownlow was allowed to argue his case, they readily agreed to build a new national branch in Tennessee. The *Journal and Tribune* enthused: "It is not an exaggeration to say that it is the greatest thing that has been accomplished by any representative from the south since the war era."<sup>23</sup> Writing for the *Knoxville Journal and Tribune* shortly after construction was complete, Elbur Williams noted that over \$2 million was spent on construction, double the amount of any other Branch:

"Uncle Sam" has been most liberal with his funds on this the baby branch, and well he should, for here in the beautiful sunny East Tennessee, with climate unsurpassed, with water as helpful as medicine, surrounded by all that goes to make life joyous and happy, the "old guard" with only a few short fleeting years, at best, left, can find as much pleasure, comfort and surcease from care as anywhere on earth so far as physical surroundings are concerned. Then too these brave loyal thousands of East Tennesseans that stuck to the flag during the dark days deserved a branch home in their midst as a witness of Uncle Sam's gratitude, a monument to their bravery and devotion.<sup>24</sup>

Again we see the perception of east Tennessee loyalty justifying federal spending in the region. The *Johnson City Comet*, in addition to praising Brownlow's political skills, reported that the local Board of Trade would be organizing accommodations and entertainment for the upcoming Board of Managers visit. Anyone with suitable land to sell was encouraged to submit a proposal.<sup>25</sup> The Jonesboro Grand Army of the Republic Post passed a resolution to allow Brownlow, who was not a veteran, access to the services of the Mountain Branch in recognition of his accomplishment on behalf of veterans.<sup>26</sup>

The process of selecting a site for the new branch commenced in April 1901. The Board of Managers arrived to examine potential locations in Washington County, Tennessee. According to the *Johnson City Comet*, the selection came down to a site offered by the Carnegie Land Company or property owned primarily by members of the Lyle family. The Lyle property,

---

<sup>22</sup> "Without Brownlow's Devotion, Mountain Home Would Not Be," *Johnson City Press*, 25 September 2003, special insert "Mountain Home/100 Years," 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> "Johnson City Will Get Branch Soldiers' Home," *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 22 January 1901, 1. This article was reprinted in the *Johnson City Comet* on January 24, 1901. The story that Brownlow single-handedly convinced the Board of Managers is often repeated. See also Charles Edwards, *Souvenir Book: National Military Home, Tennessee* (Johnson City: Charles Edwards, 1909), located in the Mountain Branch vertical file, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN [hereafter Archives of Appalachia, ETSU].

<sup>24</sup> Elbur Williams, "Mountain Branch of the National Soldiers Home at Johnson City," *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 10 September 1905.

<sup>25</sup> "Spectator," "The Soldiers' Home," *Johnson City Comet*, 31 January 1901.

<sup>26</sup> "Soldiers' Home: What the Jonesboro Grand Army Post Thinks of It," *Johnson City Comet*, 14 February 1901, 1. Supposedly Brownlow ran away to join a federal cavalry unit at age 13, but was sent home.

located west of Johnson City's business district, was selected and purported to be approximately 400 acres of the best land in the county:

This land touches the Southern [Railroad] right-of-way on the south and rises gently to the north, forming a comparatively level plateau overlooking the city and surrounding country. The board of managers discovered this site while passing by on the train and fell in love with it, so to speak. They asked to be driven there, and when upon the ground their first impressions were more than realized, and from that time on they devoted a good portion of the time to looking up the advantages of this location as to water and drainage. . . . Col. Thos. E. Matson, a resident engineer, has been employed to survey the tract and has a corps now in the field platting the land and making a topographical survey.<sup>27</sup>

The Board of Managers formally voted to purchase the site on April 12<sup>th</sup> at a cost of \$22,044.50. The local authorities, with authorization from the Tennessee State Legislature, agreed to provide macadam roads from the city limits to the site, and allow use of the soon to be constructed sewerage system. In addition to the already mentioned advantages of the site, the local press praised its visibility to railroad passengers and the fact that it would “fix” the location of the business district in its present location. Brownlow denied he had influenced the choice, claiming he preferred the Carnegie site because it had more services already in place.<sup>28</sup>

Progress on construction was to move quickly – the founding legislation passed on January 28, 1901 promised that the site would be selected within three months and construction would begin within six months. With the first deadline met, the Board of Managers turned its efforts to preparing to break ground. The process of choosing J. H. Freedlander's scheme for the Mountain Home buildings is described as a competition between six architects. However details on this process are quite scarce. One possible model was the Tarsney Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1893 to allow private architects to compete for major federal projects previously handled entirely in-house by the Department of Treasury Supervising Architect's Office.<sup>29</sup> The NHDVS operated independently of this system by always hiring private sector architects, but apparently was influenced by the idea of a competition. It is likely that six architects were invited to submit proposals in a closed competition, although whether Freedlander and other architects begin preparing proposals before or after the site was chosen is not clear. A brief mention in the *Proceedings* for the Board of Managers meetings noted that on June 24, 1901 “the President of the Board, Colonel Steele, and General Brown were appointed a committee to consider and decide upon the most suitable plan for the grouping and location of the buildings at

---

<sup>27</sup> “Site Selected: Soldiers' Home Committee Finish Their Work and Depart,” *Johnson City Comet*, 18 April 1901.

<sup>28</sup> “Site Selected: Soldiers' Home Committee Finish Their Work and Depart,” *Johnson City Comet*, 18 April 1901; NHDVS Board of Managers, “Proceedings of the NHDVS Board of Managers,” (12 April 1901), *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1901* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), 345; NHDVS Board of Managers, “Letter from the President,” *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1901* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), 9.

<sup>29</sup> Due to the reluctance of the Supervising Architect, the Tarsney Act was not implemented until 1897 and repealed in 1912. Thirty-one buildings were designed under its provisions. See Antoinette J. Lee, *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Chapters 6 and 7.

the Mountain Branch.”<sup>30</sup> It seems as though this committee must have been considering at least presentation sketches from various architects.

The *New York Times* published an article on July 12, 1901 announcing the selection of Freedlander’s design from among “six contestants from all parts of the country”:

The announcement was made yesterday and after consultation with General John T. Richards of Maine, the Superintendent of Construction, Mr. Freedlander will proceed with the working drawings. Ground will be broken at once, and it is the firm belief that the institution will be ready for occupancy by New Year’s Day, 1904. . . . The principal buildings will be in the style of the French Renaissance.<sup>31</sup>

The article goes on to describe the arrangement of thirty-five brick and limestone buildings around a parade ground and avenue, including a grand triumphal arch entrance and twelve barracks arranged in a semi-ellipse with paths from each to the mess hall. While correct about brick and limestone French Renaissance buildings and a formal site plan with broad avenues, the rest of the description, from the arch to the arrangement of barracks, is inaccurate. The *Times* journalist must have been looking at a proposal drawing which was subsequently altered. A reproduction appears in *Harper’s Weekly* that seems to fit this layout and is perhaps the only surviving copy of Freedlander’s original scheme.<sup>32</sup> The grand entrance avenue leads from the south gate straight up the hill to a traditional parade ground in front of the Mess Hall. The parade ground has a large theater at one end and the greenhouses at the other. This scheme lacks the elegance and clarity of the subsequent layout and does not seem to be informed by the topography of the site.

Board of Managers President M. T. McMahon reported on the progress of the new branch at the conclusion of the fiscal year 1901, but says little about the architectural process. After noting the purchase of the 375 acre site, McMahon writes:

At the earliest possible moment plans were prepared and bids invited for the construction of the first group of buildings, namely, the hospital, consisting of an administration building, kitchen and mess hall, and four ward buildings connected by a covered corridor. A number of bids were received from various parts of the country, but it was found that the lowest bid was in excess of the available appropriation, and it was decided to build but two of the ward buildings at the present time. The contract was awarded to J. E. Parrish, of Lynchburg, Va., at a

---

<sup>30</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, “Proceedings of the NHDVS Board of Managers,” (24 June 1901), *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1901* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), 352.

<sup>31</sup> “For a New Soldiers’ Home,” *New York Times*, 12 July 1901. A short announcement also appeared in *Inland Architect and News Record*, which appears to get its information from the *New York Times*, including the incorrect report that the Branch would house Union and Confederate veterans. See “Mosaics,” *Inland Architect and News Record* 38, no. 1 (August 1901): 8.

<sup>32</sup> “The New National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, at Johnson City, Tennessee,” *Harper’s Weekly* 45, no. 2330 (17 August 1901): 817. This poor reproduction is the only copy of Freedlander’s original scheme the author has located.

cost of \$183,497 for the entire work of construction. In the meanwhile the clearing and grading of the grounds was proceeded with and other necessary work commenced.<sup>33</sup>

The initial appropriation for the Mountain Branch was \$250,000. McMahon recommended that a large, multi-year appropriation be made to cover the construction of the rest of the planned buildings without yearly funding delays. Apparently this system had worked well for construction of the Danville Branch, the most recent addition to the NHDVS.<sup>34</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas T. Knox with the Inspector-General's Office, visited the Mountain Branch site on November 13-14, 1901. Starting in 1894, the Inspector General was charged with completing an annual inspection of each NHDVS Branch and reporting his findings to Congress. These reports provide valuable information about the Branches, as often Knox or other inspectors expressed detailed opinions about architectural matters. Knox reports that little work has been on the site other than clearing brush, grading, and staking the building locations. He describes the "general plan [as] a very pleasing one, prepared by an architect (Mr. J. H. Freedlander) in New York."<sup>35</sup> He again mentions the "semi-ellipse" arrangement of the barracks, which seems to be a key aspect of Freedlander's original scheme that was changed into rows of parallel barracks. Knox also notes that specifications had been prepared for the hospital and construction proposals invited. The contract to Parrish for the partial construction of the hospital – to include the hospital administration building (Building No. 69), kitchen, and two wards – was entered into on November 19, 1901, shortly after Knox's inspection. It seems likely that Freedlander's firm was preparing the working drawings throughout the summer and fall of 1901 and still revising the site plan.<sup>36</sup>

On February 14, 1902, Congress approved another \$900,000 for construction of the Mountain Branch. Contracts for additional buildings followed throughout the year - two more hospital wards on March 8<sup>th</sup>; barracks number one and two and the power plant on April 24<sup>th</sup>; laundry building, quartermaster's storehouse, and morgue on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the mess hall with kitchen in October. During this period, contracts were also let for excavation, electric lighting and power, drainage and sewerage, water distribution, and steam distribution for heating. However it quickly became evident that more funds would be needed to complete the complex. The above mentioned contracts, plus architect's fees of five percent for drawings and supervising construction, land purchase and other site improvements brought the total liabilities and expenditures as of November 15, 1902 to \$1,012,196.77. This represented nearly the entire \$1,150,000 appropriation to date and more barracks, the chapel, theater, and other service buildings still needed to be constructed. The Board of Managers formally moved during their September 23, 1902 meeting to request \$650,000 more from Congress. They reasoned that the

---

<sup>33</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, "Letter from the President," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1901* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Inspector-General's Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1901), 105.

<sup>36</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, "Letter from the President," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1902* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1903), 9.

shortfall was due to “the unforeseen rise in the prices of all building material and labor.”<sup>37</sup> In President McMahon’s annual letter he explained the issue in more detail:

While the progress of the work of construction at this Branch has not been as rapid as might seem desirable, it is thought, when all of the conditions and circumstances are considered, that it has been fair. The winter of 1901-02 was an exceptionally severe one in eastern Tennessee, and it was found impracticable to make any progress on the group of hospital buildings – the only work for which contracts had been made – until spring.<sup>38</sup>

Given the circumstances, and the fact that the hospital could not be occupied until other buildings such as the power plant were complete, Parrish’s contract was extended to May 15, 1903. McMahon expressed the hope that some members could be received before the end of the current fiscal year in June 1903.

Lieutenant Colonel Knox returned to conduct another inspection of the Mountain Branch on September 8-9, 1902 and this time he was less pleased with the planned layout of the buildings. Knox again praised the natural advantage of the rolling grounds and atmosphere. He also recounted ongoing problems with establishing water and sewer service, due to shoddy work by the Johnson City Water Company and a local lawsuit between that company and a rival for establishing a city sewerage system. Knox reported that progress on the hospital group of buildings was up to the first floor, with one building up to the second floor. Progress was also observed on the two barracks. Knox generally criticized the height of the barracks as well as the wide spacing between buildings. He felt that these characteristics would be inhospitable to the infirm, in spite of elevator service in the barracks. He also objected to the distances between the barracks and other key structures. One senses that the aesthetic influence of the architect was not appreciated by the practical minded Knox, who took pains to note that “an architectural monument should not be built” if appropriations were insufficient for proper facilities. Knox continued with the criticism, “An impression prevails that this Branch is desired by the architect to be a monument to his skill and ability, and although the best architectural effect should be desired, the prime purpose of the Branch being a home for the old men should not be lost sight of.”<sup>39</sup>

Knox viewed Freedlander as responsible for the delays rather than weather or other problems mentioned by the Board of Managers: “It is understood that the architect has made only two visits to the Branch, and although he has a representative on the ground, it is thought that if he could spend more of his time at the Branch it would facilitate construction, remove doubtful questions which have now to be referred to him in New York, and enable some of the buildings to be permanently located, which have thus far been only located tentatively.”<sup>40</sup> Knox’s last comment about permanently locating buildings confirms that Freedlander’s original

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>39</sup> Inspector-General’s Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), 105.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 105-106.

site plan was changed during construction. He concludes his inspection report by writing: “It is proper to say that the impressions of distances and location of buildings were obtained from the plans which were shown to me at the time of the inspection, but later information is given me that these plans were only tentative and many changes of location have been approved. Just what they are I am unable to say. If the Branch is made compact it will prove convenient and desirable.”<sup>41</sup>

Knox had clearly become unhappy with the choice of Freedlander as architect. Perhaps this was due to Freedlander’s youth as well as his distant location in New York City; he was only thirty years old when his design for the Mountain Home was chosen. The *New York Times* characterized him as one of the younger architects in the city. Born in New York in 1870, Freedlander graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1889 and the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in Paris in 1895. This training was arguably the finest and most rigorous available in this era. Prior to designing the new Soldiers’ Home Branch, his designs were among the finalists for the New York Public Library and University of California, Stanford competitions. Completed projects at this time included the St. Louis Club in St. Louis, Missouri (competition, 1897), a villa in Elberon, New Jersey, and remodeling Greystone, the Yonkers home of nationally prominent politician Samuel J. Tilden.<sup>42</sup>

The precocious skill Freedlander demonstrates in his design for the Mountain Branch continued to develop throughout his long career. Although not very well known today, during the first half of the twentieth century he was a prominent member of New York architectural community with important commissions throughout the country. He was a president of both the Society of Beaux Arts Architects and the Allied Arts Federation, as well as a member of the Architectural League of New York and American Institute of Architects (becoming a Fellow of the AIA in 1926). Major New York projects included the Museum of the City of New York (competition, 1928), Importers and Traders National Bank (c. 1908), Harlem Hospital, and Bronx County Courthouse and Jail (1934). Outside of New York, in addition to the Soldiers’ Home, he was best known for new buildings at Saratoga Spa (1929), the Portland Auditorium in Oregon (competition, 1911), and the Perry Memorial at Put-in-Bay, Ohio (competition, 1912). At the time of his death in 1943 at the age of seventy-three, he had prepared plans for a new Appellate Courthouse on Park Avenue between 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>43</sup>

Freedlander’s Beaux Arts training made him skilled in the hierarchical arrangement of institutional complexes and the vocabulary of Neoclassicism. These qualities are evident in the Mountain Branch, as well as a creative design sensibility that adapts the formal qualities of Beaux Arts with Arts and Crafts details. The end result was a campus that complements its unusual mountain view setting in a manner impressive and grand, but not stiff or imposing. A

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>42</sup> “For a New Soldiers’ Home,” *New York Times*, 12 July 1901.

<sup>43</sup> “Obituary – J. H. Freedlander, An Architect, 73,” *New York Times*, 24 November 1943; “Joseph H. Freedlander,” entry in Henry F. Withey and Elise R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennesey & Ingalls, Inc. 1970), 221; “Joseph Henry Freedlander,” entry in *MacMillan Dictionary of Architects*, (New York: MacMillan, 1982), 114; “Joseph H. Freedlander,” *AIA Historical Directory of American Architects*, accessed online at <http://communities/aia.org>

writer for the *Architectural Review* offered a short opinion on Freedlander's design, focusing on images of the Mess Hall published in the *Brickbuilder* without text. The piece questions the practicality of the narrow tower entrance for the large numbers using the Mess Hall and prefers the architectural effect of the large east porch. However the tower is praised for its proportions, rich detailing, and composition that give it a "modern character that puts a new face on a venerable problem."<sup>44</sup> Similarly *Architectural Review* questions the "illogical" combination of wide bracketed eaves that bear no relation to the actual "flat" (or mansard) roofs on buildings throughout the complex, but concludes that the contradiction is justified by the good visual result. Indeed Freedlander's design for the eaves is unusual, but a key unifying characteristic between the most ornate buildings and their plainer counterparts.<sup>45</sup>

An article in Gustav Stickley's influential journal, *The Craftsman*, puts the imprint of the Arts and Crafts Movement on Freedlander's French Renaissance design. Here the author focuses on the success of the site plan:

One of the best examples in this country of a group of buildings planned as a whole with special reference to climate, surroundings and the relation of the buildings to each other, to the grounds and to the landscape, is the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, near Johnson City, Tennessee. True, this is a public institution, established at a cost of over a million dollars to serve a well-defined national purpose and governed as an institution, but the place itself is a well-nigh perfect illustration of a colony planned for co-operative living...<sup>46</sup>

The article includes a number of photographs of finished buildings, a birds-eye rendering of the hospital, and a site plan that includes a broad avenue straight from the south gate to the front of the Mess Hall. It is not clear whether this formal axis was ever built; it certainly would have been a prominent aspect of the plan, although somewhat diminished in effect by the steep change in grade. Interestingly, although Freedlander's use of French Renaissance architectural motifs is mentioned, the clearly ornate aspects of this design vocabulary are downplayed in this article. Instead the author continues with the comment that the buildings are "admirably adapted to the requirements of the climate and to the contour of the surrounding country."<sup>47</sup> The buildings are described as "very simply treated, with long, low forms, straight lines, and wide overhanging roofs." The wide porches and sun-rooms are praised as providing for "the greatest possible amount of sunshine and fresh air in all the buildings."

### Construction of the Mountain Branch

Freedlander made periodic visits to inspect the construction progress but his representative, architect D. C. Spencer, stayed in Johnson City for the duration of the project, providing daily supervision. Freedlander had a ten-room house built adjacent to the site for

---

<sup>44</sup> "Current Periodicals," *Architectural Review* 11 (June 1904): 170.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-171.

<sup>46</sup> "Soldiers' Home in Tennessee: A Noteworthy Example of a Group of Buildings Planned as a Whole," *The Craftsman* 11, no. 3 (December 1906): 348.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

Spencer, and provided the plumbing fixtures.<sup>48</sup> The local newspaper, the *Johnson City Comet*, praised Spencer's efforts, noting "he has condemned quite a lot of work, including a number of doors which were hung in the hospital group. He is a fine judge of work."<sup>49</sup> Construction of the Mountain Branch buildings took place throughout 1903 and 1904, with a partial opening in October 15, 1903. The editor of the *Rockwood Times* visited the site in July 1903 with a party of distinguished guests. He estimated that 3,000 laborers, mechanics, and contractors were employed there.<sup>50</sup> Additional obstacles had to be overcome to complete construction, such as default by contractor J. E. Parrish in August 1903, resulting in litigation and a change in builder. The sewerage system promised by Johnson City officials was not materializing in a timely manner, making it necessary to add large septic tanks to the construction projects. The New York firm of Williams & Whitman began building a 107,000 gallon septic system in August 1903.<sup>51</sup> In addition to these unanticipated expenses, continually rising material and labor costs were a cause for concern among the Board of Managers. Their 1903 report noted that additional appropriations would be necessary, since just over \$280,000 was left of the \$1.8 million already committed. In spite of these challenges, they still planned to have the hospital, barracks no. 1 and 2, the mess hall, storehouse, and laundry ready by January 1904.<sup>52</sup>

Contracting and construction of new buildings began while work on completing the first phases of construction proceeded. Bids were opened in August 18, 1903 for construction of the governor's residence and officers' quarters, a group of one brick and four wood frame dwellings clustered at the west end of the property behind the Administration Building (Building No. 52). This contract was awarded to a Knoxville firm. The *Johnson City Comet* gleefully reported that next would come additional staff residences, guard house, canteen, store, post office, theater, and others, resulting in many more years of construction work.<sup>53</sup> A few veterans arrived early to check out the progress and do construction jobs. By early October, the first few buildings were being connected to the central steam pipes and preparations for a limited opening were being rushed forward.<sup>54</sup> Staff members began arriving, in addition to Freedlander, accompanied by his wife. Freedlander conducted his first personal inspection in three months and was "agreeably surprised at the progress made."<sup>55</sup>

Congressman Brownlow also spent many days and nights at the site that month, urging the work forward. Electric lights, heat and water were functioning for two hospital wards and the hospital kitchen, meaning that the Branch was officially open for members, albeit on a limited basis.<sup>56</sup> As reported in the *Johnson City Comet*:

---

<sup>48</sup> Charles Cunningham, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 24 September 1903.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Cunningham, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 30 July 1903.

<sup>50</sup> Typescript of article "Brownlow's Soldiers Home," *The Rockwood Times*, July 1903, in Mountain Home Museum collection.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Cunningham, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 20 August 1903; and 3 September 1903.

<sup>52</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, "Letter from the President," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1903* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1904), 9.

<sup>53</sup> Charles Cunningham, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 13 August 1903; and 24 September 1903.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Cunningham, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 1 October 1903.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Cunningham, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 8 October 1903. See also 15 October 1903.

<sup>56</sup> "Progress At The Home," *Johnson City Comet*, 29 October 1903.

There are now 25 buildings under construction including the Hospital Group. With the canteen, combination barracks, nurse's cottage and stable there will be 29. ...W. P. Brownlow's little granddaughter turned on the current for the electric lights Thursday evening and three buildings were lighted up for the first time.<sup>57</sup>

Buildings under construction included the morgue, and Barracks no. 3, 4, 5, and 6. Brigadier-General George H. Burton from the Inspector General's Office arrived shortly after the ceremonial opening. He commented that the forty-three members housed in the partially completed hospital were getting in the workmen's way and subsequently the building would have to be renovated as soon as it was completed. The two so-called Brownlow barracks – the more ornate nos. 1 and 2 – were nearing completion, as well as the power house. Burton wrote, "the buildings at this Branch are very imposing in appearance, and the construction by the contractors gives evidence of good workmanship."<sup>58</sup> He praised the focused commitment of local manager Col. Brownlow and Branch Governor John B. Smith and their efforts to push construction as fast as possible.

For several months the open portions of the hospital were used "as barrack, storehouse, mess hall, kitchen, laundry, officers' quarters, and hospital proper."<sup>59</sup> Work continued sporadically throughout the winter of 1903-04, weather permitting. By May 1904, barracks no. 1 and the mess hall were nearly ready and brick work almost complete on all the buildings under contract. Site work was also underway such as grading the main avenue between the hospital and the administration building and preparing the grounds for grass and other plantings. While much work remained to be done, the Board of Managers felt the progress was sufficient to place the remaining supervision in the hands of Governor John P. Smith and an assistant, rather than their local construction representative General John T. Richards.<sup>60</sup> By June, the contractors had turned over several more buildings including barracks no. 1 and 2, laundry, quartermaster's storehouse, and the morgue. Construction was just beginning on the guard house, greenhouses, and chapel.<sup>61</sup> The mess hall and barracks no. 1 were furnished and put into use on July 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>62</sup> In his report for 1904, Governor Smith explains:

Work commenced on the park scheme in March, and much progress was made in grading and road building. Much remains to be done. ...From various causes construction has progressed slowly. The administration building, Carnegie Library, barracks 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, stable, propagating house, and officers' quarters are nearing completion.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Charles Cunningham, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 22 October 1903.

<sup>58</sup> Inspector-General's Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1903), 52.

<sup>59</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, "Mountain Branch Report," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1904* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1905), 199.

<sup>60</sup> E. D. Haynes, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 5 May 1904.

<sup>61</sup> E. D. Haynes, "Soldiers' Home Notes," *Johnson City Comet*, 23 June 1904.

<sup>62</sup> "Mountain Branch Report," *Annual Report 1904*, 199.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

Smith also notes that the refrigerating plant was ready for inspection, and guard barracks, gates and gate lodges had foundations laid. He credits Brownlow and three visits from Inspector General Col. Thomas Knox with assistance in “overcoming the difficulties incident to the newness of the Branch and the unfinished state of the buildings.”<sup>64</sup>

President McMahon of the Board of Managers noted in his 1904 *Annual Report* letter that only \$9,785.56 was left of the \$1.8 million construction appropriations.<sup>65</sup> He offered a progress report on the construction as well as an assessment of the purposes and design of the newest Branch:

This Branch is rapidly approaching completion. It has at present accommodations for 2,000 members, with complete systems of steam heating, electric lighting, cold storage, sewerage, and drainage. The following buildings are still under construction: Guard barrack, chapel, memorial hall, and nurses' cottage. When these buildings are finished the Branch will be completed as originally planned and provided for by Congressional appropriations.

This Branch of the Home having been more particularly provided for the veterans of the Spanish-American war and future wars in which the volunteer forces of the nation may be engaged, its construction has been of a more substantial and enduring character than that of other Branches. The architectural appearance of the building is creditable, and the complete equipment of the Branch in every feature renders it in all respects suitable for the purpose for which it was designed.<sup>66</sup>

The Spanish-American War, although much smaller in scope than the Civil War, was the first major conflict of a new expansionist foreign policy. The Managers of the NHDVS must have felt that their services would continue to be needed by new generations of soldiers.

McMahon also reflected on the status of membership at this partially finished Branch:

The unfinished character of the grounds and the many discomforts and annoyances incident to building operations have had, so far, the effect of discouraging to some extent applications for membership, either by transfer or original admission, the old soldiers preferring the quiet and undisturbed comfort afforded by the older and fully established Branches. It is thought, however, that when fully completed, the beauty of its location, its desirable climate, and complete equipment will make it a very popular Branch of the Home.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, “Letter from President,” *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1904* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1905), 9.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

A November 1904 inspection noted that the small group of Mountain Home members – 117 for a 2,000 person capacity facility – was a mix of Civil War veterans over the age of sixty, and Spanish/Philippine war veterans averaging early thirties in age.<sup>68</sup> The shifting demographics of the Home had already begun to reflect the wide differences in interests and needs between veterans of recent conflicts and the Civil War “old timers.” The challenges of serving these disparate constituencies would become more pronounced over time.

An anonymous editorial published in the *Johnson City Comet* that same month gives an interesting perspective on the Branch conditions and Governor Smith’s leadership at this time. The self-dubbed “old one” wrote that in spite of the “growlers and chronic fault finders,” “we consider ourselves blessed beyond measure to be installed in a home that is a veritable haven of rest and plentitude.”<sup>69</sup> He expected an influx of new members with the approach of winter, a common pattern for the various Branches as partially-employed veterans sought room and board during harsh weather and employment lulls. Governor Smith’s respectful leadership and attention to good care without wastefulness was given particular mention:

During the sauntering of the men about the reservation, looking at the improvements constantly going on, Governor Smith is frequently met, and all upon the approach, like true soldiers, raise the right hand in a military salute, in token of their respect. The salutation is reciprocated in kind, and in this way together with other pleasant recognitions, of which is nature is charmingly imbued, he has endeared himself to all those under his care.<sup>70</sup>

Governor Smith and the members would have had several construction projects still underway needing attention. Smith reported to the Board of Managers that during fiscal year 1905 (July 1, 1904 to June 30, 1905) the Administration Building, six barrack buildings, the chapel, governor’s residence and 4 officers’ quarters, ice plant and refrigerating system, greenhouses, and other support structures were completed.<sup>71</sup> The \$1.8 million appropriation was nearly exhausted by mid-1905, and only the Memorial Hall remained to be handed over by the contractors.<sup>72</sup> Also, landscaping was still underway and the books being acquired for the Carnegie Library. Colonel John L. Chamberlain from the Inspector-General’s Office visited from September 23 to 27, 1905. Like his counterpart Thomas Knox, Chamberlain was not impressed with the stylish architecture, stating that “everything is modern and most attractive; but, considering the amount expended, the capacity is small, and much appears to have been sacrificed to architectural effect.”<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Inspector-General’s Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1904), 66-67.

<sup>69</sup> B., “Soldiers’ Home Notes,” *Johnson City Comet*, 10 November 1904.

<sup>70</sup> B., “Soldiers’ Home Notes,” *Johnson City Comet*, 10 November 1904.

<sup>71</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, “Mountain Branch Report,” *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1905* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1906), 204.

<sup>72</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, “Letter from the President,” *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1905* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1906), 9.

<sup>73</sup> Inspector-General’s Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1905), 75.

The inspectors rarely mentioned specific contractors, but newspaper accounts give a partial picture of the variety of firms who contributed to creating the Mountain Home's "architectural effect." In addition to the ill-fated first contractor J. E. Parrish from Lynchburg, Virginia, skilled firms were brought in from many locations to assist with the construction. Mr. Kendell from Chicago led his team of expert plasterers in executing decorative elements in the Hospital administration building and barracks no. 1 and 2 while a John Marconi completed mosaic floors and marble wainscoting in the hospital. Other far flung experts were brought in for more prosaic work such as the Black & Boyd (New York) for the electric lighting, I. L. Probst (New York) as general contractor for the Mess Hall, Williams & Whitman (New York) for the septic system, and the Otis Elevator Company. Farrell Plumbing and Heating Co. of Atlanta installed the plumbing and steam heating pipes while exterior slate and tinwork were done by T. E. A. Sweet of nearby Bristol, and Bosbury Brothers of Parkersburg, West Virginia. Local companies provided the mess hall tables and other supplies, while presumably many of the laborers – skilled and unskilled - were local men.<sup>74</sup>

### The Completed Mountain Branch and Neighboring Johnson City

Unlike many earlier Branches of the NHDVS, which saw gradual expansion and additions to their physical plants, the Mountain Branch was constructed in one, multi-year construction campaign (Figure 1). The tradition of publishing souvenir books with views of the Branch continued here, with several issued in the years following its completion. With the buildings new and landscaping still young, the scale of the entire endeavor is striking (Figures 2 and 3). Nearly every structure is monumental and sprawling and when people appear in the photographs they are usually dwarfed by the architecture. The grounds are carefully landscaped and attractive.<sup>75</sup> A 1908 guidebook produced in Johnson City by Martin Brady offered a glowing description of the place:

Mountain Branch presents a very beautiful appearance, with its numerous buildings of varied artistic designs. Its smooth lawns and rolling meadows, its wild-woodland deep in umbrageous foliage, its broad winding avenues, its many miles of macadamized drive-ways, its clean streets and sidewalks bordered with artistic beds of flowers, ... is indeed a rare gem. All of this once seen is forever a joyous memory. The shouts and merry jest of pleasure seekers, all mingled within the sweet notes of the band floating over this grand picture, echoes back in unmistakable tones, the gratitude of a great Government to the survivors of many bloody battlefields.<sup>76</sup>

Brady's text describes Memorial Day observances, but even on a more ordinary basis the grounds of the Mountain Branch were an important part of the Johnson City community.

---

<sup>74</sup> These names were compiled from *Johnson City Comet* articles published between January 1902 and November 1904, accessed via microfilm at East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee.

<sup>75</sup> See Charles Edwards, *Souvenir Book: National Military Home, Tennessee* (Johnson City: Charles Edwards, 1909), Archives of Appalachia, ETSU; *Souvenir Book, National Soldiers Home*, c. 1913; Martin V. Brady, *Picturesque Mountain Branch National Soldiers' Home Tennessee*, (Johnson City: Martin V. Brady, 1908).

<sup>76</sup> Brady, n.p.

The construction of the Mountain Branch was accompanied by great local pride in the sprawling federal complex. The *Knoxville Journal & Tribune* celebrated “the finest home in all the land, being made prettier day by day under the control of Tennesseans.”<sup>77</sup> Local businesses such as the Appalachian Sanitarium for the Treatment of Nervous and Chronic Diseases, included images of the Home in their promotional material. This example also illustrates the ongoing advertising of the regional climate’s healthfulness. The Appalachian Sanitarium booklet reads:

East Tennessee is a land of fortunate combinations, and is noted both as a summer and as a winter resort. The altitude, the variations in its rolling surface, the rapidly-flowing streams, the mildness of its changes of weather, the purity of the air, the absolute freedom from malaria and chills – all these essential elements unite here and make this the choicest place for a sanitarium. The Committee of statesmen appointed by Congress, after long and careful examination, confirmed the above statements by selecting Johnson City, in preference to all other places, as the site for the Southern branch of the National Soldiers’ Home, and the Government is now spending some \$3 million in buildings and improvements at this place.<sup>78</sup>

It is doubtful the Appalachian Sanitarium – which offered x-ray treatments for cancer and goat lymph treatment for “nervous prostration” became a thriving business, in spite of its efforts to link to the Soldiers’ Home. However Johnson City in general experienced a surge of growth and boosterism inspired by the new federal facility.

The specific impact of the Mountain Branch on Johnson City coincided with a general demographic shift and growth of urban areas in Appalachia. Historian Tom Lee examines how Johnson City, Kingsport and Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia became the “chief manufacturing, wholesale, and retail centers” for the region including northeastern Tennessee, southwestern Virginia, and western North Carolina.<sup>79</sup> Johnson City had first been named Johnson’s Depot and functioned as a railroad water stop and transfer point. Expansion of the railroads during the late nineteenth century meant the increased movement of timber and coal from the mountains and the growth of valley towns linking the region to the national economy. Johnson City had a railroad-fueled speculative boom from the 1880s until the widespread financial collapse of 1893, but local business interests continued their promotional efforts and gradually rebuilt under the aegis of organizations like the Johnson City Commercial Club (replaced by Johnson City Chamber of Commerce in 1915). In 1900, Johnson City’s population was 4,645. This figure nearly doubled by 1910 (not including the nearly 2,000 Home members);

---

<sup>77</sup>Elbur Williams, “Mountain Branch of the National Soldiers Home at Johnson City,” *Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, 10 Sept 1905.

<sup>78</sup>“Appalachian Sanitarium for the Treatment of Nervous and Chronic Diseases,” Johnson City, 1904, located in Pamphlets - Health Care, Folder: 1-4, McClung Collection, ETHC.

<sup>79</sup>Tom Lee, *The Tennessee-Virginia Tri-Cities: Urbanization in Appalachia, 1900-1950* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 23.

by 1920 it was 12,442. The surge of growth brought by the Mountain Branch helped accelerate and focus a general trend, providing jobs and demand for local products and services.<sup>80</sup>

The role of the Soldiers' Home in Johnson City's expansion frequently appears in booster material. A 1909 publication produced by the Commercial Club touted the recent growth of Johnson City, numerous business opportunities, and fine climate. The author enthused, "on account of our wonderful climate, the Government has recently had built the finest Home for the Disabled Volunteer Soldiers of the Federal Army in the entire country. It is a noted fact that members of other homes, who are in poor health, are sent to this home to prolong their lives."<sup>81</sup> A photographic spread of the Mountain Branch buildings in the same publication included an enthusiastic description and frequent mentions of the interplay between Home and town:

Two years ago the National Government completed the Mountain Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers at a cost of over two million dollars. It is said to be the finest aggregation of buildings of their kind in the world. The grounds comprise more than 450 acres. 200 acres are devoted to farming, a beautiful tract of about fifty acres of prime forest is set aside for a zoological park, and the rest to the parking surrounding the buildings. Magnificent driveways encircle and intertwine the buildings, flower gardens and lake, while the interlying lawns in beautiful blue glass makes it indeed the most entrancing spot in the entire South. Thousands of people flock to this place throughout the week, for amusement and recreation, and excursion parties come to visit it from every section. A magnificent brass band furnishes daily and nightly concerts in the open air during the summer, and in the Opera House during the winter. Lying in front of and immediately south, is the magnificent range of the Buffalo Mountains, lending additional attraction to the already entrancing scene. The elevation is high and the view is exceedingly fine. A fine hotel, open to the public, is run on the premises, and if one so desires may spend their time there. Street cars make regular schedules of fifteen minutes going and coming, between the Home and the city.<sup>82</sup>

Streetcar service was established in 1903, linking the Mountain Branch to growing downtown Johnson City to the east. Convenient transportation encouraged members to visit local business and residents to visit the grounds, attend a band performance, or watch a traveling production in the branch theater. Johnson City did not have any of its own theaters until 1914, making access to that Branch amenity particularly attractive. Both special visits and routine interaction seem to have been common.

---

<sup>80</sup> Lee, *The Tennessee-Virginia Tri-Cities*, 92. For discussion of the economic development of Johnson City and the other Tri-Cities during the second half of the nineteenth century see Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>81</sup> J. O. Lewis, *Johnson City, Tennessee* (The Commercial Club, December 1909), reprint as *Johnson City: The Way We Were* (Johnson City: Overmountain Press, 1989), 13. For similar rhetoric, see also *Johnson City, Tennessee*, (Chamber of Commerce, 1915) in Special Collections, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.

<sup>82</sup> Lewis, 28.

Also prominent in the Commercial Club narrative is the role of federal largess in the growth of Johnson City and its environs. The author claims that the First Congressional District received \$6.5 million in federal appropriations between 1899 and 1909, more than any other district. In addition to W. P. Brownlow's achievement of bringing the Soldiers' Home to Johnson City, the new post office/federal building in Johnson City and the fish hatchery ten miles south are mentioned. Here the author is even more explicit about the financial rewards of hosting the Mountain Branch beyond the large amount spent on construction:

From the home a quarterly pension is disbursed, amounting to fifty thousand dollars, and on "pension day," ... members of the home flock the city's streets and crowd the stores, spending their money. This is a great source of revenue to the city, as it reaches nearly a quarter of a million dollars annually. In addition, the cost of maintaining this reservation is about \$300,000 every year.<sup>83</sup>

The approximately \$500,000 in annual spending from the Soldiers' Home was touted, along with the recent selection of Johnson City for a state Normal School campus (now East Tennessee State University) and the new C, C & O Railway, as reasons "Johnson City must grow, and it need never see another dull day, something it has not had for a period of more than five years."<sup>84</sup>

### World War I and the Growth of Veterans Health Care

In 1909, the Chief Surgeon of the NHDVS noted that as the Civil War veterans aged and died in increasing numbers, other younger veterans were taking their place. Many of these veterans suffered from tuberculosis, a vexing public health problem until the advent of antibiotics.<sup>85</sup> The Mountain Branch was intended to address this shift in veteran demographics but still needed additional facilities to meet demand. The next Branch established after the Mountain Branch was the Battle Mountain Sanitarium opened in 1907 near Hot Springs, South Dakota. Designating Battle Mountain a sanitarium indicated the growing emphasis on medical care by the NHDVS.<sup>86</sup> At the Mountain Branch a special tuberculosis annex was built on the grounds of the hospital during fiscal year 1911.<sup>87</sup> This building was a modest, wood frame structure, completely different than the grand architecture of the rest of the Branch. NHDVS members with tuberculosis were encouraged to enroll at either Mountain Branch or Battle Mountain Sanitarium to receive specialized care. The aging of the member population and the steady decrease of their numbers presented a particular challenge to the NHDVS. More costly

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>85</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, "Report of the Inspector-General and Chief Surgeon," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1909* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1910), 85-86. For a brief account of growing up at the Mountain Branch during its first twenty years, see Dorothy Hamill, "Memories of the Home," *Johnson City Press-Chronicle*, 29 November 1981.

<sup>86</sup> Suzanne Julin, "National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers – Assessment of Significance and National Historic Landmark Recommendations." (2008), 32-33. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C..

<sup>87</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, "Mountain Branch Report," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1911* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1912), 234.

medical care was needed, increasing per capita costs. Major W. H. Gordon noted in his 1912 *Inspection Report*:

The matter of larger appropriations for the maintenance of the medical department of the home, including special diet, and for increasing the facilities for the care of the very aged and convalescents, is recommended for consideration, in view of the fact that the time is now at hand when for the majority of its membership the home must be regarded as a hospital rather than a barrack, and a rapid increase in the number of members requiring medical care and assistance must be expected.<sup>88</sup>

This situation persisted and grew more urgent with the advent of World War I. Now rather than slowly becoming obsolete through age and deferred maintenance, the Homes would need to serve a new generation of disabled veterans, many with tuberculosis caused by trench warfare conditions. The new conflict would create unprecedented veteran demand for medical care.

The great influx of new veterans, many young men with acute medical or psychiatric conditions, tested the capacity of the entire federal veterans' benefits system. At this time the NHDVS and the Bureau of Pensions were the two federal entities serving veterans. In 1917 Congress passed an amendment to the War Risk Insurance Act that established vocational and medical benefits for those with service-related disabilities and a low-cost insurance system for the totally disabled veteran and his dependents. The Public Health Service and contract hospitals were enlisted to quickly expand capacity.<sup>89</sup> Within the NHDVS, World War service men were admitted via an Act of Congress on October 6, 1917. There was a growing realization that meeting new demands for more sophisticated medical care would require substantial reorganization. Colonel R. C. Humber addressed these issues in his Inspector-General report for 1919. In his view, the current "perfunctory and routine manner" of medical care in the NHDVS hospitals would not suffice to treat the ailments of the newer veterans:

In the past the patients cared for in the hospitals were generally those afflicted with the diseases of old age. These patients required a minimum of treatment and a maximum of care and nursing, a permanent cure being, of course, impossible. ... An entirely new condition is now confronted. With the new members from the late war will appear diseases and disabilities of every character and degree, requiring from the surgeons, professional ability and skill of the highest order.<sup>90</sup>

Changes in the needs of veteran patients were accompanied by major advances in medical treatment over the previous twenty years, including an increase in surgical treatment and other specialties.

---

<sup>88</sup> Inspector-General's Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1912), n.p.

<sup>89</sup> Julin, "NHDVS Assessment of Significance," 34-35.

<sup>90</sup> Inspector-General's Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1919), 11.

The need for specialized tuberculosis facilities was most pressing. Humber criticized the treatment of several hundred members with tuberculosis, mostly young World War veterans, scattered in various Branches. The need to place extra restrictions on the tubercular members as a precaution against spreading infections caused resentment and was loosely enforced in the generally open environment of the Home.

Afflicted members mingle at will with female employees on the reservation, other members of the home, and visit the near-by towns at will. It is, therefore, evident that these patients do not and cannot receive the desired treatment, nor can the proper degree of protection be afforded others.<sup>91</sup>

Humber recommended that a one or more separate “sanatoria branches” be created, “in order that these patients may receive proper and scientific treatment, and in order to provide for the large influx of patients which may be expected as a result of the recent war.”<sup>92</sup> The recommended tuberculosis sanatorium would have a healthful climate, easy railway access, on-site farm, and modern medical equipment, and a “staff of especially qualified tubercular, X-ray, and laboratory specialists.” Humber concluded that, “without this segregation the proper discipline cannot be enforced, hence the ideal therapeutic results are not possible. Every effort should be made to effect a cure, that these young men may be restored to useful citizenship.”<sup>93</sup>

The Board of Managers must have quickly recognized the fact that the Mountain Branch embodied most of Humber’s recommendations. Acknowledging the failings of the current decentralized system and faced with a large increase in tubercular members, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution in 1919 to convert the Mountain Branch into a tuberculosis sanitarium.<sup>94</sup> Authorization to proceed with the conversion was granted in September 1920. A committee of consultants, along with NHDVS officials such as Chief Surgeon James A. Mattison, surveyed the Branch to recommend tuberculosis sanatorium alterations. The changes cost \$750,000 and included converting six barracks into “pavilions” with two-story sleeping porch ells added at the rear. Partially and fully-bed ridden patients were housed in the hospital and African American patients segregated in the wood frame tuberculosis annex built in 1911. These alterations and improvements created a 1,100-bed tuberculosis hospital. The changes were largely complete by March 1921 and all other members were moved to the Southern Branch in Hampton, Virginia. To accommodate the new medical staff, four duplex houses for Assistant Surgeons were constructed to the north of the greenhouses near the main gate and hospital beginning in early 1921.<sup>95</sup> In addition, planning began for new \$100,000 laboratory facility and a \$50,000 isolation ward. The NHDVS also received appropriations on June 27,

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, “Letter from the President,” *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1919* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1920), 6.

<sup>95</sup> Lester Harris Post No. 98, American Legion, *The National Sanatorium* (Lester Harris Post No. 98, c. 1922), 21. This interesting publication, located in Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is a guidebook produced by the American Legion post established at the Mountain Branch by young World War I veterans. It includes numerous photographs and information about operation as a National Sanatorium.

1921 to build dedicated tuberculosis hospitals at the Northwestern (Milwaukee), Central (Dayton), and Marion Branches.<sup>96</sup>

Meanwhile Congress directed the Treasury Department, in its capacity to design and build federal structures, to establish additional facilities for the NHDVS. Immediately there was concern about inefficiency and duplication of effort, so the Veterans' Bureau was established to oversee the various laws pertaining to World War I veterans.<sup>97</sup> The Treasury Department also commissioned a group of consultants, led by tuberculosis authority Dr. William Charles White, to analyze the various federal hospital systems and make recommendations. Dubbed the "White Committee," this small group of mainly private sector doctors was charged with looking at the Federal hospitals in a holistic manner – including Treasury Department (Public Health Service, Office of the Supervising Architect, and Bureau of War Risk Insurance), Army, Navy, Department of the Interior, and NHDVS. They were to assess current capacity, present and future demand, and the best means of expansion to meet this demand. Their report acknowledged that the National Homes would provide a capacity for and experience with domiciliary (or live-in) care that would be important going forward. It also made specific hospital expansion recommendations, adding tuberculosis hospitals to the Battle Mountain, SD and Western (Leavenworth, KS) Branches.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately this report recommended expansion of the NHDVS, but also a new emphasis on outpatient care that deemphasized the institutional model of the NHDVS. The study seems to have planted the seed for the modern Veterans' Medical Center system and the disbanding of the older NHDVS and Pension Bureaus in favor of a new federal entity, the Veterans' Administration.

The NHDVS continued to manage the Johnson City facility, with the hospital under the supervision of a medical director. Any veteran with appropriate disabilities was eligible, but in practice most of the patients were World War servicemen, as described by Dr. W.C. Klotz, Medical Director:

...as a result of the influenza epidemic, pneumonia and other chest conditions, not to mention gas warfare, the number of these invalided has been far greater in connection with the World War than any previous one....The National Sanatorium offers all the advantages of suitable buildings, adequate equipment, beautiful location and surroundings, a favorable climate, together with its trained and skillful medical and nursing staff.<sup>99</sup>

New facilities included an enlarged surgical suite, recovery rooms, cystoscopy rooms, an eye, ear, nose and throat clinic, a dental clinic, clinical laboratory and new radiology department.<sup>100</sup> The *Annual Report* for 1922 noted the increased complexity of medical care provided in trying to

---

<sup>96</sup> James A. Mattison, "The Development of the National Soldiers' Home Service," *Modern Hospital* 20, no. 1 (January 1923): 60.

<sup>97</sup> Julin, "NHDVS Assessment of Significance," 34-35.

<sup>98</sup> U.S. Treasury Department, *Report of the Consultants on Hospitalization Appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury to Provide Additional Hospital Facilities* (Washington: GPO, 1923), 22, 26.

<sup>99</sup> Lester Harris Post No. 98, *The National Sanatorium*, 37.

<sup>100</sup> *The Mountain Home Story*, c. 1978, (VACO files, Washington, DC), 2-3.

cure young men. Of the 2,971 members cared for at the Mountain Branch that fiscal year, 2,865 were veterans of the “German war,” 96 Spanish-American War veterans, nine “other service,” and seven Civil War veterans.<sup>101</sup> The average stay was approximately two months, with the ambulatory patients receiving access to therapeutic workshops for activities such as basket weaving, painting, and ceramics. Dr. Klotz reminded patients of the sacrifice made by the older veterans required to leave the Mountain Branch, and encouraged them to cooperate in their own recovery.<sup>102</sup>

The following year the NHDVS reached two major milestones – the first service women were admitted and Civil War veterans were no longer the majority of the members. Board of Managers President George H. Wood reported that 45 percent of the members were Civil War veterans, while 55 percent served in other conflicts.<sup>103</sup> The Mountain Branch continued to function exclusively as a tuberculosis sanitarium, receiving its new clinical laboratory and isolation ward during fiscal year 1924.<sup>104</sup> An inspector from this period reported, “The facilities for treatment of tuberculosis at this branch are excellent and the chances for recovery are good if a patient comes when the disease is not too far advanced and assists in his treatment by following medical advice and complying with the rules and regulations of the hospital.”<sup>105</sup> By 1926, probably partially due to the completion of modern tuberculosis hospitals at several other branches, non-tubercular members began to be admitted to the Mountain Branch again. Although many young veterans were successfully rehabilitated, many long term members needing housing and domiciliary care remained.

Around 1928, members of Congress began advocating for restructuring federal veterans’ services. NHDVS Board President General George Wood defended the purpose and efficiency of his agency:

The National Military Home is to-day an important part in the Government’s plans for caring for its disabled soldiers, with the demand for its care constantly increasing. It is believed that the above financial statements indicate that its work is being done efficiently and economically and with justice to both the Government and the members of the home. The board feels that the plans for expansion are fully justified by present conditions, and confidently hopes that

---

<sup>101</sup>NHDVS Board of Managers, “Mountain Branch,” *Annual Report* (1922), typescript in Veterans’ Affairs Central Office Library, Washington, DC [hereafter VACO Library]. See also John Thompson, “TB Epidemic Turns Local Soldiers’ Home Into Sanitarium,” *Johnson City Press*, 25 September 2003, special insert – “Mountain Home/100 Years,” 7.

<sup>102</sup> Lester Harris Post No. 98, *The National Sanatorium*, 24, 31, 37.

<sup>103</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, “President’s Letter,” *NHDVS Annual Report* (1923), 6-7, typescript in VACO Library.

<sup>104</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, “Minutes, 19 September 1924,” *NHDVS Annual Report* (1924), 55, typescript in VACO Library.

<sup>105</sup> Inspector-General’s Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1925), 33.

Congress will carefully consider the recommendations and furnish the needed relief.<sup>106</sup>

Looking back in early 1930, Wood testified before the House Committee on Military Affairs that the World War had dramatically shifted demand for the Home's services. Between 1907 and 1919 no substantial construction was undertaken anywhere in the system. By the end of the war, the potential membership had increased tenfold. In 1929, the state soldiers' home in Bath, New York became the eleventh branch of the NHDVS. This transfer was a partial solution for the rapidly rising demand in the late 1920s.<sup>107</sup>

At this time three different agencies served veterans – the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, the Pension Bureau, and the Veterans' Bureau (founded in 1921 and primarily involved with medical care and insurance). Various restructurings were considered; the most straightforward and ultimately successful proposal was combining all three agencies under a new Veterans' Administration. This proposal was approved by Congress on July 3, 1930 and instituted through an executive order. The NHDVS Board of Managers resisted the initial proposals, but finally their eleven branches were folded into the new VA. The NHDVS was no longer an autonomous agency; now their primarily domiciliary services were just one of many offered by the Veterans' Administration.<sup>108</sup>

#### Veterans' Administration/Affairs Medical Center

Colonel Lee B. Harr became director of the Veterans' Administration Mountain Home in 1934. Shortly thereafter additional doctors were recruited and renovations planned. The VA sent an architect and a Superintendent of Construction to Johnson City to survey the physical plant and oversee renovation and modernization. Noteworthy changes included replacing wood floors with terrazzo, installing new elevators and bathroom fixtures, updating heating systems and wiring, and modernizing the kitchens, including replacing iceboxes with electrical refrigeration.<sup>109</sup> Harr also began the tradition of a Memorial Day parade on the grounds; First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was a distinguished guest at the parade in 1939.<sup>110</sup> The tuberculosis houses were removed around 1945.<sup>111</sup> Harr served until 1966, overseeing the transition into a VA Medical Center during the post-World War II years. There was a major influx of new patients during the 1950s due to the large number of World War II veterans and eligibility rules that allowed treatment of any medical problem for those in financial need. Another round of renovations began in 1957, including a new surgical suite, laboratory, and x-ray facilities. The

---

<sup>106</sup> NHDVS Board of Managers, "Letter from the President," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1928* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1929), 6.

<sup>107</sup> Inspector General's Report – NHDVS published in *Construction at Soldiers' Homes, Hearings Before the Committee on Military Affairs*, House of Representatives, 71<sup>st</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session (Washington, DC: GPO, 1930), 76.

<sup>108</sup> Cetina, 382-383.

<sup>109</sup> "75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1903-1978 Veterans Administration Medical Center, Mountain Home, Tennessee," Mountain Home Collection, Archives of Appalachia, ETSU.

<sup>110</sup> Hartman, 49.

<sup>111</sup> Hartman, 37.

upgrades cost approximately \$1 million.<sup>112</sup> The Mountain Home continued to include both hospital and domiciliary services; in 1959 there were 1,781 domiciliary members and 575 hospital patients.<sup>113</sup> In 1965 the numbers were similar, with the addition of a small nursing home facility to the Medical Center.<sup>114</sup>

An important new era began for the Mountain Home when the U.S. Congress passed the Teague-Cranston Act in 1972. Also called the “Veterans’ Administration Medical School Assistance and Health Manpower Training Act,” this legislation funded construction of medical schools at five VA facilities through partnerships with local universities. Neighboring East Tennessee State University established its College of Medicine at the Mountain Home, admitting its first students in 1978. The Mountain Home was in need of renovations by the late 1970s. The availability of construction funds and personnel from the medical school helped revitalize veteran care. The College of Medicine renovated a number of buildings including the Administration Building (Building No. 52). A new medical library, offices and classrooms were built during the early 1980s as Building No. 119, which was attached to the rear of the original barracks no. 1 and the front of barracks no. 4. A new Clinical Support Building (Building No. 77), costing \$11 million, filled the open courtyard at the center of the original Hospital. This structure was completed in 1984.<sup>115</sup> Although the modernizing patient care was a positive step for the Mountain Home, there was early concern about the impact of new construction and renovations on the historic Beaux Arts campus. Mountain Home Historic District was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places on August 30, 1979 and efforts were made to mitigate the impact of proposed changes.<sup>116</sup>

The role of historic preservation in maintaining the character of Freedlander’s design became even more important as expansion continued with even larger projects. In 1990 a large addition to the hospital removed two of the historic pavilions. A 600-bed domiciliary was built just south of the hospital to replace the capacity lost when ETSU Medical School converted several original barracks for their use. After years as the Veterans’ Administration Medical Center, Mountain Home, the complex was renamed the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Mountain Home in 1997. Carrying on the tradition of W. P. Brownlow, Jimmy Quillen was a longtime local Congressman instrumental in generating new projects and opportunities for the VA medical center, such as the partnership with the ETSU College of Medicine. Quillen’s support is credited with saving the campus at a time when it might have been closed.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> “75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” (1978), Archives of Appalachia, ETSU.

<sup>113</sup> *Veterans Administration Center Mountain Home, 1903-59*, 1. Mountain Home Collection, Archives of Appalachia, ETSU.

<sup>114</sup> *Veterans Administration Center Mountain Home, 1903-65*, 1. Mountain Home Collection, Archives of Appalachia, ETSU.

<sup>115</sup> John Thompson, “School Changes Everything,” *Johnson City Press*, 25 September 2003, special insert “Mountain Home/100 Years,” 16-18.

<sup>116</sup> The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation reviewed proposed changes to the Mountain Home and advocated for historic preservation during the founding of the ETSU College of Medicine. See “Executive Director’s Report: Mountain Home VA Medical Center, Johnson City, TN,” (14 July 1980), in files of the VACO FPO.

<sup>117</sup> Jeff Keeling, “VA Formally Renamed in Quillen’s Honor,” *Johnson City Press*, 8 February 1997, 1.

In 2002 a major addition to the hospital (Building No. 204) was completed, creating a new outpatient clinic and emergency room. The project had been in the works for almost sixteen years and required demolition of the remaining original hospital wards – no. 78 and 76 – in 1999.<sup>118</sup> Building No. 69, the Hospital Administration Building, and sections of wall from the connecting corridor survived. The addition mimicked the architectural forms and materials of the historic wings. While this expansion were intended to serve the growing number of veterans from new conflicts such as the Iraq War, Mountain Home still specialized in geriatric care needed by World War II and Korean War veterans.<sup>119</sup> In 2003, Mountain Home celebrated its centennial with tours, concerts, and other events. Around this time, ETSU considered leasing even more of the original Mountain Home buildings, including twenty-four structures on the west side of the campus. However in 2004, this proposal was downgraded to include only the twelve buildings already used by the College of Medicine.<sup>120</sup> Today the Mountain Home is an active medical center providing care for veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam and more recent conflicts. The Mountain Home was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2011, the highest recognition for a historic site in the United States. Freedlander’s Beaux Arts campus retains its historic character and is still an important representation of connections between the Federal government and East Tennessee.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

See individual reports on selected Mountain Branch buildings for detailed architectural information:

HABS No. TN-254-B	NHDVS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH, BARRACKS No. 2 (James H. Quillen VAMC, Building No. 2)
HABS No. TN-254-F	NHDVS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH, CHAPEL (James H. Quillen VAMC, Building No. 13)
HABS No. TN-254-K	NHDVS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH, MESS HALL (James H. Quillen VAMC, Building No. 34)
HABS No. TN-254-L	NHDVS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH, MORGUE (James H. Quillen VAMC, Building No. 36)
HABS No. TN-254-N	NHDVS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH, DUPLEX QUARTERS (James H. Quillen VAMC, Building No. 40)
HABS No. TN-254-X	NHDVS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH, HOSPITAL (James H. Quillen VAMC, Building No. 69)

---

<sup>118</sup> Sue Guin Legg, “New VA Clinic, ER Unveiled,” *Johnson City Press*, 14 September 2002, 1, 8.

<sup>119</sup> See John Thompson, “Caring for the Survivors,” *Johnson City Press*, 18 May 2003, 25, 31.

<sup>120</sup> Sam Watson, “ETSU Downgrades VA Property Request,” *Johnson City Press*, 28 November 2004, 1A, 8A.

HABS No. TN-254-Y            NHDVS – MOUNTAIN BRANCH, ADMINISTRATION  
BUILDING  
(James H. Quillen VAMC, Building No. 52)

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings: Copies of J. H. Freedlander's drawings for many of the original buildings are located in the Department of Veterans' Affairs Washington, D.C. central office (VACO) microfilm drawings collection (PLIARS). Additional copies of original drawings and those for changes and additions are located on site at the Mountain Home in the Planning and Design Office. However a complete set of original drawings, including site plans, has not been located.

B. Early Views: The best sources of early views are the published souvenir books from 1908, 1909, and 1911. Period journals such as *Brickbuilder*, *Architectural Record*, and *The Craftsman* also published early views. See citations below.

#### C. Selected Bibliography:

Collections and Archives –  
*Johnson City, Tennessee* -

The Museum at Mountain Home Museum, Quillen VAMC.

Drawing Files, Planning and Design Office, Quillen VAMC.

Archives of Appalachia, Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee [Mountain Home Collection and vertical file].

Microforms and Periodicals, Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University [Johnson City newspapers].

*Knoxville, Tennessee*-

Special Collections, Hodges Library, University of Tennessee.

McClung Historical Collection, East Tennessee History Center, Knox County Public Libraries.

*Washington, D.C.*-

Department of Veterans' Affairs Central Office [VACO] Library [NHDVS Annual Reports and Inspection Reports].

Mountain Home files, Federal Preservation Officer, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, VACO.

PLIARS drawing database, Department of Veterans' Affairs Central Office.

Published Sources and Reports –

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.

Brady, Martin V. *Picturesque Mountain Branch National Soldiers' Home Tennessee*. Johnson City: Martin V. Brady, 1908.

Cetina, Judith Gladys. "A History of the Veterans' Homes in the United States, 1811-1930," Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1977.

Edwards, Charles. *Souvenir Book: National Military Home, Tennessee*. Johnson City: Charles Edwards, 1909.

"For a New Soldiers' Home," *New York Times*, 12 July 1901.

"Freedlander, Joseph H." entry in Henry F. Withey and Elise R. Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. (Los Angeles: Hennesey & Ingalls, Inc. 1970), 22.

"Freedlander, Joseph Henry," entry in *MacMillan Dictionary of Architects*, (New York: MacMillan, 1982), 114.

Hartman, Susan Kay. Thesis H255h "A History of Mountain Home," Department of History, ETSU, December 1984.

Inspector General. *Annual Report of Inspection - National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers*. Washington, DC: GPO, 1894- . [author name and exact title vary]

*Johnson City Comet* – various articles, accessed via microfilm at ETSU.

*Johnson City, Tennessee*. Johnson City: Chamber of Commerce, 1915.

Julin, Suzanne. "National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers – Assessment of Significance and National Historic Landmark Recommendations." 2008. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C..

Julin, Suzanne. "Mountain Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers," Washington County, Tennessee. National Historic Landmark Registration Form (draft), 2008. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Kelly, Patrick. *Creating a National Home: Building the Veterans' Welfare State*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Lee, Antoinette J. *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's*

*Office*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Lee, Tom. “The Lost Cause that Wasn’t: East Tennessee and the Myth of Unionist Appalachia,” In *Reconstructing Appalachia: The Civil War’s Aftermath*, Andrew L. Slap, ed. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Tennessee-Virginia Tri-Cities: Urbanization in Appalachia, 1900-1950*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005.

Lester Harris Post No. 98, American Legion. *The National Sanatorium*. Lester Harris Post No. 98, c. 1922.

Lewis, J. O.. *Johnson City, Tennessee*. The Commercial Club, December 1909, reprint as *Johnson City: The Way We Were*. Johnson City: Overmountain Press, 1989.

Mattison, James A. “The Development of the National Soldiers’ Home Service,” *Modern Hospital* 20, no. 1 (January 1923): 59-61.

“Obituary – J. H. Freedlander, An Architect, 73,” *New York Times*, 24 November 1943.

Schuyler, Montgomery. “Fortunate Treatment of a Group of Institutional Buildings: The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers,” *Architectural Record* 30, no. 2 (August 1911), 136-150.

“Soldiers’ Home in Tennessee: A Noteworthy Example of a Group of Buildings Planned as a Whole,” *The Craftsman* 11, no. 3 (December 1906): 348-356.

*Souvenir Book, National Soldiers Home*, Johnson City, TN: Muse-Whitlock Co., Printers, c. 1913.

U.S. Treasury Department, *Report of the Consultants on Hospitalization Appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury to Provide Additional Hospital Facilities*. Washington: GPO, 1923.

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of selected buildings at the Mountain 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 planning was coordinated by Catherine Lavoie, Chief, HABS; by Douglas Pulak, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, DVA; and by Kevin Milliken, Assistant Chief, Engineering Service, James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center (QVAMC). The field work was undertaken and the measured drawings were produced by Project Supervisor Mark

Schara AIA, HABS Architect; by HABS Architects Paul Davidson, Daniel De Sousa, and Jason McNatt; and by Architecture Technician Michael Ellingson (Hampton University). The historical report was written by HABS Historian Lisa P. Davidson. The large format photography was undertaken in 2008 by HABS Photographer James W. Rosenthal. Assistance was provided by Martha Whaley, Museum at Mountain Home, Quillen College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University; Aaron Prozak, Engineering Technician, QVAMC; and by the QVAMC facilities maintenance staff.

PART V. ILLUSTRATIONS:

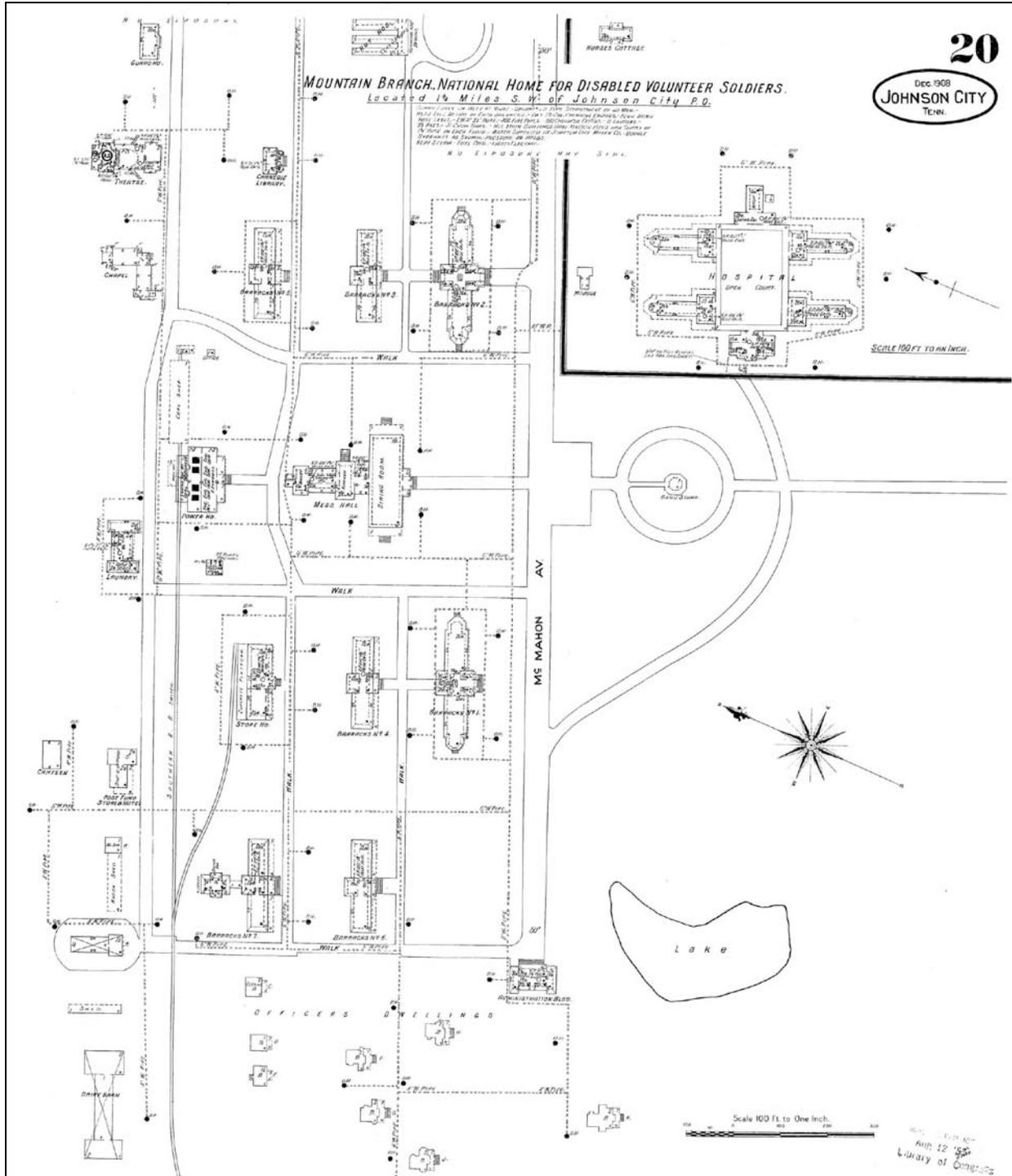


Figure 1: Site Plan of Mountain Branch, 1908  
Source: adapted from Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Johnson City, TN, 1908, Sheet 20



Figure 2: General View of Mountain Branch from East, c. 1905.  
Note from left Administration Building (in distance) and Barracks No. 1&2 with Mess Hall tower behind.  
Source: Museum at Mountain Home



Figure 3: General View of Mountain Branch from East, c. 1905.  
Note Barracks No. 2 (left) and Chapel (center right).  
Source: Museum at Mountain Home