

NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS -
MARION BRANCH, BUILDING NO. 121
1700 East 38th Street
Marion
Grant County
Indiana

HABS IN-306-AN
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

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NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS – MARION BRANCH, BUILDING No. 121

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Location: 1700 East 38th Street, Marion, Grant County, Indiana. Within the original hospital complex, Building No. 121 is located directly north of Building No. 20, the rear service annex. Building No. 121 is also southeast of the main entrance gate on 38th Street.

The coordinates for Building No. 121 are 40.521117 N, -85.633085 W. These coordinates were obtained in January 2012 and with it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Significance: Building No. 121 was built c. 1895 as an outbuilding in the hospital complex at the Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS).

Description: Building No. 121 is a one-story, red brick building with a high, hipped slate roof topped by a wood cupola. This modest structure contains a single room and has a nearly square footprint of approximately 20 feet by 22 feet. The east façade has been altered by the installation of two sets of two-leaf wood garage doors with a large wood beam lintel. The segmental brick relieving arches for original openings are still visible on this façade. Similar openings have been bricked in on the north façade, as was a small window on the south. Two original tall segmental arch window openings with two-over-two light wood sash remain on the west façade. The rectangular cupola has a hipped roof and six window sashes each with six divided lights. The single interior room shows evidence of whitewash, but no additional interior finish or fittings. The space currently holds road salt and the building is in an advance state of deterioration.

History: The NHDVS was a federal institution authorized by Congress in 1865 and charged with caring for Civil War veterans disabled by their military service. Congressman George Steele of the 11th Indiana Congressional District successfully promoted the creation of this Branch in Grant County with the promise of an on-site natural gas well for free heating and lighting. Founded in 1889, the Marion Branch was the seventh NHDVS branch and featured a picturesque campus of winding avenues and red brick Queen Anne buildings with wide porches and ornamental balustrades. By 1930 the NHDVS system had eleven branches and became part of the new Veterans Administration.

Building No. 121 was built for the hospital complex in 1894-95 and its original use is unknown. A morgue (later Building No. 61) was also built at this time just to the north.¹

In 1921, the Marion Branch became the Marion National Sanitarium, a facility dedicated to the treatment of World War I neuropsychiatric cases, including what was then called shell shock and other mental disorders. A site plan from 1927 labels this structure “disinfector” (Figure 1).

After 1930 the Marion Branch continued to specialize in psychiatric care as part of the Veterans Administration. Building No. 121 was converted into a garage/storage building by 1936.² The morgue was demolished by 1953, as indicated by the Sanborn Fire Insurance map from that year. Building No. 121 is now part of Marion Campus of the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System. It is currently vacant and slated for demolition.

Sources:

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

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

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

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

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, HABS Historian, 2011

Project

Information: Documentation of selected buildings at the former Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was undertaken in 2011 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs division of the National Park Service, Richard O’Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Kathleen Schamel, Federal Preservation Officer. Project development was coordinated by Catherine Lavoie, Chief, HABS and by

¹ NHDVS Board of Managers, “Marion Branch Report,” *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1911* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1912), 207. It should be noted that a hospital boiler house was also built in 1894.

² Typescript, Marion VA Hospital Inventory (29 April 1936), Marion and Grant County File, Marion Public Library.

Douglas Pulak, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, DVA. The field work was undertaken and the written histories were produced by Lisa P. Davidson and Virginia B. Price, HABS Historians. The large-format photography was undertaken by HABS Photographer Renee Bieretz; an initial photographic survey was completed by HABS Photographer James Rosenthal in 2008. Valuable assistance was provided by James A. Broyles, Project Engineer, Engineering Services, Marion Campus, VA Northern Indiana Health Care System.

Illustrations:

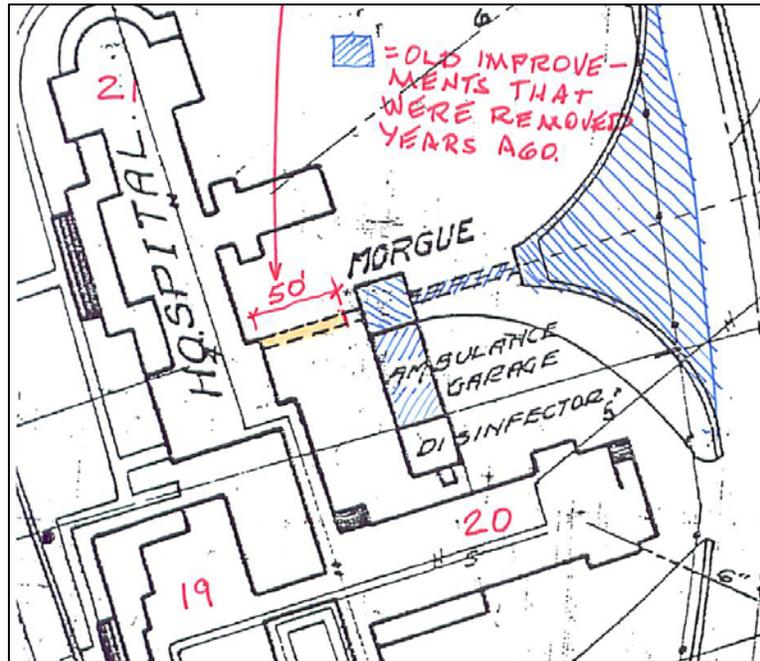


Figure 1: Excerpt of 1927 Site Plan
Source: Engineering Services files, Marion VAMC