

National Home for Disabled Volunteer  
Soldiers Western Branch  
(Department of Veterans Affairs  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center)  
U.S. Highway 73  
Leavenworth  
Leavenworth County  
Kansas

HABS No. KS-55

HABS  
KS-55

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

*Address  
- 10/20/00*

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**  
**NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER**  
**SOLDIERS WESTERN BRANCH**  
**(DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER MEDICAL CENTER)      HABS NO. KS-55**

**Historic Name:** National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Western Branch  
Presently named: Department of Veterans Affairs Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center

**Location:** Veterans Administration Park (North), Union Pacific Railroad (East), Kansas State Highway 5 (South), Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad (Southwest), U.S. Highway 73 (West), Wilson Avenue (West), Leavenworth, Leavenworth County, Kansas

**Quadrangle:** USGS Leavenworth, Kans.- Mo. Quadrangle  
1:24,000 Scale

**UTM Coordinates:** Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:

A	15.337320.4349650
B	15.337690.4348690
C	15.336940.4348590
D	15.336420.4348720
E	15.336250.4349030
F	15.336170.4348980
G	15.336010.4349280
H	15.336210.4349200
I	15.336190.4349800
J	15.336350.4349800
K	15.336350.4349950
L	15.336660.4349950
M	15.336660.4349650

**Present Owner:** Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC

**Present Use:** Department of Veteran Affairs Medical Center

**Date of Erection:** 1887 - 1990

**Architect:** Multiple, including:  
Architect: Louis Singleton Curtiss (1865-1924)  
Landscape Architect: H.W.S. Cleveland (1814-1900)  
Builder: James A. McGonigle (1834-1925)

**Significance:** The former Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was founded in 1885. It was the fifth in a series of 11 branch

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institutions established between 1867 and 1929. The institutions are considered to be the earliest and most extensive examples of federal government-sponsored and of non-religious planned communities in the country. The scope of training, education, and readjustment activities offered at the Homes are thought to be the earliest federal venture into large scale rehabilitation programs.

The Western Branch Home, now the Department of Veterans Affairs Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center (DDE/VAMC) has continuously provided residential and medical care for veterans since 1886. The facility embodies the comprehensive federal policies and concepts of health and rehabilitative care provided in a planned community as they originated after the Civil War and evolved into the first half of the twentieth century. The Western Branch has excellent examples of building and landscape architecture, most notably its fine groups Georgian Revival, late Gothic Revival, and Queen Anne style buildings, surrounded by a park- and campus-like setting.

The 213.97-acre site is characterized by rolling terrain, tree-dotted lawns, a man-made lake, and curving roads overlooking the Missouri River. The historic buildings constructed between 1885 and the early 1940s are mostly well-designed and crafted examples of popular period Victorian revival styles executed in brick and stone, with a few wood-frame examples. The work of a notable local architect and builder are represented, as well as that of a nationally important landscape architect. The original planning concept combined civilian and military influences in a planned rehabilitative community. The evolution of the Home into a major regional Veterans Administration medical center in the 1930s is reflected in the building scale and siting.

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## **I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

### **SUMMARY**

The Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (WB/NHDVS)/ Dwight D. Eisenhower Veterans Administration Medical Center (DDE/VAMC) and Leavenworth National Cemetery Historic District, Leavenworth Kansas, is significant in the areas of health/medicine, politics/government, and social history. The Western Branch Home is the fifth in a series of 11 branch institutions established between 1867 and 1929 and has continuously provided residential and medical care for veterans since 1886. It embodies the comprehensive federal policies and concepts of health care and rehabilitative care provided in a planned community as they originated after the Civil War and evolved into the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, the Western Branch is significant for its architecture and landscape architecture, noted for its fine group of buildings, including many excellent examples of Georgian Revival, late Gothic Revival, and Queen Anne style architecture, surrounded by a designed park-like and campus-like setting. The period of significance is defined from 1885 to 1943, beginning with the founding of the Western Branch and ending with the 50-year termination date required by the National Register.

### **NATIONAL CONTEXT**

At the close of the Civil War, vast numbers of disabled volunteer soldiers in need of medical and rehabilitative care were discharged. Their numbers greatly outstripped the capabilities of existing facilities and pension programs, which had been designed for the relatively small career military force. As a result, Congress passed legislation on March 3, 1865 incorporating a national Military and Naval Asylum for disabled volunteer soldiers of the Union Army.<sup>1</sup> The Act was a departure from traditional emphasis on the professional soldier and officially set forth the concern and commitment of the government and the population for the well-being of the civilian soldier. In 1873, the Asylum was renamed the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. During its history it was also known officially as the National Military Home, and colloquially as the Old Soldiers Home.<sup>2</sup>

The initial congressional Act listed 100 incorporators to oversee the National Home and included many prominent leaders in contemporary political, military, financial, publishing, religious, and abolition circles. The inability to assemble a quorum of such diverse prominent individuals, however, forced Congress in 1866 to establish a 12-member Board of Managers to conduct the business of the Home. The original managers were: President Andrew Johnson; Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton; and Chief Justice, Salmon Chase (all ex-officio), as well as nine members appointed by Congress: Generals Richard J. Ogelsby, Benjamin F. Butler, Frederick Smyth, P. Joseph Osterhaus; the Honorable Lewis Gunckel; Messrs. Jay Cooke, John H. Mortwalder, Horatio B. Stebbins, and George H. Walker.<sup>3</sup>

The first Home established was the Eastern Branch, at Togus, Maine, in 1867. Between 1867 and 1929, the Home expanded to encompass ten Home branches and one sanatorium: the Northwestern Branch, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1867; the Central Branch, Dayton, Ohio, 1867; the Southern Branch, Hampton, Virginia, 1870; the Western Branch, Leavenworth, Kansas, 1885; the Pacific Branch, Santa Monica (Los Angeles), California, 1888; the Marion Branch, Marion, Indiana, 1889; the Danville Branch, Danville,

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Illinois, 1898; the Mountain Branch, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1901; the Battle Mountain Sanatorium, Hot Springs, South Dakota, 1902; and the Bath Branch, Bath, New York, 1929 (formerly New York State Soldiers and Sailors Home, established 1877).<sup>4</sup>

The Act authorized the Board of Managers to select Home locations and establish programs as they determined appropriate. Shelter was the immediate priority, but the Homes quickly developed into complete and almost self-contained planned communities. The Home facilities were far more comprehensive than those at contemporary military installations. They are considered to be the earliest and most extensive examples of federal government-sponsored and of non-religious planned communities in the country. Military models provided the basis for planning, and members (as residents were called) of the Home were governed by the Articles of War.<sup>5</sup>

Integrated site planning, building design, and landscaping provided members with a full range of shelter, health care, educational, training, and rehabilitative services. Veterans were organized in companies and resided in groups of architecturally similar barracks, conveniently situated near the mess hall and the hospital. Homes included administration buildings, libraries, theaters, chapels, recreation and beer halls, bandstands, training schools, hotels for visitors, staff residences, and a range of farm, laundry, maintenance buildings, and shops. Cemeteries were located adjacent to the main building complex.

The scope of training, education, and readjustment activities offered at the Homes are thought to be the earliest federal venture into large scale rehabilitation programs. The chapels are reputed to be the first non-military construction of a religious facility by the federal government.<sup>6</sup>

Eligibility requirements allowed an even more significant departure from previous federal programs. Membership in the Home was based on disabilities incurred while serving in the Union Army. Thus both white and black former soldiers were equally eligible. Integration was rudimentary by today's standards, but another 80 years passed before the military forces in which these men served desegregated.

Although the Home program was conceived for disabled Union Army volunteer veterans of the Civil War, admission for veterans of other wars occurred in the first year of Home construction. The Northwestern Branch, Milwaukee opened in 1867 and allowed veterans of the War of 1812. By 1871, disabled veterans of both the War of 1812 and the Mexican War had access to any Home. In 1884, broader admission requirements were adopted, such that a veteran needed only to prove that a disability was not incurred in service against the United States.

In 1900, admission was extended to all honorably discharged officers, soldiers and sailors who served in regular or volunteer forces of the United States in any war in which the country had been engaged, who had no adequate means of support and were incapable of earning a living. Coverage was extended to those who served in undeclared wars "against hostile Indians" in 1908, and to those who served in the Philippines, China, and Alaska, in 1909.<sup>7</sup>

Initially, funding for operations was derived from fines and stoppages of pay for courts martial, forfeitures of pay for desertion, monies due and unclaimed for three years, as well as disability pensions for members with no dependents. Direct congressional appropriation replaced this uncertain and complicated funding system in 1875. However, the Managers continued to depend upon pension funds

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collected through fines, stoppages, and limits upon the amounts allotted to pensioners to prevent "squandering" until Congress forbade the practices in 1881. Cooperative funding of federal and state Homes has existed since 1888. At that time, Congress authorized Managers to make yearly payments of \$100 to approved state Homes on behalf of each veteran residing there and who was eligible for admission to the federal Home. This practice continues in principle today.<sup>8</sup>

Military surplus provided uniforms for Home members and staff, and items such as cannon for grounds ornamentation. Agricultural products, including field crops and dairy products, filled much of the ration needs. A number of Homes developed specialized operations to manufacture goods such as knitted hose and construction bricks that were used throughout the system. Farming, manufacturing, and shop skills were an important part of rehabilitation programs. Libraries and other educational facilities were also considered critical.

By World War I, the National Home for Disabled Veteran Soldiers had been operating for approximately 50 years with branches constructed between 1867 and 1902. Much of the initial enthusiasm and creative leadership was diminished over this half century. The War produced a greater number of veterans, at an average younger age, than the Home was equipped for. In order to fulfill current veterans needs, a new government agency, the U.S. Veterans Bureau was established. Yet, even with the renewed emphasis on veterans affairs, the Home program was considered to have been reduced truly to an old soldier's final resting place and was publicly criticized for inadequate management and care.

Although expanded hospital and quarters facilities were built at several branches, the Home's future was inextricably linked to that of other veterans affairs agencies. To eliminate redundancy and confusion in services, President Hoover, with the consent of Congress, combined the National Home, the Veterans Bureau, and the Pension Bureau into a single agency, the United States Veterans Administration, on July 31, 1930. The Home briefly retained a distinct identity as the Home Service of the Veterans Administration. However, construction of new facilities by the Veterans Administration, a uniform admissions policy, and the passing away of the Civil War veterans marked the end of the National Home for Disabled Veteran Soldiers. The Homes continued in existence and were adapted to Veterans Administration programs. The Veterans Administration, as the Department of Veterans Affairs, is now part of the Cabinet.

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The Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Veteran Soldiers was the first trans-Mississippi branch of the Home. Congress authorized its establishment in 1884, nineteen years after it authorized the first home. Site selection occurred when the town of Leavenworth agreed to donate 640 acres and \$50,000 towards the embellishment of the grounds. Christian Delaware Indians had previously owned the land and had sold it to private parties in the late 1850s. From 1844 to 1848, a Stockbridge Indian settlement and Baptist mission occupied the property, but it was not successful and was abandoned.<sup>9</sup>

The decision to construct a Western Branch reflected the country's population shift westward and the greater demand for Homes due to expanded eligibility requirements and the increased age of Civil War veterans. Leavenworth's proximity to Fort Leavenworth, one of the country's key military installations,

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and the efforts of Mayor S.F. Neely and State Senator Alexander Caldwell were instrumental in the selection of this site. The city's financing offer required an expenditure of \$120,000, with the land purchase price to be met with park bonds. Needing assistance, the city requested an appropriation of \$50,000 from the State legislature, but was refused. As a result of the city's inability to raise the funds, the Home Board of Managers passed a resolution in April 1885 to permit Leavenworth to pay \$5,000 per annum for ten years, discharging all previous obligations.<sup>10</sup>

Construction began in 1885 and consisted of 17 buildings by 1886, costing \$214,875: 13 barracks, each accommodating 124 men; a general mess hall and kitchen with 1200 seats, a boiler plant, and one other building. The approximately 40 buildings erected by 1890 comprised a coherent planned community, similar to other branches of the National Home. It included barracks, mess hall and kitchen, staff housing, a chapel, an administration and library building, a hospital with a morgue, amusement halls, storehouses, shops, laundry, stable, greenhouses, agricultural buildings, and other facilities. The few buildings built in the first two decades of the twentieth century augmented these facilities, but introduced no new significant functions.

The administration also corresponded to that at other Homes. The Board of Managers appointed a Governor, who was assisted by a staff of officers: Secretary, Treasurer, Quartermaster, Commissary of Subsistence, Surgeon, Assistant Surgeon, Matron, Chaplains, and Music Director. All staff were required to live on the grounds in housing assigned according to position and marital status. The veterans were organized under a military model and were subject to the Rules and Articles of War. They wore uniforms (supplied by military surplus), lived in barracks, were grouped into companies, and marched in formation. Formal termination of the military model and the term "barracks" occurred in 1955.

The first member admitted, July 11, 1885, was Alexander Maines, formerly Private, Company A, First Rhode Island Light Artillery. A transfer from the Eastern Branch at Togus, Maine, his disabilities were listed as "Rheumatism, Fever, and Ague". By the end of the first fiscal year, membership had grown to 261 veterans. Numbers increased steadily to a peak, in 1906, of 4,119 on the roll and 5,300 cared for. Most were Civil War veterans ("the Boys in Blue"), with a few Mexican War Veterans. In 1916, 531 Civil War veterans remained, and by 1936, this number had dwindled to 13. Overall, population numbers dropped off after 1906 to a low of 3,102 cared for in 1923. The population during these years included veterans of the Spanish-American War; conflicts in Alaska, China, the Philippines, and the Mexican border; and World War I. The number of veterans of all wars cared for rose again to a high of 6,348 in the depression year of the 1930. The number of members averaged about 2,000 in the early 1930s. Typically, throughout the Home's history until the mid-twentieth century, membership was higher in winter than in summer, when warmer weather and opportunities for farm employment allowed members the chance for a temporary absence. In 1893, fully one-third of the members were foreign born. Of the 21 countries represented, the greatest numbers by far came from Ireland and Germany.<sup>11</sup>

Civilian employees, other than officers, numbered 45 in 1893. They included clerks, engineers, a druggist, a farmer, firemen, a florist and gardner, a matron, 19 musicians, plumbers, a surgeons assistant, a baker and women nurses. The first female nurse was employed in 1891. In 1899, there were five commissioned officers, 26 noncommissioned officers, 63 civilian employees, and 1,323 members on extra duty with pay.<sup>12</sup> A staff of over 500 was employed in the early 1930s.

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The National Home program's mission as originally conceived and as it operated at the Western Branch from 1885 to 1944 was to provide shelter, education, training, employment, and medical care to veterans recovering from war experiences in the carefully orchestrated confines of a planned community. Members were able to work "extra duty" either with or without pay and to receive skills training and rehabilitation. Employment and training opportunities were offered in agriculture, the shops, and other facilities. The Western Branch shops in 1893 were: carpenter, blacksmith, engineer, tin, paint, printing, shoe, soap, and tailor shops. In that year, truck farm products (vegetables and fruits) and flowers valued, \$9,082.90.<sup>13</sup> By 1900, additional shops included baking, upholstering, and horseshoeing. Members also worked in positions such as laborers, waiters, clerks, cooks, carpenters, and guards.<sup>14</sup>

A variety of amusements catered to residents, visitors, and the Leavenworth community, providing recreation and income for the post funds. Amusements included a beer hall, the Home store, a hotel, plays, band concerts, billiard tables, boating on Lake Jeannette, and a large library with newspapers, magazines, and books.<sup>15</sup> The Ward Memorial Building (Building 29), which contained the library and billiard room along with the Home's main administrative offices, was funded under a bequest in the will of a London banker, General Horatio Ward. Ward was originally from Virginia and left monies for the National Home system. The managers used the funds to erect recreational and cultural buildings and other amenities, which might not justify expenditure of public funds, at many of the branches. Both the South Branch near Hampton, Virginia and the Northwestern Branch in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for example, constructed Ward Memorial Theaters. The Ward-funded buildings were individually designed for each Home branch and therefore are not necessarily similar in design.<sup>16</sup>

The extensive grounds planted with cool shade trees and bright floral beds, and Lake Jeannette where the professional and highly regarded Home band performed each weekend, had a wide appeal. The Home gardeners in the decades at the turn of the century were Carl Kline Sr. and Carl Kline, Jr., who resided in Building 52. A baseball league was also organized in 1900 and played at a diamond located northeast of the West Gate. E.F. Brown, Inspector General for NHDVS noted at the turn of the century, that the "Western Branch is a pleasure ground... visited by thousands who are profuse in their admiration of the Home."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to practical training and recreational activities, the Western Branch monitored improvements and repairs of buildings and grounds, laundry and post office activity, discipline, subsistence (meals), sanitary conditions, temperance, opportunities for religious worship, and hospital facilities, as well as health, death, nationality, occupation or trade, and other statistics of the members. These categories were summarized in the Annual Reports of the Board of Managers. In 1893, it was noted that 3,367 members could read and write, while 402 could not. The former group was 35 percent native born, and the latter was 64 per cent foreign born. The Chapel, with a total seating capacity of 475, offered Sunday services for both Protestant and Catholic members which were generally well attended. Discipline infractions reported typically were restricted to general disorderliness and drunkenness by less than ten per cent of the membership. Three nourishing and substantial meals were provided in the mess hall each day. Sanitary regulations required the men to bathe once a week and maintain a clean wardrobe.

In the 1890s, temperance became a concern and a controversial issue at the Western Branch, reaching national attention. Alcoholic beverages were available in Leavenworth and at the popular Home beer hall which sold 5% alcohol beer purchased from the Anheuser Busch Company. It was modelled after the

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Central Branch beer hall of 1886, which was found to have a marked effect in reducing drunkenness among its members. In 1892, the Keeley "Gold Cure", an intravenous remedy for alcohol and drug addiction was introduced to the Home. The Keeley Institute at the Western Branch graduated over 1,500 members and became a lucrative fixture, with profits going to Home improvements, before doubts about its legitimacy and complaints of conflict caused a Congressional investigation and closure of the Institute in 1897. The Board of Managers eventually closed the beer hall in the 1920s under the pressure of temperance groups and Prohibition.<sup>18</sup>

Mental and physical health care and special facilities for the old and infirm, and for handling the deceased were important features of the Home. The hospital complex overlooking Lake Jeannette included the main hospital building with five wards (demolished 1933), two hospital annexes, an insane asylum, and a morgue. The older members resided in the barracks close to the hospital, with a separate smaller dining hall connected to the barracks. The hospital treated both inpatients and outpatients, as well as members and nonmembers of the Western Branch.

The final resting place for Home members was the Cemetery. Leavenworth National Cemetery originated in 1886 as the Western Branch, NHDVS Cemetery. The National Cemetery System had begun on November 19, 1865 with the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery by President Abraham Lincoln. However, the National Home cemeteries remained part of their Home branch until 1973, when an act of Congress placed them and other VA cemeteries in the National Cemetery system.<sup>19</sup>

With the incorporation of the Western Branch, NHDVS, along with the other National Home Branches, into the newly formed Veterans Administration in 1930, increased emphasis was placed on medical care. The new General, Medical and Surgical main hospital was begun in 1931, the year following 1930, when a record number of veterans were cared for. Completed in 1933, it cost nearly one million dollars and was finished by the VA, as the contractor's bid was too low to finish the work. At the same time, the Veterans Bureau closed its hospital in Kansas City, Missouri and transferred patients and staff to the new Leavenworth hospital.<sup>20</sup> In 1936, the name of the Western Branch Home was officially changed to Wadsworth, NHDVS in honor of Col. C.W. Wadsworth, who was for many years the General Treasurer of the National Home.

During World War II, 155 German prisoners of War were housed in Barracks 5. They undertook much of the remodelling done in this period at the station.<sup>21</sup> The dominant activity at the Home remained the domiciliaries until the end of 1944, when the Veterans Administration authorized its conversion to a neuropsychiatric hospital. All residents were transferred and the barracks were remodelled and renovated with new brick-enclosed fire stairs, dayroom additions, and several connector wings with porches. In 1946, however, a change in official VA policy caused the conversion plan to be dropped. The station was reassigned as a home and hospital with particular emphasis on medical programs. It was formally designed a VA medical center in 1946, and from that date medical programs, rather than home programs have predominated.<sup>22</sup>

Military terminology was discontinued in 1955, and in 1971, due to a Post Office address change, the station became known as the Veterans Administration Center. Shortly thereafter, the name Dwight D. Eisenhower/ Veterans Administration Medical Center was adopted.

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The DDE/VAMC's present mission as a modern medical facility is to care for veterans of all ages, with a specialization in geriatric care. All but the most complicated medical and surgical specialties are covered in-house, or referred to a consultant staff or to Kansas City hospitals. The hospital provides residency practicum programs for medical students at Kansas University and dental and ophthalmology students at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. To augment the existing facilities, a large new domiciliary will be erected in 1993 west of and connected to the main hospital complex.

The architecture of the historic district is striking both for its rich variety and visual coherency as a group. Similarity of materials, scale, and, to a great degree, design, link the diverse built fabric. Most of the buildings can be classified as excellent examples of their type and period. Among the most architecturally notable buildings are the group of 12 originally identical, well proportioned, designed, and crafted Georgian Revival style domiciliaries of 1885-1886. Not all identical, but clearly distinguishable as a group, the approximately one dozen single quarters and duplex quarters built between 1887 and 1922 share many similarities with substantial middle class civilian domestic architecture in the decades around the turn of the century. Although the some building designs are standardized, and buildings similar in concept to many of the Leavenworth buildings appear at other Homes, the architecture at VAMC is unique within the system. Only the main Hospital of 1931-1933 has a twin, in this case found at the Hospital at the Dayton, Ohio Home.

Among the most important and prominent individual buildings is the handsome Romanesque Revival General Mess and Kitchen, completed in 1886. Emphatically institutional and monumental, it is one of the first group of buildings constructed at the Home and the earliest major building to be designed in a style other than the Georgian Revival. The Ward Memorial, former administration building of 1898, introduced the Queen Anne style to nonresidential architecture at the Home. It displays the rich textural use of materials and eclectic mix of design elements that are hallmarks of the Queen Anne. It shares similarities, albeit at a larger scale, with the contemporary residences built for the administrators of the Home, many of whom had offices in this building.

Perhaps the most outstanding building, and certainly one of the most remarked upon, is the Chapel of 1893. An excellent example of the Late Gothic Revival style, executed in brick and stone with immense stained glass windows, it was considered to be an early example of combining Protestant and Catholic chapels on two levels under one roof. The architect, Louis Singleton Curtiss (1865-1924) was a colorful, eccentric, and talented pioneering designer based in Kansas City, Missouri from the late 1880s until his death. Born in Belleville, Ontario, Canada, Curtiss may have studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He migrated to Kansas City about 1887 where he worked for several years in the highly regarded firm of Adriaan Van Brunt before entering a ten year partnership (1889-1899) with Frederick C. Gunn. The Chapel at the Home was one of the firm's first commissions. In 1893, the same year as the Queen Anne style Home Chapel, their classically inspired design for the Missouri State Building was erected at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The partners' work included hotels, courthouses, and churches in Kansas and Missouri and as far afield as Texas and West Virginia. Upon the dissolution of the partnership, Curtiss went on to a distinguished individual career designing residences, commercial buildings -- notably the Baltimore Hotel for the Corrigan Brothers Realty Company, Kansas City, MO (1898-1899) -- and more than 30 railway depots, restaurants and hotels for the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey, in Kansas, New Mexico, Texas, and Missouri.<sup>23</sup>

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During his early years in Kansas City, Curtiss resided in an apartment near 13th and Cherry Streets. However, in 1908 he moved to a new apartment above his office in the Studio Building, a building he designed and constructed at 1118 McGee Street, Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>24</sup> His contributions to turn of the century architecture design and technology included the Boley Building of 1908 in Kansas City, the earliest known example of metal-and-glass, curtain-wall construction in the country. It may also have been the first to use rolled-up steel sections instead of built-up sections for the structural frame columns. He pioneered in the application of reinforced concrete and in the use of suspended steel building structures, such as the two-story building at 1105 Magee Street, Kansas City, MO.<sup>25</sup> Stylistically, Curtiss's design repertoire ranged from the Classical Revival, Romanesque, and Queen Anne styles most apparent in his earlier works, to reflect the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement and the Prairie School of architecture, as illustrated by the massive steel and reinforced concrete Bernard Berrigan House (1912-13) at 1200 West 5th Street in the Country Club district of Kansas City, MO.<sup>26</sup> The emphasis on use and celebration of new construction materials also became a major theme much of his commercial architecture of the early twentieth century, as exemplified by the buildings mentioned above. The Chapel of the WB/NHDVS in Leavenworth thus stands as an important early example of the work of one of the most prominent regional architects at the turn of the century. Its bold use of materials, scale, and ornamentation presages the innovative character of Curtiss's later outstanding work. Architectural drawings for the building survive in the Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries.

The contractor hired to undertake much of the early construction at the Home was James A. McGonigle (1834-1925), a prolific, well known, and highly respected Leavenworth builder considered to be the foremost contractor in Kansas.<sup>27</sup> McGonigle was responsible for many buildings erected in the Leavenworth area and throughout the western part of the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His employment by the managers of the National Home underscored their intent to employ high quality materials and services in the creation of a home for veteran soldiers. The initial contracts covered 17 buildings, including the 13 original domiciliaries, the first hospital, and the General Mess and Kitchen (Building 19). McGonigle oversaw not only the construction, but apparently the manufacture of bricks used in construction. As many as 50,000 bricks per day were fabricated of clay excavated from what later became Lake Jeannette.<sup>28</sup>

McGonigle was born at Hagerstown, Maryland where he apprenticed and worked as a house joiner before migrating to Leavenworth, Kansas in 1857. He began his own small contracting business prior to serving as first lieutenant in Company H of the First Kansas Volunteers in the Civil War. Badly wounded at the battle of Wilson's Creek, McGonigle resigned his commission and returned to Leavenworth. In 1864, he married Margaret Gilson. McGonigle served as a member of the city council in 1859-60 and 1865, as well as being a member of the second state legislature which met in Topeka, January 1862.<sup>29</sup> In 1924, McGonigle became ill and was admitted to the hospital, which he had constructed, at the Home; where he died of heart failure, February 27, 1925.

James A. McGonigle was one of the mid-west's most important contractors in the major settlement boom of the late nineteenth century. More than 2,300 structures from Illinois to Wyoming are attributed to him.<sup>30</sup> A Kansas City Star article of 1914 described him as the "dean of American building contractors."<sup>31</sup> Most of his buildings were masonry and later steel and concrete, with classically inspired designs and large proportions requiring great engineering skill and craftsmanship. Locally, McGonigle's firm constructed the earliest buildings at St. Mary's College, Leavenworth; Bethel African

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Methodist Episcopal Church and Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (1864; destroyed by fire 1961), north Leavenworth; the bishop's residence adjoining the cathedral; Leavenworth Union Depot (1878); buildings at Fort Leavenworth; and numerous of the city's largest residences, including 714 South Broadway (NR 1977). His own Queen Anne style mansion at 420 Broadway is remarkably similar to some of the residences he built at the Home, notably buildings 42, 43, and 44. Among his other notable projects were Machinery Hall and three other buildings at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893); 15 railroad depots from Missouri to Wyoming (including St. Louis, Kansas City, Atchison, and Denver); facilities for the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey restaurants; as well as private office buildings, state and federal buildings in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Iowa, Texas, and Colorado.<sup>32</sup> McGonigle may have also constructed the Chapel, designed by architect Louis Curtiss, at the Home (Building 66, 1893). In light of the convergence of later Curtiss and McGonigle railroad related projects, it is entirely possible that an early working relationship developed in part through construction of the Chapel at the Western Branch Home. McGonigle was joined in the business by this son, and the firm of James A. McGonigle & Son was responsible for 30 reinforced steel concrete buildings at Fort Crockett, Galveston, Texas and the interior finish for the Denver Mint Building.<sup>33</sup>

The classically derived design approach that characterized the Georgian Revival style remained the predominant architectural vocabulary used at the Home well into the twentieth century. The most important of the twentieth century buildings is the main Hospital complex of 1931-33, an imposing group of similar Classical Revival style buildings. Designed in-house by the VA, and similar to the hospital at the Dayton, Ohio Home, they are a good and early example of multiple-story U-plan or H-plan hospital design, reflecting new understandings of disease and new approaches to scientifically efficient stacked floor plans, as well as being handsome and well-crafted buildings.<sup>34</sup>

The historic designed landscape that forms the setting for both the buildings and Leavenworth National Cemetery within the historic district is an important, although not well documented, example of the work of famous nineteenth-century landscape architect based in the midwest, Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814-1900).<sup>35</sup> Born in Massachusetts, H.W.S. Cleveland collaborated with noted eastern designers Robert Morris Copeland, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Calvert Vaux before settling in Chicago in 1869. A pioneer in landscape architecture in the frontier states, Cleveland's philosophy advocated developing designs that worked in harmony with the existing natural landscape. These principles were explicated in his book Landscape Architecture as Applied to the Wants of the West in which he stated that landscape architecture was "the art of arranging land so as to adapt it most conveniently, economically, and gracefully to any of the varied wants of civilization".<sup>36</sup>

Cleveland's projects included cemeteries, residential suburbs, parks, resorts, campuses, and many institutional developments in the midwest and the eastern seaboard. Three projects are known in Kansas. The Western Branch Home was Cleveland's third Kansas commission, following Highland Cemetery in Junction City (1870), one of the state's earliest "Rural" or Romantic cemeteries, and a plan for the statehouse grounds in Topeka (1871), of which only the planting plan survives and the extent of execution is unclear.<sup>37</sup> His Leavenworth design integrates the romantic and picturesque aesthetic with reference to the irregular natural topography and practical concerns of institutional layout. The long ridge-like area of the natural topography disallowed a rectilinear arrangement of buildings. Instead they are set atop the ridge in a roughly crescent layout and oriented across the ridge. This layout afforded residents sweeping views of the valleys below. The bold linear form used here is similar to Cleveland's State Training

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School in Red Wing, Minnesota of the 1880s, also designed to take advantage of river valley views. In other instances, however, where land forms dictated, Cleveland's institutional site plans are more traditional and rectilinear (e.g. Shattuck School, Faribault, Minnesota and Mt. Pleasant Treatment Center, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately, little documentation exists in Cleveland papers on the Soldiers Home project. The only known references to the Home are two mentions in correspondence and an 1891 listing of projects, all on file at the Library of Congress.<sup>39</sup> Although recognized by scholars of landscape architecture history as one of the most important figures in American design at the turn of the century, no comprehensive inventory and analysis of Cleveland's work has yet been published.

The DDE/VAMC has provided a home environment and medical care to over 150,000 veterans during its more than 100 years of existence. Changes in appearance and operation have been inevitable in this long history of continuous use in service to the country's veterans. In most cases, modifications and new construction have occurred due to expanding or shifting patient care programs, a critical need for more modern specialized facilities, or alteration in recreational interests (reflecting national trends). Despite these changes, DDE/VAMC continues to accurately represent its original design and important later developments before 1943. The predominantly brick buildings, arranged on curving roads through tree dotted lawns create the restful park- and campus-like setting originally intended.

## **II. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION**

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center (DDE/VAMC) Historic District in Leavenworth, Kansas is the former Western Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (WB/NHDVS), founded in 1885. It consists of a medical complex of residential, hospital, and support buildings, along with an expansive cemetery, in a historic landscaped, park- and campus-like setting. The 213.97-acre site is characterized by rolling terrain, tree-dotted lawns, a man-made lake, and curving roads. The historic buildings constructed between 1885 and the early 1940s are mostly well-designed and crafted examples of popular period Victorian revival styles executed in brick and stone, with a few wood-frame examples. The work of a notable local architect and builder are represented, as well as that of a nationally important landscape architect. The original planning concept combined civilian and military influences in a planned rehabilitative community. The evolution of the Home into a major regional Veterans Administration medical center in the 1930s is reflected in the building scale and siting. The historic district retains excellent overall integrity of buildings and landscape. Few buildings have been demolished and few have been constructed since 1943. Located south of the town of Leavenworth, the district is roughly bounded by U.S. Highway 73 (Wilson Avenue) and the former A.T. and S.F. Railroad (west), the Missouri Pacific Railroad and Missouri River (east), Limit Street (north), and Kansas State Highway 5 (south). It contains a total of 106 properties, of which 82 historic resources contribute to the significance of the district: 75 buildings, 3 structures, 2 objects, and 2 landscape sites. The 24 noncontributing buildings were constructed after the end of the period of significance (1943). An inventory of these resources is included following the descriptive narrative. Archaeological resources are also present, including 11 documented historic sites and a number of areas with high potential to contain prehistoric and historic archaeological sites.

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**SITE**

The Western Branch/NHDVS occupies 213.97 acres, reduced from its original size of 640 acres. The major topographical features of the site are two high points joined by a north-south ridge parallel to the Missouri River, gently sloping on the west and more steeply angled on the east. Adjacent hilltops are occupied by the 113.15-acre Leavenworth National Cemetery in the southeast portion of the property.

**SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT**

Prior to the founding of the Home, in 1830, the grounds were contained in a Delaware Indian Reservation. The earliest documented occupation, however, was the Stockbridge (Indian) Baptist Mission established in the 1844-1845. The mission included several trails, the Indian settlement, and a mission house which was sited in the approximate location of present-day Building 122, north of Lake Jeannette. Twelve burials, thought to be Indian, were found during construction of Building 122 and were reinterred in the National Cemetery.<sup>40</sup> Records indicate that in the 1860s through the early 1880s, the property that is now the DDE/VAMC was held in absentee ownership and was not improved.<sup>41</sup>

A contract for construction of ten brick buildings was awarded to James A. McGonigle, a Leavenworth contractor, on May 16, 1885. Work began immediately, and 17 buildings had been completed by 1886, of which 13 were identical barracks.<sup>42</sup> Early views show that the site was mostly open lawn dotted with trees as it is today. Construction continued through the 1880s and 1890s, forming a complex of approximately 35 buildings by 1900. Most early buildings were constructed of local limestone, brick, and terra cotta tile manufactured on the property. The Cemetery was also laid out during this period with curving roads, trees, and sweeping views of the Missouri River. The first burial occurred in 1886.

At the turn of the century, a report to the Board of Managers described the Home.

Its general appearance from the railway station... is in every way worthy of a national institution and of the beneficent purpose it represents. For a half mile along the elevated plateau stands an imposing array of dormitory buildings of pleasing architecture, enlivened with rifts of climbing ivy and surrounded with lawns and shrubbery. The most notable object in view to the right, is the grey stone chapel, with bold and picturesque skylines, perched on the brink of its slope.... To balance this attractive feature, there is reared to the left, on the northern flank, a grand and lofty music stand of oriental splendor... Beyond the hospital and "Old Men's Buildings" at the southern end, a deep artificial lake with a fountain in the center and surrounded with grassy banks, refreshes the eyes of invalids who frequent the hospital porches.<sup>43</sup> (Board of Managers Report 1895)

Nearly all the historic buildings within the DDE/VAMC were standing at this time, and construction was considered to be essentially complete. The tree-dotted lawns and curving roads of the landscape appeared basically as they do today, but were scattered with popular Victorian era elements such as bandstands, fountains, a topiary globe, and flower beds. Sixty cannon acquired from military surplus lined Franklin Avenue. Funding for construction was provided by the federal government, with the exception of several buildings (Ward Memorial and Chapel) and ornamental grounds furnishings (lake, bandstands, fountains).

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A large portion of the outlying lands were dedicated to agriculture, including crop production and animal grazing.

Oil lamps, which proved unsatisfactory, originally illuminated the grounds, and in 1893, electric arc lights were introduced. The buildings were heated by steam and lighted by gas.

By 1900, the physical growth of the Home had stabilized, although several new buildings were erected in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In 1930, the WB/NHDVS was incorporated into the newly created Veterans Administration system. Little new construction occurred for several decades. However, the few buildings that were built between 1931 and 1939 constituted a major building campaign for a new main hospital complex, a large barracks building, and a large nurses' quarters building. This period also witnessed reconfiguration of the entrance road to its present form.

A report on the lands and buildings in 1946 noted that the property contained 100 buildings and 725 acres: 240 acres of lawn surrounding buildings; 125 acres of open lawn (no buildings); 439 acres of cultivated, pasture, and miscellaneous land; and 46 acres in the cemetery. There were approximately three miles of paved or improved roads and approximately nine miles of gravel, cinder, or dirt roads.<sup>44</sup>

## **PLAN**

The original site plan, including circulation patterns, location of buildings, and most likely some plantings, is thought to have been the design of landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland. No plans are known to exist, but the project is mentioned in Cleveland's correspondence.<sup>45</sup> Still clearly evident (see 1897 Bird's-Eye View), the design incorporates the natural north-south ridge as the long spine of a roughly C-shape layout of roads and buildings. Franklin Avenue (originally called Front Street) and a secondary road, Back Street, follow the ridge. At the south end, Franklin curves southeast and intersects Lakeside Drive, which encircles Lake Jeannette. The lake was formed from a clay quarry used in manufacturing brick and terra cotta tile for construction of early buildings and road paving. At the northern end of the "C", Riverview Avenue intersects Franklin Avenue and curves northeast. Franklin Avenue continues north to the property boundary. The main entrance road originally ran from the west gate to the center of the C, intersecting Franklin Avenue approximately between Buildings 9 and 10. A fragment of this road is still visible near the West Gate. In the 1930s, it was altered to its current configuration. The approach road now divides just inside the gate into a north and a south alignment (North Rowland Road and South Rowland Road) which follow a gentle upward slope to join Franklin Road on the north and Lakeside Drive on the south.

The arrangement of buildings reflects clearly the original planning concept and changes as the mission of the Home and hospital planning theory changed in the twentieth century. Eight (originally nine) identical brick Georgian Colonial Revival style Domiciliary buildings (Buildings 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14; all 1885) are aligned along the ridge spine between Franklin Avenue and Back Street. The domiciliaries are oriented east-west, perpendicular to the ridge, making maximum use of the linear site and taking advantage of breezes and vistas. Domiciliaries Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4; all 1885, are grouped along both sides of Riverview Street on the northeast curve of the "C". They were originally referred to as barracks.

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Originally, the mess hall, recreation hall, administration building, and the Home director's quarters were the functions assigned to the area at the north end of the domiciliary group. These buildings and functions remain, but administration moved to a newly constructed building west of Franklin Avenue across from the domiciliaries in 1903 (Building 21), and the construction of a new main Hospital complex (Buildings 88, 89, 90, 91) in 1931-33 brought a new function to this area, previously located at the south end of the complex. Two residential buildings (Buildings 42, 1887 and Building 45, 1901) were relocated further north to their present site at that time. The area at the southern end of the domiciliary group around Lake Jeannette contained the main hospital, hospital staff residences, and the largest barracks. A Chapel was added in 1893, and Hospital functions were relocated in 1933.

Service functions and other residential structures for supply and maintenance staff are located east of the "C", as they were originally. Many service buildings are sited in a low hollow basin so as to not interfere with views from the ridge towards the river and to not compete visually with the main buildings.

## **BUILDINGS**

James A. McGonigle was responsible for the initial construction at the Home.<sup>46</sup> No information has come to light regarding the identity of the architect. The historic buildings at DDE/VAMC are constructed mostly of brick trimmed with limestone (both smooth and quarry-face), sandstone, terra cotta tile, and concrete. Quarry-faced limestone block, high foundations with raised mortar joints are typical of the early brick buildings. Stone was reserved for rustic buildings and for selected key service buildings: the Boiler Plant (Building 39, 1896), the Stable (ca. 1895, demolished), the West Gate Guard House and Shelter (Buildings 40 and 30, both 1910), and the Cemetery Shelter (Building 58, 1921). Wood-frame construction was used from the 1890s onward, but was restricted to residential, garage, and service/maintenance buildings.

Buildings are generally one- and two-stories in height with a few exceptions. The tallest early buildings are the original three-story Hospital (1886, demolished) and the General Mess and Kitchen (Building 19, 1886). Domiciliary Services, former Barracks (Building 100, 1904) and N. P. Hospital, former Barracks (Building 122, 1939) are also three stories, while the main Hospital complex (Buildings 88, 89, 90, 91; 1931-1933) is four to six stories.

The most common roof forms are gable and hip, with one mansard roof (rear wing of Building 18; 1897). Flat roofs appear within the main Hospital complex, but otherwise exist mostly on buildings less than 50 years old (noncontributing). Original roof sheathing appears to have been either standing seam metal or slate, although tile was used on some stone buildings. The buildings are well-designed and finely crafted. For the most part, they are well maintained.

Stylistically, the buildings fall into several groups. The oldest domiciliary buildings (Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14), along with the original hospital that no longer exists, set a tone of military-like austerity in the mid-1880s. These buildings exhibit a restrained Georgian Colonial Revival style executed as multi-story structures with central blocks and flanking wings fronted with wood porches and capped with hip roofs. This form is repeated in the Domiciliary Services, former Barracks (Building 100, 1904). The T-plan Supply Storehouse (Building 41, 1899; 1908) is a variant with a gable roof and no

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central block. The latest examples in this group are the Nurses' Quarters (Building 71, 1932/33) and the N. P. Hospital, former Barracks (Building 122, 1939), both academic Georgian Colonial Revival brick buildings with a gable roof and gabled pavilions.

The residential quarters buildings of the 1880s built for Home and hospital administrators (Buildings 42, 43, 44, 51, and 53; all 1887) and one duplex (Building 46, 1889) are well within the stylistic range of civilian Queen Anne style houses of the late nineteenth century with complex massing and roofs, use of mixed masonry and wood materials, and decorated, textural surface treatments. Houses built in the subsequent decades continue to follow mainstream trends, exhibiting a leaning towards simplification of form and decoration and the introduction of Colonial Revival design elements (Buildings 47, 1906; 48, 1908; 52, 1892; 61, 1900). The same applies to duplex buildings (Buildings 34, 1898; 56, 1915/16; 57, 1921; and 68, 1922) and a four-unit nurses quarters building (76, 1921).

The third group is composed of ten major and prominent buildings and one complex of four buildings with unique designs and functions at the Home. Four were built in the 1880s and 1890s, and five buildings and one complex date from between 1900 and 1933.

(1) The earliest is Franklin Hall, General Mess and Kitchen (Building 19; 1886), a Romanesque Revival style brick building with two large, square, corner stair towers, tall narrow windows, and a two story iron porch, now covered over. (2) The original administration building and library, Ward Memorial Building containing the Hancock Library (Building 29, 1888) is an eclectic Queen Anne style structure of brick and stone with a turreted corner tower. The building is currently threatened by structural wind and water damage and over 10 years of vacancy. These two buildings form an important visual focus, flanking the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Riverview Avenue. (3) The third major non-hospital building constructed at the Home is the Chapel (Building 66; 1893), an imposing and eclectic Late Gothic Revival style building designed by noted Kansas City architect Louis Curtiss and highly unusual in incorporating both a Catholic and a Protestant chapel on two levels.<sup>47</sup> Sited on the west side of Franklin Avenue opposite the domiciliaries, the Chapel was the first building to interrupt vistas to the east. (4) Located southeast of Building 19 and sited on a terrace below Back Street, the "Dugout" Recreation Hall (Building 64; 1898) combines Gothic and Romanesque Revival style elements in a building approached by an arched bridge to the second level.

By the turn of the century, administrative requirements had outgrown Building 29 and a new facility was built on the west side of Franklin Avenue. (5) The Administration Building (Building 21, 1902/1903) incorporates classically-inspired design elements, but returns to the severity of the early buildings. (6&7) The West Gate Guard House (Building 40, 1910) and Shelter (Building 30, 1910) with flanking wing walls provide a new formal main entrance designed in a simplified rustic Renaissance Revival style and executed in stone with tile roofs. (8) The former A.T. and S.F. Railroad station, now Police Station (Building 94, 1916), located just outside the main entrance incorporates Queen Anne elements under a broad tiled roof. (9) A rustic Renaissance Revival Cemetery Shelter (Building 58, 1921) is similar to the West Gate buildings in form, scale, and materials and features a stone porch on two sides. (10) A major new construction program instituted by the Veterans Administration when it took over the Home in 1930 resulted in the addition of a massive new main hospital complex. The Hospital (Buildings 88, 89, 90, 91; 1931-1933) is a block of four- to six-story, classically detailed brick buildings with wide overhanging cornices and a half-round columned entrance portico. They introduce a monumental scale not previously

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present at the Home and occupy a site originally intended for administrative residential purposes.

Historic service and maintenance buildings fall into three groups. The first consists of two large masonry buildings with coarse ornamentation, the Boiler Plant (Building 39, 1896) and the Fire Station and Garage (Building 54, 1927/1928). The second is the simple, unadorned utilitarian buildings of brick and wood, which constitute the majority of the shops, service, and storage buildings. The third is garages designed to hold from one to 15 cars, built in the 1930s. They are similar to civilian residential garages of the period, and in their expanded form, to garages constructed on military bases at that time.

Alterations to historic buildings have resulted from changes in use (i.e. barracks/domiciliaries converted to brief use as N.P. Hospital in 1944-1945), in a few cases from additions, and from window replacements. The construction of concrete handicap ramps at several buildings, most notably Building 29 and Building 66, in the 1980s introduced unsympathetic elements to the original facade. In no instance, however, has a building been altered beyond recognition, nor has its overall integrity been compromised.

Five buildings constructed in the 1880s and 1890s that no longer stand deserve mention. Domiciliary Building 5, 1886, was identical to the other buildings in this group and stood between Buildings 6 and 19 prior to its destruction by fire in the 1950s. The original main hospital (1885-1886) was designed as an expanded version of the domiciliaries and occupied the present site of Building 122 of 1939. A second building at the Home designed by Louis Curtiss was a large brick domiciliary under a massive sloping roof. It stood south of Building 12 and west of the original hospital. It was replaced by the large Domiciliary Building 100, 1904, constructed across Franklin Avenue. The Stable of ca. 1895 stood in the east part of the Home. It was a Queen Anne style building with sloping Tudor gables, Romanesque arched entrances and textured brick and stone walls. A two-story, brick Romanesque Revival Hotel and Theater building with drip molding cornice and round corner tower was constructed in 1900. The Hotel closed in 1946, and the building was demolished in 1959 and replaced with the present Theater and Library (Building 152, 1960). All the agricultural buildings (approximately six), with the exception of Building 33, a former Milk House, have been removed.

New construction since 1943 includes one ranch house (Building 49, 1955), the Theater and Library (Building 152, 1960), a Laundry (Building 153, 1978), a Maintenance Building (Building 160, ca. 1980), a Cemetery Office (No Number, 1992), mechanical structures, and small sheds.

## **STRUCTURES AND OBJECTS**

A variety of decorative and utilitarian structures and objects have historically been scattered around the property. Two structures of note are the small wood-frame Fire Hose Storage structure used between 1890 and 1940 and presently located on the east side of Franklin Avenue near Buildings 19 and 6, and the large steel Water Tank (Building 124; 1940) located in the northeast corner of the property. In the nineteenth century, numerous landscape elements were added, several of which remain today. These include cast iron benches with a fern motif manufactured in Leavenworth, concrete garden benches, and concrete urns and birdbaths. Presently located at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Riverview Avenue is a large limestone monolithic Monument (Building 125A, 1936). It originally stood outside the

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West Gate. It was given by a former member, John Joy, as part of a bequest including the classically-inspired limestone Speaker's Stand (Building 125B, 1936) in the Cemetery. A single cannon remains from the group of 60 that lined Franklin Avenue. Manufactured in Spain in 1856, it was captured by Admiral Dewey at San Felipe near Manila. Adjacent to the cannon are other recent monuments and a steel flagpole (Building 126, ca. 1960) that replaced an earlier wood pole on the same site.

Among the structures that once graced the landscape and no longer stand were three bandstands. A small stand erected in 1887 in front of Building 19 was replaced in 1892 by a larger ornate domed structure. It was dismantled and burned in 1964 due to its deteriorated condition. An oriental influenced bandstand with an onion dome roof stood in Lake Jeannette from 1890 until it too was torn down in 1934. Two fountains/ponds also existed opposite Building 19, one of which was given by the Anheuser-Busch Company of St. Louis, Missouri in 1892. The company supplied beer to the beer hall in the recreation building (Building 64).

None of the floral planting beds survive, nor do the two greenhouses built in 1890-1895, or a large floral globe topiary, constructed of chicken wire and plants at the turn of the century. The globe stood at the intersection of Franklin and Riverview Avenues.

## **LANDSCAPE**

The key characteristics of the historic landscape of the Home likely designed by H.W.S. Cleveland were the open expanses of lawn scattered with trees, the broad arcs of the circulation roads, which like the placement of the buildings, responded to the undulating natural topography, and the viewsheds. Important viewsheds were established during the initial construction from the ridge (Franklin Avenue), with unobstructed vistas to the west and east. Roads were paved with the brick and edged with hollow terra cotta curbs designed to accommodate conduits. Sections of original paving and curbing remain around Lake Jeannette and at the intersection of North and South Rowland Roads near the West Gate. The clay quarry pit used to make the brick and tile was transformed into Lake Jeannette (approximately 4 acres), an important landscape amenity, by the early 1890s.

## **LEAVENWORTH NATIONAL CEMETERY**

The design of the approximately 113-acre Cemetery was likely created by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland.<sup>48</sup> It follows the park-like cemetery layout popular in the late nineteenth century. The roads sweep up the hill past the Cemetery Shelter House (Building 58; 1921) and the Speaker's Stand (Building 125B, 1936) to a limestone obelisk monument at the crest of the hill. The spacious burial lawns are laid out with regular rows of similar white gravestones and planted with scattered trees. Approximately 50 acres of ridge and side slopes are developed; the remainder, comprising ravines and an east-west ridge, are undeveloped.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The first archaeological survey of DDE/VAMC was conducted in 1990.<sup>49</sup> The survey identified 17 sites, primarily dump/discard sites, associated with the National Home or the Veterans Administration occupation. Five sites were recommended as eligible for inclusion in the National Register (14Lv136, -143, -145, -149, -150). The remains of the mid-nineteenth century Stockbridge Indian settlement and mission were not located, and are presumed to have been impacted by the construction of Building 122 in 1939. This area, along with others adjacent to the Home buildings are considered to have high potential to contain buried archaeological resources.

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C. Deeds

Leavenworth County, Kansas

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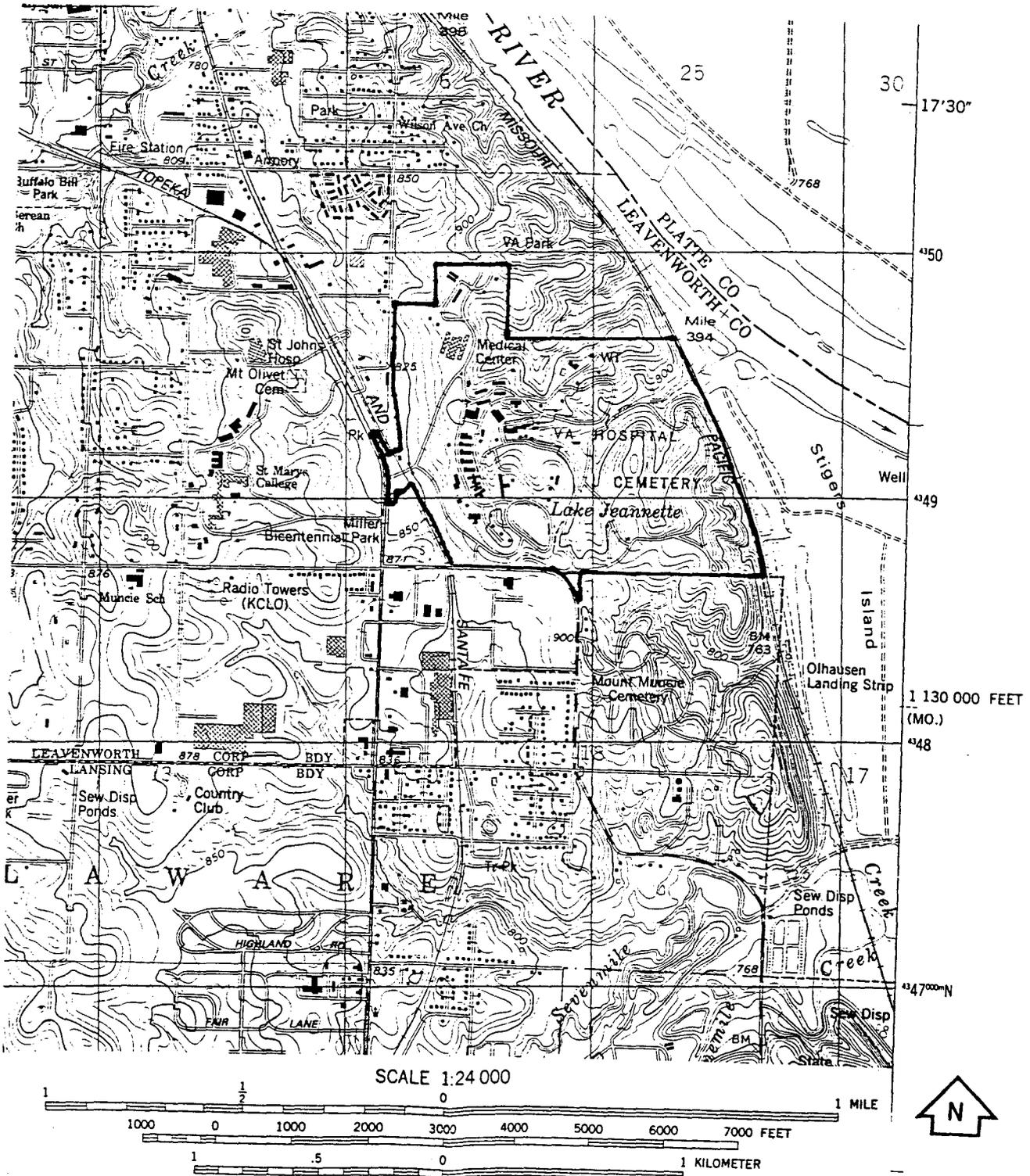
**V. PROJECT INFORMATION**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contracted for the completion of a Historic Preservation Plan for the DDE/VAMC in Leavenworth, Kansas. The scope of the project included the preparation of a historic resources survey, evaluation, National Register nomination and Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) overview for the campus, and the development of a Historic Preservation Plan (HPP). In addition, the scope of the project included the preparation of an existing conditions and reuse study and Historic American Buildings Survey documentation for Building 29. This HABS overview of the facility has been prepared as a component of the HPP to assist the VA in compliance with Section 100 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended.

This report was completed in June and July 1993 by Virginia H. Adams, Architectural Historian and Maureen A. Cavanaugh, Preservation Planner, of the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The Historic American Buildings Survey large format photography was undertaken in June 1993 by Robert Brewster of Warren Jagger Photography, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island.

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SOLDIERS WESTERN BRANCH  
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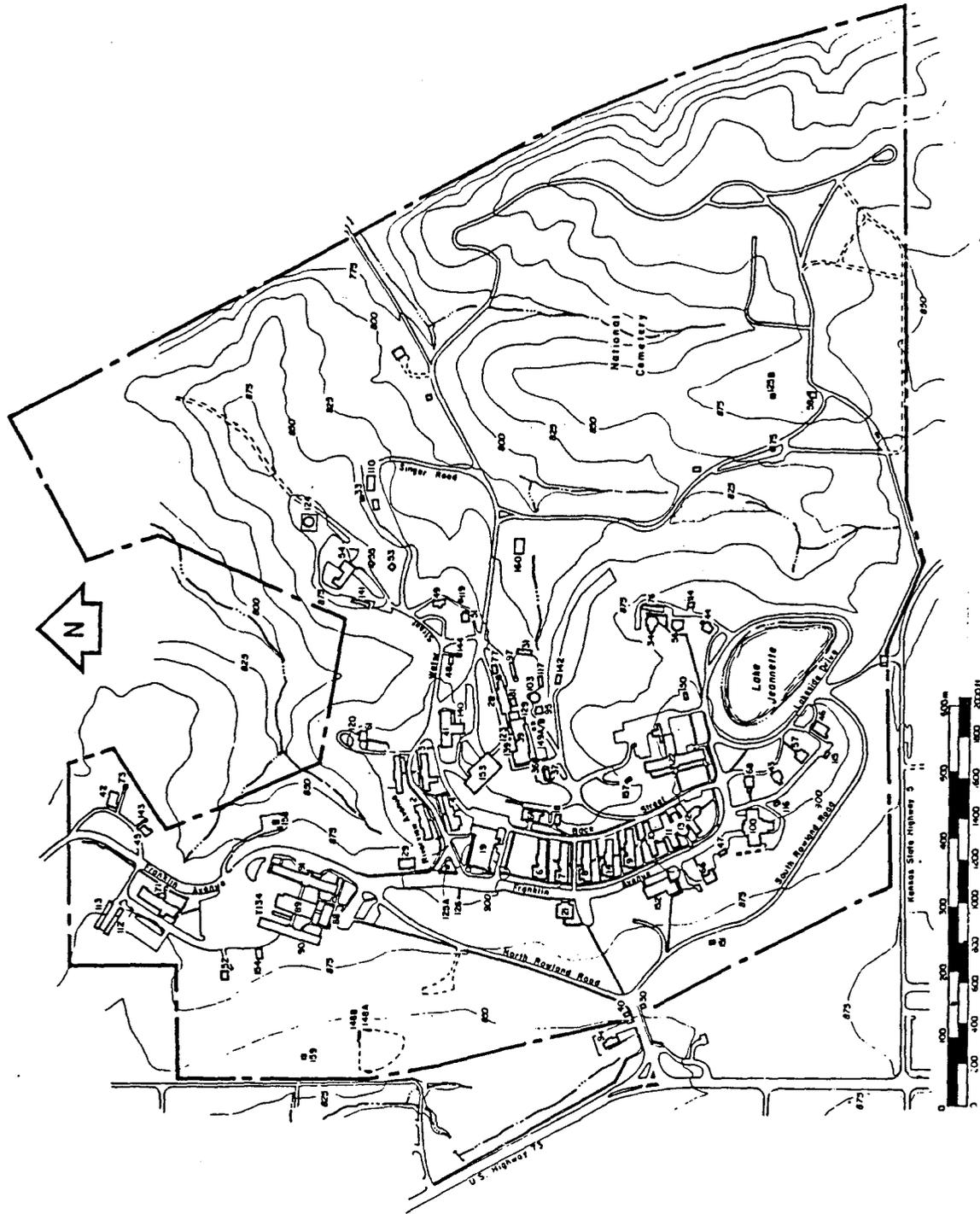
LOCATION MAP



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SOLDIERS WESTERN BRANCH  
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LOCATION MAP

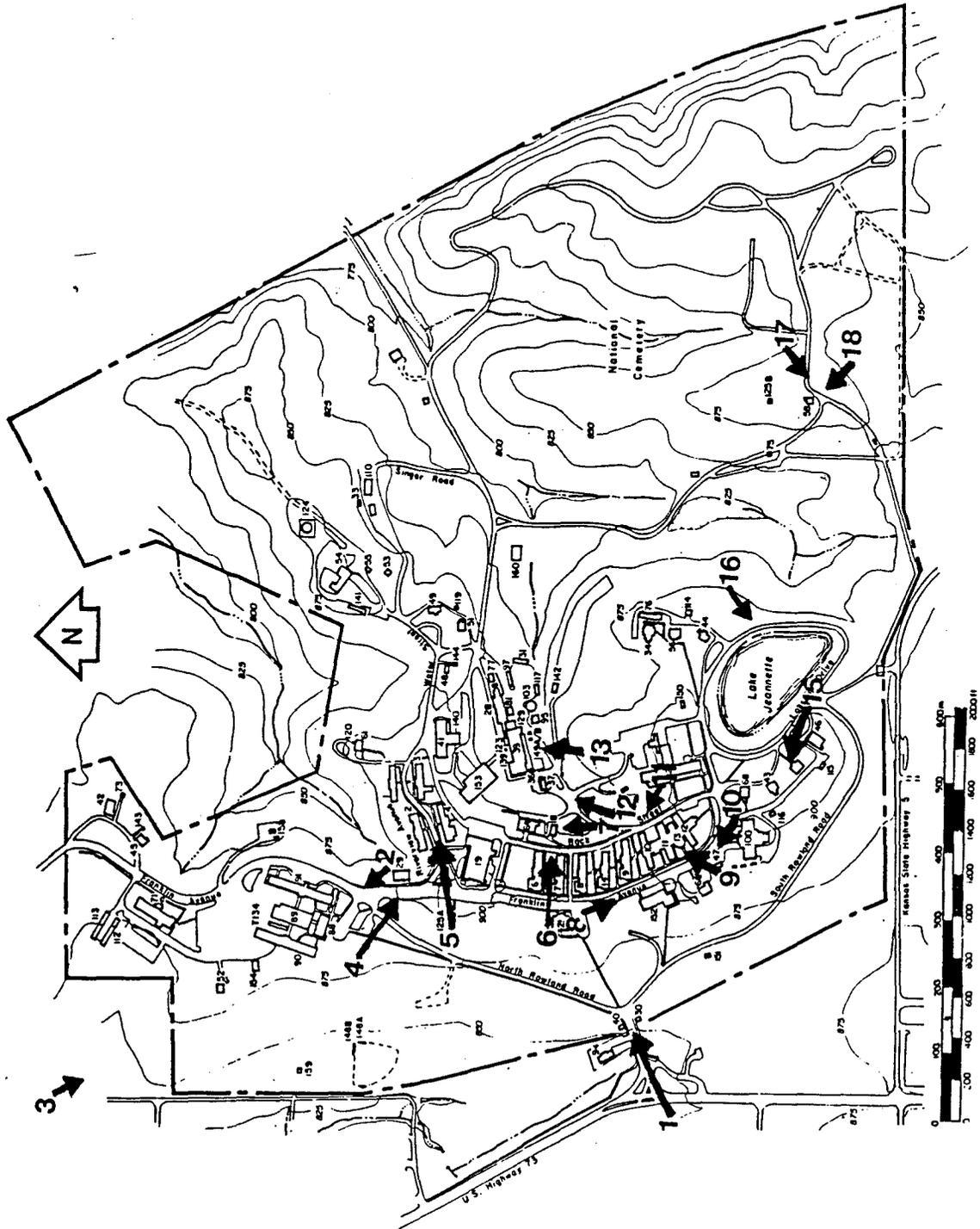
DWIGHT D EISENHOWER VAMC



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KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS

DWIGHT D EISENHOWER VAMC



ADDENDUM TO:  
NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS  
WESTERN BRANCH  
(Department of Veteran Affairs Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center)  
4101 South Fourth Street  
Leavenworth  
Leavenworth County  
Kansas

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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