

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS – VHA'S ANCESTRAL ORIGINS

Celebrating Our Civil War Roots

2015 VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

APRIL 22, 2015
VHA HISTORIAN

April 22, 2015



VA
HEALTH
CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

“REGULARS” vs. “VOLUNTEERS”

REGULARS

- “Lifers”
- Professional, careerists
- Signed up for 5 year stints
- Disciplined
- Skilled in combat & weapons
- Knew rules & conduct of War
- Many trained at military academies

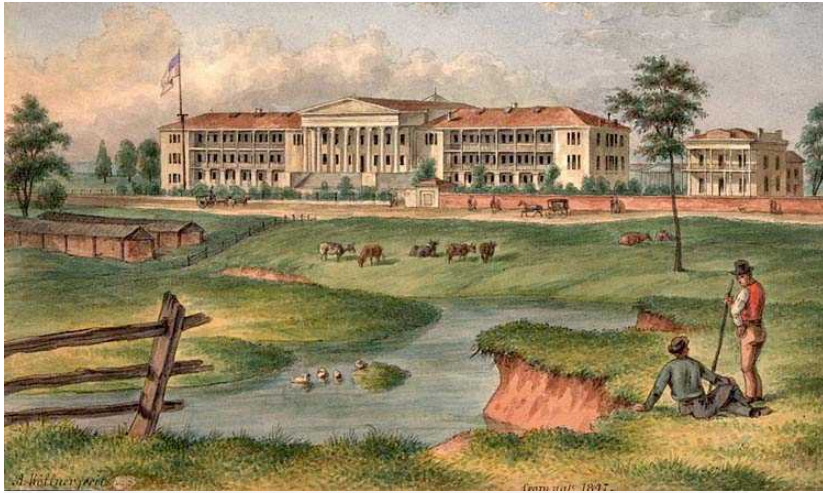


Private Jacob Harker
120th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Co. C

VOLUNTEERS

- “citizen-soldiers”
- Temporary “volunteer” forces
- Signed up for short terms then went back home
- Farmers, students, blue & white collar workers, former slaves, immigrants, etc.
- Little to no military or weapons training; undisciplined

VETERANS BENEFITS BEFORE 1860



Federal Veterans benefits were primarily for “REGULARS”

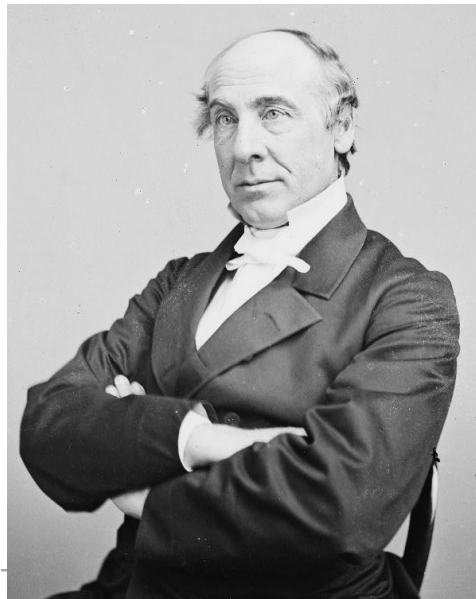
- 1775 – 1855 - bounties-land warrants
- 1776 – 2nd Continental Congress authorized first disability pensions
- 1794 – widows & orphans benefits
- 1834 – **U.S. Naval Asylum** (Philadelphia) for Navy Regulars – old or disabled men with 20+ years of service
- 1851 – **U.S. Soldiers Home** (D.C.) for Army Regulars – old or disabled men with 20+ years of service
- 1855 – **Government Insane Asylum** “St. Elizabeth’s” (D.C.)

U.S. Sanitary Commission

Supported U.S. VOLUNTEER Forces

- April 1861 - Army & its medical department was very small
- June 1861 - U.S. Sanitary Commission, a volunteer organization, to assist the Army medical department with providing care and supplies for regiments of U.S. VOLUNTEERS

Dr. Henry Bellows,
President,
U.S. Sanitary Commission



U.S. Sanitary Commission Revealed a Need



Pvt. William Sergeant, Co. E, 53rd
PA Volunteer Infantry



U.S. Sanitary Commission "soldiers home" on New York Ave.,
D.C., 1863 c.

1862

“Volunteers” Placed on Equal Footing with “Regulars”

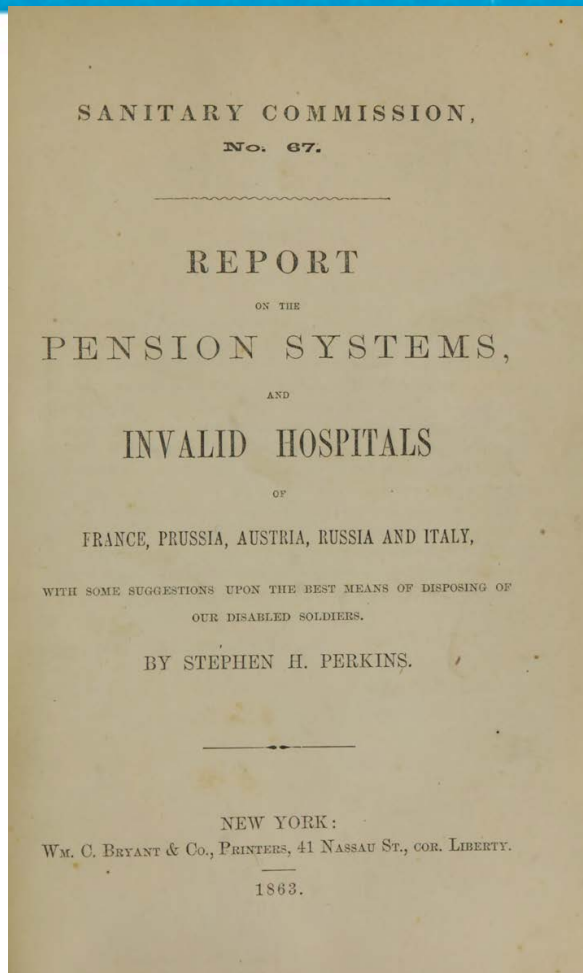
July 14, 1862.

Who may
have pensions.
Post, p. 626.

CHAP. CLXVI. — *An Act to grant Pensions.*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That if any officer, non-commissioned officer, musician, or private of the army, including regulars, volunteers, and militia, or any officer, warrant, or petty officer, musician, seaman, ordinary seaman, flotilla-man, marine, clerk, landsman, pilot, or other person in the navy or marine corps, has been, since the fourth day of March, eighteen hundred and sixty-one, or shall hereafter be, disabled by reason of any wound received or disease contracted while in the service of the United States, and in the line of duty, he shall, upon making due proof of the fact according to such forms and regulations as are or may be provided by or in pursuance of law, be placed upon the list of invalid pensions of the United States, and be entitled to receive, for the highest rate of disability, such pension as is hereinafter provided in such cases, and for an inferior disability an amount proportionate to the highest

1863 U.S. Sanitary Commission Report No. 67



Perkins report recommended:

- Every permanently disabled officer & soldier entitled to a pension; widows & orphans get half pensions
- All pensioners have a right to appointments in civil service positions, based on Prussia's "Versorgungs-Scheins"
- Establish hospitals and industrial villages with boarding houses for unmarried men or small cottages for invalids; run under military rules with occupations of various kinds.

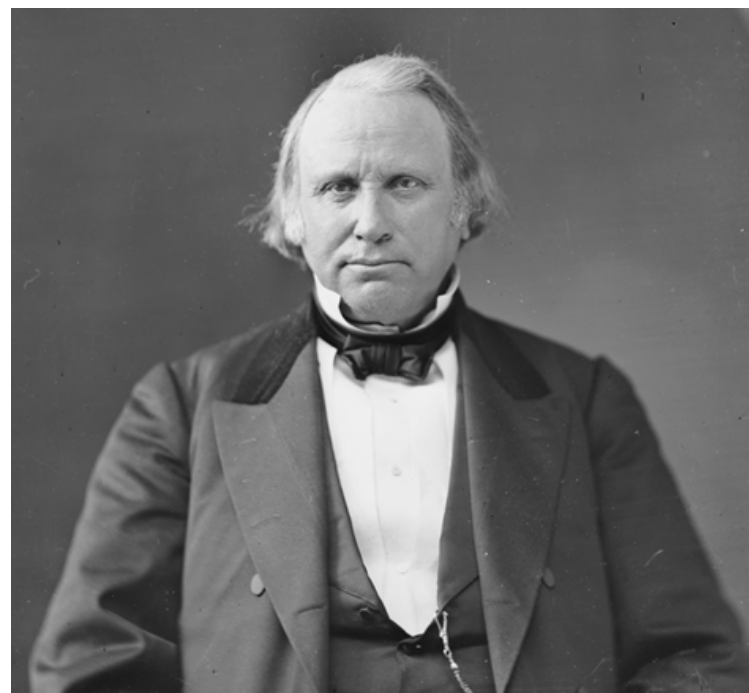
What would they do?
Expand Pensions? Provide a Home?

1864

A Petition & Bill for a National Asylum (Home)



Miss Delphine P. Baker

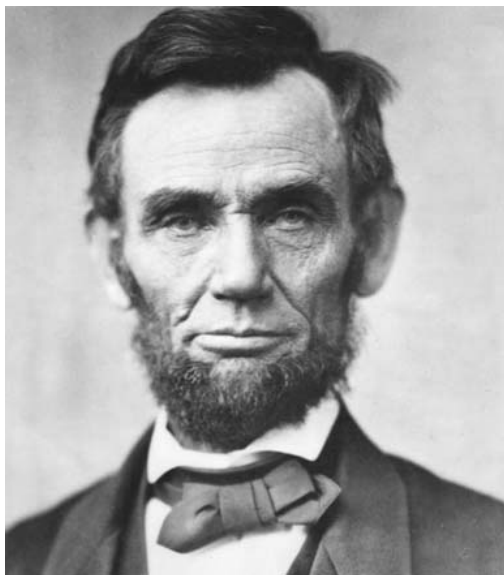


Senator Henry Wilson
(Massachusetts)

1865

National Asylum for VOLUNTEERS Becomes Law

March 3, 1865 – the day
before Lincoln's 2nd
inauguration



Established for U.S. (Union) Volunteer Force Veterans only

1865 – 1866 A Rough First Year

- 100 of the North's leading men were appointed to the original board
- Post Fund established to accept donations
- 3 known meetings scheduled, but failed to reach a quorum
- March 21, 1866 amendment eliminated the 100 incorporators
- Board of Managers, which included the U.S. President, appointed by Joint Resolution on April 21, 1866
- Point Lookout, MD, site for the Asylum
- General Benjamin F. Butler appointed as its first president



General Benjamin F. Butler
First National Home President
1866-1880



The first National Home opened November 1, 1866 in Togus, Maine

1870 - 5 Years After the War



- 4 National Homes: Togus, Dayton, Milwaukee, & Hampton
- First hospital & chapel buildings at Dayton
- First African American Veterans (USCT) admitted at Dayton
- Roughly 3,800 residents at that time



State & National Homes

In 1888 the relationship was cemented into law:

- State or territory Homes remained under control of State or territory authority and their own management
- National Home to reimburse such Homes for every disabled Veteran admitted at a cost not more than maintaining a man at the National Home
- National Homes given power to inspect State or territory Homes and report to Congress
- National Homes to make rules, regulations, and set number of Veterans who could receive care from State or territory Homes



Michigan Soldiers Home, Grand Rapids, 1903 c.

WHO WAS ELIGIBLE?

- 1865 - Honorably discharged sick or disabled officers, soldiers, and seamen of U.S. **(Union)** Volunteer forces (all branches) wounded or disabled during service
- Included African Americans (USCT) & “Galvanized Yankees”
- 1871 – War of 1812 and Mexican War “volunteers”
- 1898 – Spanish American War Veterans
- 1900 – ALL honorably discharged officers, soldiers, and sailors of REGULAR or VOLUNTEER forces of ANY WAR
- 1923 – Women – World War I



Holistic Care – Treating the Whole Man



OPERATING ROOM

Operating room
& hospital ward
at Bath, 1890s



WARD OF HOSPITAL

- Hospitals and best medical care available
- Convalescence
- Residence & community
- Clothing
- Financial security
- Schools-education
- Occupational training or re-training programs
- Employment & responsibility
- Structure, stability, discipline
- Beautiful park-like surroundings
- Leisure, music, & creative activities
- Moral, religious, customs
- Comradery with cohorts & the public
- Final resting grounds & military funeral

Life at the National Homes



Quarters (Barracks), Bath, 1890s



Bathrooms, Bath, 1900 c.

Life at the National Homes



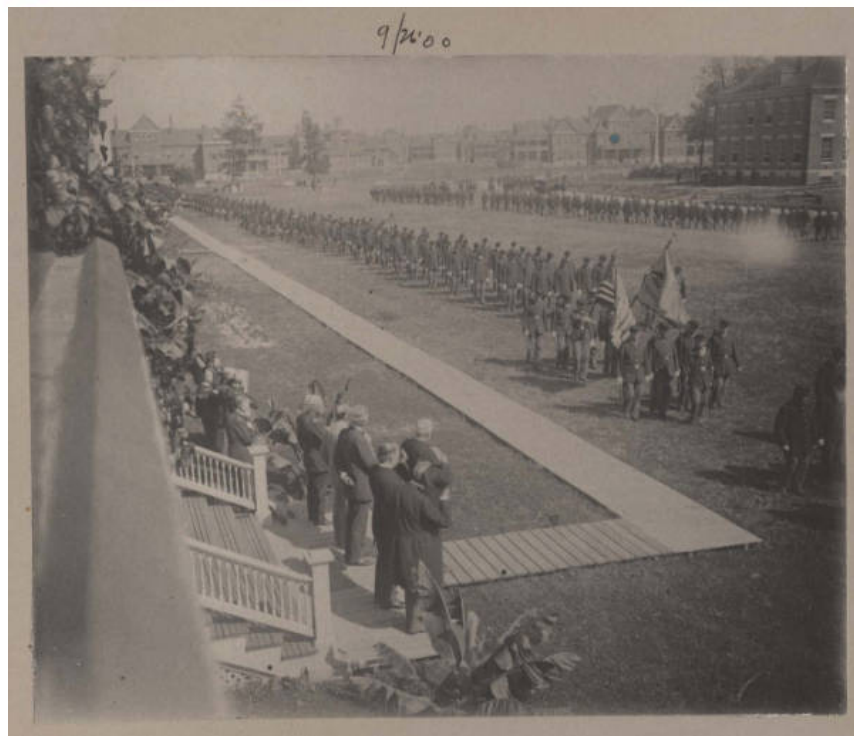
Meal time at Marion Branch, 1898

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION



Game room, Southern Branch, 1910 c.

Life at the National Homes



Review, Danville Branch, 1900



Kitchen, Northwestern Branch, 1890s

Life at the National Homes



Memorial Hall, Soldiers' Home
Monday - Nov. 24
AT 2:30 P. M. *1913 Dayton, Ohio*

First Concert of the
Singers Club

Clara Turpen-Grimes	Zoa Uphold Dodds
Ladra E. Flecksteiner	Mabel L. Moran
Anna Poock Tappan	Dorothy A. Werkmeister
Florence Cornell	Nelle Davis
Minnie Dunker	Martha Thiele-Hahn
Addie N. Davis	Vernelle Rohrer

Mr. Grant Odell, Conductor
Anna Cosley Wright, Accompanist

Assisted by

Mr. Max Froehlich
'CELLO

Direction A. F. THIELE



Life at the National Homes



Discipline

Top offense: bringing in whiskey

- “Jumping the Fence” (AWOL)
- Drunkenness
- Assault and Battery
- Willful disobedience



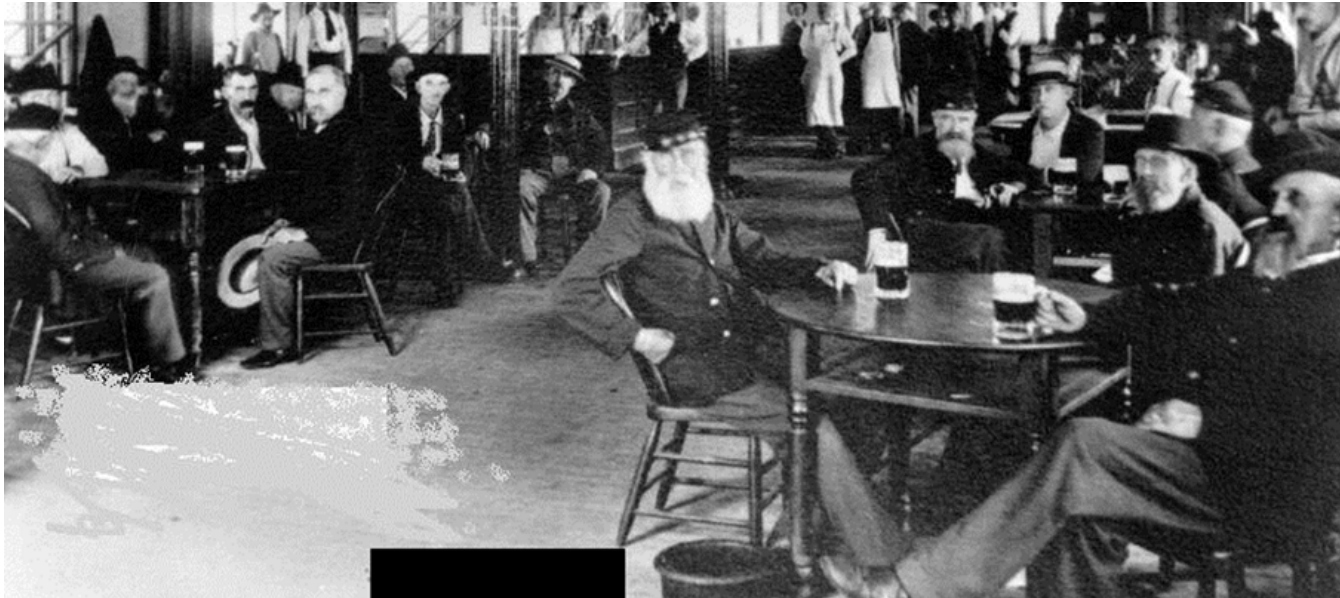
Heaviest penalty: stone breaking

- “dump” duty
- Fines
- No passes
- Court-martialed & banned

Aug 14	AWOL from gqs + inspection, Aug 13 to 14	30 days demerit
" 21	AWOL from gqs 4 days + jumping the fence	30 days demerit
Sept 18	Coming from outside drunk	30 days demerit Suspended
From page 803 1900		
Mar 3	Drunk from outside + jumping fence	30 days demerit
May 9	Brought in from outside drunk in a wagon	30 days demerit
July 19	Brought in from outside, drunk in wagon using obscene language at depot	30 days demerit Suspended
1895		
Oct 17	Coming from outside drunk + having a bottle of whiskey	30 days demerit
" 19	Using obscene + abusive language repeatedly in gqs	30 days demerit Suspended
" 30	Assault with a knife upon a comrade asleep with intent to kill, having stabbed him 17 times	Rec'd for 100 days
1898		
Jan 17 1908	Fighting in quarters	Jan 15 Excused
Jan 20	A 17.18 1/8 inspr 101d	
	Thomas Lavery	Fr 44 My 26ls
	Thomas Kelly	U.S. Navy
	Thomas Davis	B 1 My 26ls
		Discharged July 7 th 1903
		Dis. O.R. B.O. 34, 1/7/05. Dis. O.R., 1/2/06.

Temperance & the Beer Hall Experiment 1875 - 1907

- 1875 – first beer hall opened at Eastern Branch (Togus)
- July 12, 1886 – Central Branch (Dayton), the largest home, opened its beer hall
- Sold weak beer, kept men safe at home, discipline problems declined, proven success
- 1907 – Congress denied funding for any NHDVS branch or state home with a beer hall



Beer Hall at Western Branch (Leavenworth), 1890s

1870 – 1910

- 1873 – name changed to National *Home* for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers
- 1875 – its funding changed to annual appropriations from the War Department
- 1880 – Office of Inspector General established
- 1882 – “insane” patients to be transferred to Government Insane Asylum in D.C.
- 1883 – first conference of NHDVS surgeons
- 1884 – War of 1812 & Mexican War non-service wounded Veterans approved for NHDVS admittance
- 1890 – first women nurses hired; benefits expanded to Veterans with non-service related disabilities
- 1905 - peak year for Civil War Veterans

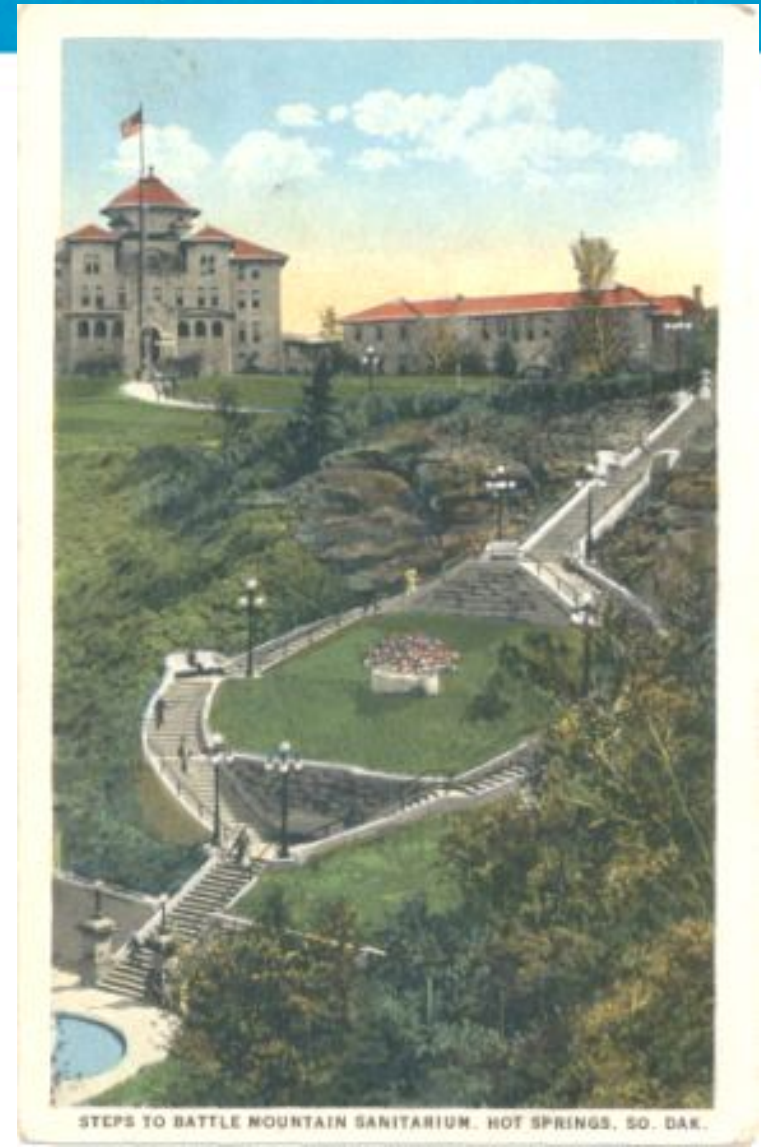


“It is quite evident, because of recent wars, that the duration of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers will be greatly prolonged.” NHDVS President, M.T. McMahon, 1900

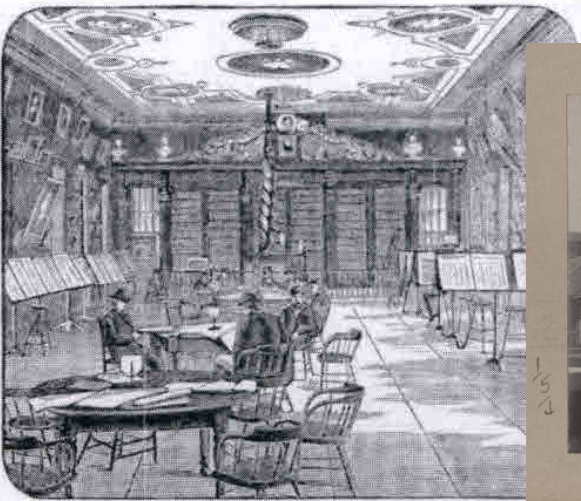
1870 – 1910 Expansion

SIX new National Homes:

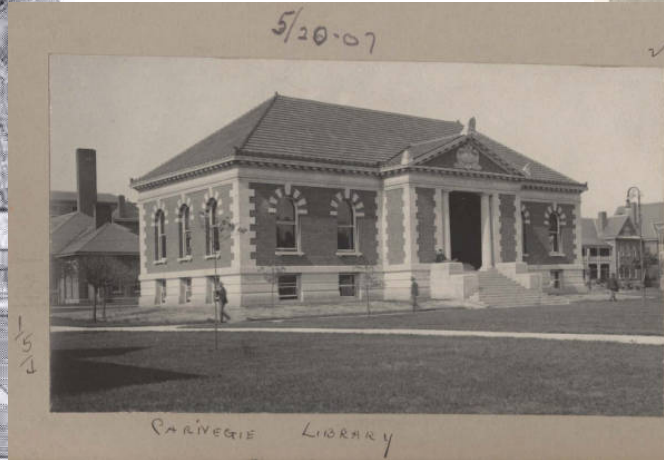
- 1885 - Western Branch – 1st west of the Mississippi River - Leavenworth, KS
- 1888 - Pacific Branch – 1st west of the Rocky Mountains - Santa Monica, CA
- 1890 – Marion Branch – Marion, IN
- 1898 – Danville Branch – Danville, IL
- 1903 – Mountain Branch – Johnson City, TN
- 1907 – Battle Mountain Sanitarium – 1st short-term, specialty care facility - Hot Springs, SD



Gifts from a Caring Public



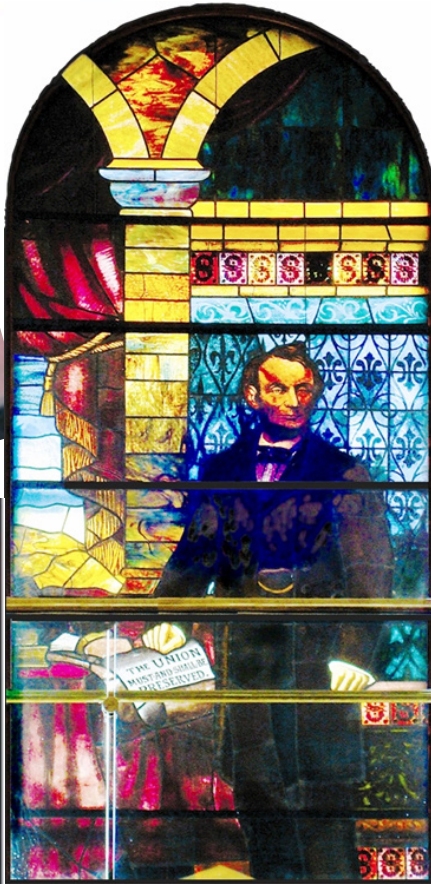
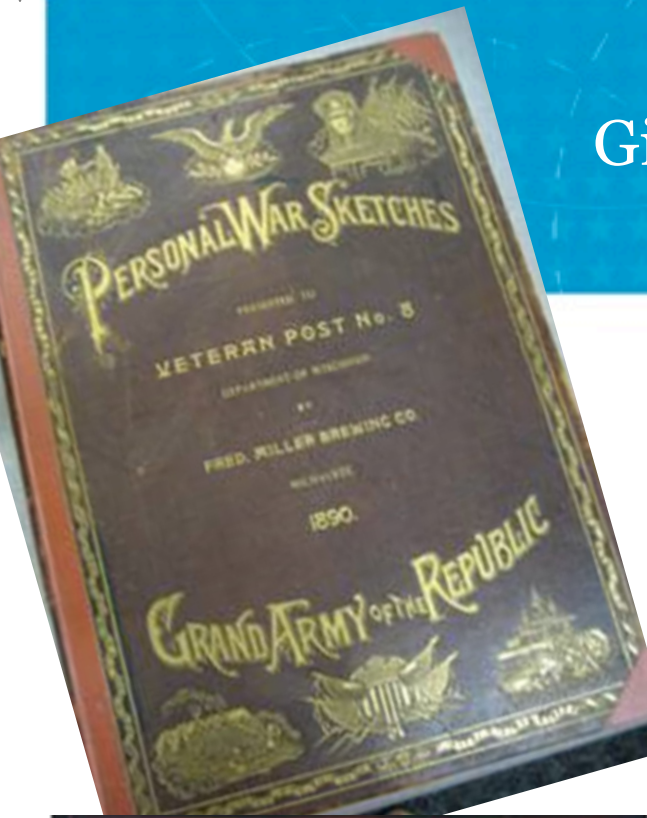
THE PUTNAM LIBRARY.



THE THEATRE.



Gifts from a Caring Public



RATION



Civil War Veterans at the National Home

1870

- 3,618 men
- 60% foreign born (mostly German, Irish)
- 71% unmarried
- 30-50 year olds - largest group (1,651), followed by 20-30 year olds (1,502); 59 were under 20 years of age
- 95% Volunteers, 4% Regulars, 1% Navy
- \$184.04 avg. annual cost per man

1900

- 29,578 men
- 53% native born; 47% foreign born; German (6,022), Irish (5,005), English (884), African Americans (804); Canada (527)
- 61% unmarried
- Average age: 63 - the youngest was 49
- 91% Volunteers, 6% Navy, 3% Regulars
- 29,051 Civil War, 527 other wars
- \$130.91 avg. annual cost per man

1905 – 1917 An Uncertain Fate

1905 - peak year for Civil War Veterans at NHDVS

- 34,810 cared for
- 33,431 were Civil War Veterans
- USCT exceeded Spanish American War Veterans (1,218 vs. 1,049)
- Mid-1910s - proposed closing facilities



WORLD WAR I – A New Paradigm & Saving the NHDVS

JUST FOR WORLD WAR I VETERANS

1914

Bureau of
War Risk
Insurance
(Treasury)

1917

Federal
Board of
Vocational
Education

1918

Public Health
Service
(Treasury)

NHDVS HELPED

- Southern Branch transferred to War Dept. during the war
- Battle Mountain Sanitarium made available to BWRI/PHS
- Marion & Mountain branches temporarily converted to hospitals for BWRI/PHS

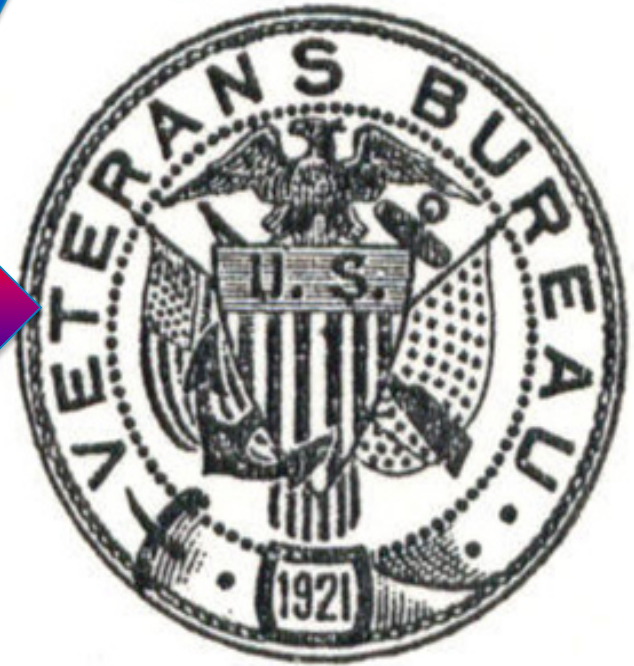
1921 – FIRST CONSOLIDATION OF FEDERAL VETERANS PROGRAMS

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Bureau of
War Risk
Insurance
(Treasury)

1917
Federal Board
of Vocational
Education

1918
Public Health
Service
(Treasury)

JUST FOR WORLD WAR I VETERANS



1776
Pensions
(Interior)

1862
National Cemeteries,
prosthetics (Army)



1921-1931

TWO VETERANS HOSPITAL SYSTEMS



- 11 National Homes (1929)
- 60 years experience
- well-established
- processes that worked
- 3 new homes approved in 1930



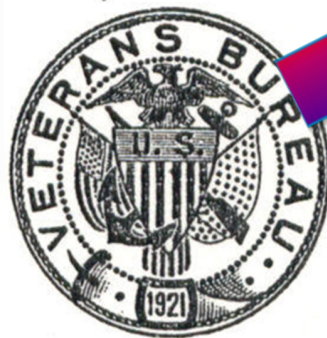
- 48 Hospitals, including a segregated hospital in Tuskegee
- 16 under construction
- New & different approach
- Overwhelmed



1930 – 2nd CONSOLIDATION

1776
Pensions
(Interior)

1862
Prosthetics
(War Dept.)



Veterans Administration went into full effect on July 1, 1931



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

National Homes for the Disabled Volunteer Soldiers System in 1931





Veterans at the National Home

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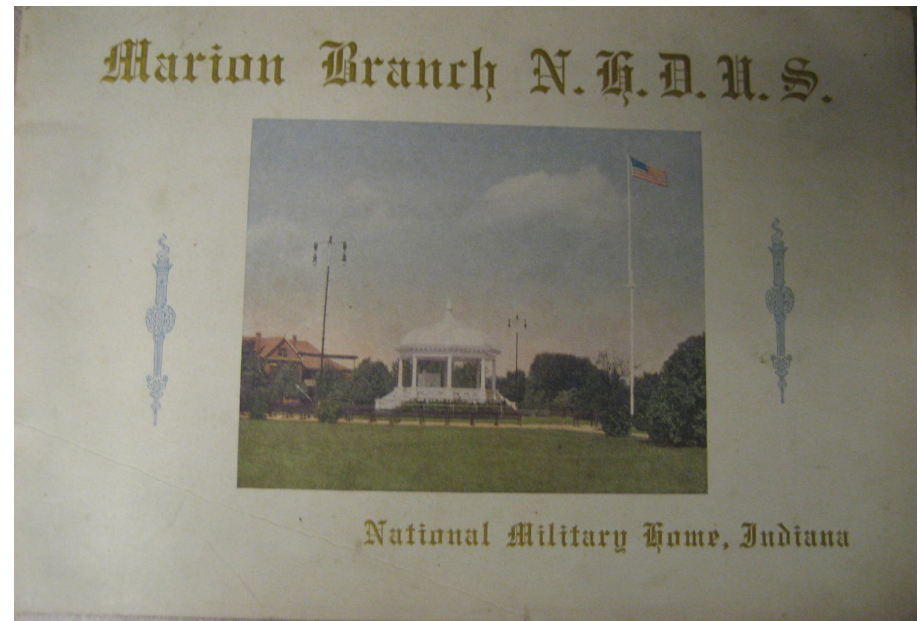
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- Central Branch largest
- \$130.91 avg. annual cost per man

1930

- 19,518 men
- Average age CW: 89
- Average age SPAM: 62
- Average age WWI: 40
- Pacific Branch largest
- \$560.47 avg. annual cost per man

VA – An Integrated Hybrid of Old & New

- 1932 - Marion was the first National Home converted into a VA hospital (neuro-psychiatric)
- 1947 - “domiciles” incorporated at certain new hospitals (i.e., Temple)
- 1948 – all former NHDVS had been converted into VA hospitals
- 1989 – 15 VA hospital-domiciliary facilities



1973 – 3rd consolidation



1988 – Elevation to Cabinet-level Department





VA's Legacy – Still a Home for Veterans

“In addition to chapel and school-room there will be workshops, where you may learn new and lighter trades adapted to your several disabilities. We hope by proper surgical care and nursing to send many of you again into the world healthy and able to take care of yourselves, and by suitable education to prepare many of you for teachers, book-keepers, clerks, mechanics, etc., . . . If you succeed, we bid you God speed. If you fail, we will welcome you back; for here, as long as you live, is your HOME, to which, if you have left with an honorable discharge, you will be ever welcome.”

Hon. Lewis B. Gunckel, at transfer of Ohio State Soldiers' Home to National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, March 26, 1867.

THE END



Hospital staff, Danville Branch, Oct. 7, 1898

QUESTIONS?

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