THE VETERANS IN OUR MIDST:
DISABLED UNION VETERANS IN WEST LOS ANGELES
1888 – 1914

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ABSTRACT

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Previous historical scholarship argues that the vast majority of Union veterans who entered the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) were poor and did so only as an alternative to the poorhouse. Until recently, it also claimed that the branches of NHDVS received continuous support from their host communities, with the corollary that the branches became integral parts of those communities. However, the existing body of scholarship has focused on the NHDVS only during the nineteenth century and has not fully examined the evolution of the institution into the early twentieth century. Further, scholars have not examined the history of the NHDVS’ Southern California branch. This thesis extends the exploration of the NHDVS into the twentieth century and to its west coast branch. By doing so, it reveals a significant Civil War veteran presence in Southern California as well as changing expectations about the nature of the federal benefits granted to Union veterans.

This research explores the efforts of Santa Monica elites to secure the NHDVS for their area as a source of jobs, a market for local goods and services, and as a supply of
pension dollars that it anticipated would be spent by its residents. When the behavior of residents of the Pacific Branch affected Santa Monica in ways those elites had not anticipated, they sought ways to segregate the Pacific Branch members from their city. That goal, combined with Southern California’s drive to develop its vast expanses of vacant land, led to a real estate project that specifically targeted pensioned Union veterans, especially those who lived at the Pacific Branch. The project attracted not only Pacific Branch residents, but also an important group of Union veterans who were neither destitute nor willing to leave their families. Instead, those veterans used their Pacific Branch benefits as part of their retirement plans in order to live as productive members of the community outside the Soldiers’ Home well into old age.
INTRODUCTION

As Union soldier Charles Willis faced his muster out of military service at the end of America’s Civil War, he worried that the war had left him unfit for civilian life. Willis was convinced that “citizens are not like soldiers.”¹ His concern conformed to traditional characterizations of veterans held by many nineteenth-century Americans. Veterans, especially former members of the rank and file, were considered to be a morally bereft class of men who were permanently tainted by military life and the experiences of war.² Hobbled by social preconceptions about the degeneracy of soldiers, disabled veterans were further burdened by prejudices associated with disability. In all likelihood the disabled veterans would be unable to return to their pre-war occupations, and their resulting poverty would only add to the community’s scorn for them. The government could accept responsibility for its damaged soldiers after their military service, but it could not force communities to admit disabled veterans back into society as fully vested members.

¹ Larry Logue, To Appomattox and Beyond: The Civil War Soldier in War and Peace (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), 83.

² Larry Logue reports that Northerners feared the worst from “men who had been living by the dictates of war rather than the rules of society. Ibid., 85. Several articles in The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader examine contemporary prejudices relating to a postwar crime wave and drug addiction of Civil War veterans. While veterans did commit crimes and some developed opiate addictions, the war can be considered only one of several factors that contributed to increased prison populations and a rise in opiate addiction in the late nineteenth century. Edith Abbot, “The Civil War and the Crime Wave” in The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader, ed. Larry M. Logue and Michael Barton, 65-79; Erik H. Monkkonen, “Conventional Wisdom versus Reality” in Logue, Civil War Veteran, 80-82; David T. Courtwright, “Opiate Addiction as a Consequence of the Civil War” in Logue, Civil War Veteran, 103-116. Americans’ trepidation about the effects that war had on soldiers did not end in the nineteenth century. Writing as Americans anticipated the return of hundreds of thousands of veterans from World War II, Dixon Wecter warned that the veterans had been “licked into shape as a soldier by the manual of arms and a drill master” but were expected to revert into civilians without an equivalent manual. Wechter anticipated a number of social problems in the aftermath of war. Dixon Wechter, When Johnny Comes Marching Home (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1944), 5. More recently, Richard Severo and Lewis Milford, The Wages of War: When America’s Soldiers Came Home—From Valley Forge to Vietnam (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989) extends the history of demobilized US troops through the Vietnam War.
Disabled Union veterans faced discrimination in the decades after the Civil War not only from the civilian community, but by able-bodied veterans as well. It was not until the late twentieth-century that historians began to study the postwar lives of Civil War veterans, but relatively little research has been done about the lives of disabled veterans, especially those living in the Far West. Moreover, scholars have made certain presumptions about the men who lived in veterans’ homes and the branches of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS), a system of residential care facilities provided by the federal government to disabled Union veterans. It is only very recently that those institutionalized veterans have been recognized as being members of a lesser class of Civil War veteran than their able-bodied comrades.

As Union veterans grew older, Congress’ ever-broadening definition of what constituted disability drew more of the formerly “able-bodied” men into a subordinate class of veteranhood, especially when they sought care at branches of the NHDVS. Thus far, scholars have not explored the postwar lives of the disabled veteran population in

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4 One way that the Board of Managers sought to differentiate the earned dependency of disabled Union veterans from that of inmates of insane asylums, poorhouses, and prisons was by referring to NHDVS residents as members.

5 Marten, Sing Not War, 30.
California, but the men who lived there were no less immune to the community’s
discrimination than were their Eastern and Midwestern comrades. The same issues and
concerns that influenced cities east of the Rockies to seek to limit the legal and political
rights of institutionalized Union veterans inspired Southern California cities to act against
the veterans living at the Pacific Branch of the NHDVS (Pacific Branch). In many ways,
the institutional experiences of Pacific Branch members paralleled those of men living at
other branches of the NHDVS.

This study began with one simple question: “How did the community respond to
and interact with the Union veterans living at the Pacific Branch?” Even before Southern
Californians secured the Pacific Branch for their region, civilian and particularly elite
members of the community considered the NHDVS and its members primarily as a
source of pension dollars, employment opportunities and a market for local goods and
services, but failed to conceive of them as citizens who were entitled to full investiture in
the civic life of the community. The history of elite attempts to exclude Pacific Branch
members from political participation matched the repeated efforts of other host
communities to disfranchise NHDVS members.

In other ways, Southern California was significantly different from the other
NHDVS host regions. By 1898, Southern California had a steadily increasing population
and access to sizable amounts of investment capital; expansion had become the major
business of the region. The seemingly wide-open opportunities available in Southern
California attracted a small, but very important, segment of the Pacific Branch population

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that has previously been overlooked by scholars. Unlike many NHDVS members admitted to the system before 1895, these Union veterans did not cycle in and out of the Pacific Branch, nor did they pass decades of barracks life simply waiting for death in Spartan barracks surrounded by strangers. Though the Pacific Branch had its share of the disaffected and troubled men previously examined by scholars, these particular Pacific Branch members (identified in this study as the “Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents”) kept their families intact, helped found a city, held elective offices, owned their homes and claimed full civic participation in that city.

The establishment of Sawtelle, a town developed by Santa Monica elites on land that abutted the Pacific Branch, attracted a population of Union veterans who refused to be limited by disability or membership in the NHDVS. These men separated themselves from other Pacific Branch members not only physically by choosing to reside in the town rather than in the NHDVS barracks, but also by the way they utilized their Soldiers’ Home memberships. Rather than using the NHDVS as a permanent residence, Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents either used membership for access to medical care on an as-needed basis or as one of several survival tools to face their approaching old age. Their dual citizenship as residents of both Sawtelle and the Pacific Branch placed them in the unique position of being neither fully independent and nor totally dependent. This contradictory identity revealed itself in residents’ efforts to participate in and organize

7 A presumption that all NHDVS residents were impoverished runs through the works of Larry Logue, Patrick Kelly, James Marten and Judith Cetina. Indeed, Logue argues that the higher a veterans’ pension, the more likely he was to leave the NHDVS. Logue, *To Appomattox and Beyond*, 1996), 93; Kelly, *Creating a National Home*, 129; Marten, *Sing Not War*, 159-161; Cetina, “A History of Veterans’ Homes.”
their community, as well as their relations with fellow NHDVS members and with the Pacific Branch itself.

“The Veterans in Our Midst” argues that though the majority of Pacific Branch members were poor, in the opening decade of the twentieth-century the Pacific Branch was no longer only the last resort of the disabled poor, but rather was also an alternative support system used by middle and laboring-class Union veterans seeking to move to Southern California. This inquiry ends in 1914 with the advent of World War I, which brought thousands of disabled young men to the Pacific Branch. Their presence changed the focus of its services from an old folks’ home to a rehabilitation facility for the war-damaged young.

Finally, this study represents only one aspect of the on-going conversation about the postwar lives of American Civil War veterans as they sought to reintegrate themselves into civilian life. Despite expansive inquiry into the postwar westward migration, there has been no cohesive study of the thousands of Civil War veterans who moved to California after their military service. Whether they were able-bodied or disabled, California’s Union veterans have been absent from the discussion. It is my hope that this research will give new insight into Union veterans’ presence in Southern California and contribute to our understanding of what it meant to be an American veteran at the turn of the twentieth-century.
CHAPTER I
A Grateful Nation
Historiography and Overview of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers

dear sir, I made … on the 6th of October my discharge, pension certificate voucher and my application for member of the Home … [I]f you … find me Ellijbel please let me know. I have the Asthma very bad at times this is a wet cold climate in winter and bad for asthma.

John Wyllie

The above excerpt is taken from an October 25, 1904, letter written by Sergeant John Wyllie, a Civil War veteran of the 80th Illinois Infantry. It was Sergeant Wyllie’s second letter in less than a month regarding his application to the Pacific Branch of the NHDVS, a residential institution for permanently disabled Union veterans. Clearly, Wyllie was anxious to gain admission to the NHDVS. Yet Wyllie’s declared disability, asthma, seems to have little to do with wartime injuries, and the thirty years which elapsed between the war and his letters raise the question of why he was appealing to the NHDVS. However, asthma, rheumatism and even chronic diarrhea were all common ailments that old soldiers like Wyllie believed could be traced back to their Civil War military service. Years of exposure to the elements, poor nutrition, disease and forced marches had left Wyllie, like tens of thousands of his wartime comrades, with a chronic disease that he would deal with for the rest of his life. For some soldiers the reality of

1 National Archives and Records Administration Pacific Region, Riverside, CA, “Records of the Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1888-1933,” RG 15, “Sample Case Files,” box 8, John Wyllie File. Note, when quoting from the veterans’ files, whenever possible I have retained original spellings and usage.

2 Ibid.

permanent disability began on the battlefields or in the camps, but for thousands of veterans the cumulative effects their military service had on their health would take years to surface. At seventy-three, Wyllie had been ground down by life, disease and his military service long ago. He could no longer support himself and his wife without assistance beyond the twelve dollars per month he received as a disability pension for his Civil War military service. Chronic illness, and in many cases poverty, compelled aging Union veterans like Wyllie to turn to the NHDVS for care in the first decade of the twentieth-century.

Before proceeding further, it is appropriate to consider a brief historiography of the exploration of the postwar lives of Union veterans like John Wyllie. It is only relatively recently that historians have begun to examine the lives of the disabled men who returned from the Civil War, which is not surprising since it was not until the late twentieth-century that historians took up any sustained investigation into the postwar lives of its rank and file veterans. The few studies of Civil War veterans published in the first half of the century explore government programs, veterans associations and social phenomena, but they are rarely, if ever, concerned about individual veterans, aside from the war’s military leaders. Predictably, the years surrounding the two World Wars

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spurred multi-war studies about the reintegration of veterans in the immediate aftermath of war. These studies explored disabled veterans as social problems and potential drains upon the federal budget. Yet it was not until the 1990s that a spate of research projects re-examined previous studies, and asked new questions about the fate of America’s Civil War veterans. At last, historians began to examine the war’s effect upon the lives of its able-bodied survivors, and upon those who had sustained permanent injury or developed chronic disease in the course of military service.

Among the new approaches to history that developed in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement was disability history. Many pioneering works of American disability history emphasized “the half century from around 1880-1930 as a moment of major redefinition for disabled lives, disability policy and disability history.” That time frame coincides with the post-Civil War explosion of disability pensions and veterans’ homes, during which an ever-growing number of aging Civil War veterans began to receive from


5 McMurtrie, The Disabled Soldier; Wecter, When Johnny Comes Marching Home.


8 Longmore and Umansky, The New Disability History, 22.
the federal government what they were unable to provide for themselves. Thus, Civil War historians, rather than historians of disability, were the first to focus upon the lives of disabled Union veterans. Unquestionably, however, the latter emerging historical discipline informed their research, and it bears further scholarly consideration when examining the lives of Civil War veterans, particularly the disabled.

As part of the current flourishing interest in Civil War history, a number of scholars have examined the federal benefits granted to Union veterans, including both the massive pension program and the series of residential institutions the federal government created to care for permanently disabled veterans. Several scholars have asserted that because of their military service, veterans as a group occupied an elevated tier of citizenship. In his examination of the NHDVS, historian Patrick Kelly dubs that special


category of citizen the *martial citizen*. According to Kelly, as *martial citizens* all Union veterans were guaranteed “a minimum standard of living and lifetime access to a federal system of shelter and medical care.” According to Kelly, as *martial citizens* all Union veterans were guaranteed “a minimum standard of living and lifetime access to a federal system of shelter and medical care.”¹⁰ Because of their military service, all Union veterans “were deemed morally worthy of enjoying generous and honorable public aid.”¹¹ For Kelly, institutionalized Union veterans shared several characteristics, including poverty, but theirs was not a separate identity from that of Union veterans as a whole.

Kelly is not alone when he conflates the separate identity of the institutionalized and disabled veterans living in the branches of the NHDVS into his *martial citizen*. By eliding the institutionalized veterans’ identity, scholars have argued that branches of the NHDVS became integral parts of their host communities. They argue this in part because local citizens used the homes’ grounds as public parks and tourist attractions, as well as because the institutions contributed to local economies through pension distributions and jobs.

Recently, however, some historians have begun to explore the limits of the *martial citizen* thesis. Historian James Marten agrees with Kelly’s general assessment, but he also contends that

the association of soldiers’ homes with the communities in which they were located was made complex by old ideas about poverty and disability, by practical issues related to the boundaries—both geographical and jurisdictional… and by the behavior of the men as it clashed with the expectations of communities with fairly specific notions of how old soldiers should act.¹²

¹⁰ Kelly, Creating A National Home, 4.
¹¹ Ibid., 5.
¹² Marten, Sing Not War, 160.
Marten correctly points out that the relationship between the institutionalized veterans and the residents of communities surrounding soldiers’ homes was intricate. It became more so over time as public attitudes about veterans, especially institutionalized veterans, became increasingly negative. As Marten and other scholars suggest, residents of the NHDVS were relegated to society’s periphery. More precisely, the disabled veterans constituted an entirely separate class of veteran from that of their more fortunate brethren—a distinction observed even by their fellow veterans.

While Marten acknowledges the civilian community’s “clash…[of] expectations” with respect to the behavior of NHDVS residents, more attention needs to be paid to the repeated civilian efforts to assert control over the economic, political, and legal behaviors of the men living in Soldiers’ Homes both on and off the facilities’ grounds—efforts aided by able-bodied veterans and even former NHDVS residents. In that context, thus far the historiography is particularly limited by the longstanding cultural bias regarding veterans and their use of alcohol, especially with respect to the commercial exchanges between the institutionalized veterans and the greater community. Indeed, the idea that individual soldiers’ home veterans might participate in the greater community in ways other than in the acts of voting, imbibing alcohol, gambling, marching in Memorial Day parades or facing a judge has yet to be considered. Among other things, such a bias discounts a recent historiography that reveals the prevalence of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century working-class home ownership as a response to the unpredictability of

\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}}\text{Ibid.}\]
the industrialized economy. If, as Marten points out, “drinking alcohol was a way of life at soldiers’ homes” but “the reputations of all old soldiers were tarnished by the actions of a few,” it seems reasonable to ask about the disposition of the pensions received by soldiers’ home veterans who neither drank nor gambled to excess.

Perhaps even more important, historians have for the most part either ignored or relegated to the periphery those Civil War veterans who lived in California and the Far West. Union veterans clearly had a significant presence in the booming West, given that

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15 Marten, *Sing Not War*, 101, 107. Marten and other scholars contend that the use of alcohol by NHDVS residents constituted the largest health and behavioral problem within the system. See, Marten, 100-125.

16 With the exception of biographies which relegate the subject’s Civil War service to the background, there are no explorations into the postwar lives of California’s Civil War veterans. However, there are a number of studies that have explored California’s Civil War participation. Leo P. Kibby provides an overview of California’s role in the Civil War in his monograph, *California, The Civil War, and the Indian Problem: An Account of California’s Participation in the Great Conflict* (Los Angeles: Lorlin L. Morrison, 1968).

that 60 percent of Northern white men born between 1837 and 1845 served in the Union army. Since the population of California rose from a scant three hundred thousand residents in 1860 to over two million inhabitants by 1910, it would have been impossible for such growth not to include a major Union veteran population. The construction of a regional branch of the NHDVS in Southern California testified to their presence, as well as to the needs of the disabled among them. Yet, because the war was fought thousands of miles away, California’s disabled Civil War veterans have received even less attention from historians than have their able-bodied comrades. One must wonder about the ways their NHDVS experiences may have differed from those disabled veterans who lived east of the Rocky Mountains.

Union veterans were by no means the first American soldiers to be awarded disability benefits in return for their military service. An abbreviated history of benefits

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_Civil War Days, 1860-1865_ (Los Angeles: Dawson’s Book Shop, 1977) is specifically about Los Angeles during the Civil War.

17 Marten, _Sing Not War_, 4.


19 James Marten examined the writings of one Henry Clinton Parkhurst a terminally disgruntled resident of state homes in both California and Iowa at the turn of the twentieth century and very briefly mentions a state soldiers’ home at Yountville, California, but the vast majority of his research involved veterans living in the Midwest and the East. James Marten, _Sing Not War_, 187-189. Existing research about disabled Union veterans in the Far West include an undergraduate thesis that explores the history of the Pacific Branch of the NHDVS, the memoir of the daughter of the first Pacific Branch surgeon and a project tracing the history of Dixie Manor, a Confederate soldiers’ home founded by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in Pasadena, California. See, Cheryl L. Wilkinson, “Forgotten Saviors: Disabled Civil War Veterans in West Los Angeles, A History of the Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1888-1915” (senior honors thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 2008); Elspeth Andrae, _The Dear Old Boys in Blue_; Connie Walton Moretti, _Dixie Manor Days_ (Redondo Beach: Mulberry Bush Publishing, 2004).
that the United States has provided to its veterans reveals that even prior to the Revolutionary War, America recognized a civic responsibility toward its soldiers by providing pensions to veterans disabled in the course of their service. Underlying that practice was the practical consideration that pensions encouraged future enlistments in the military. In this view, men would enlist in greater numbers knowing that they could trust their community to provide for them and their families in case of injury or death.\(^{20}\)

When the Civil War broke out, Congress once again passed a new pension system to boost recruitment. In February 1862, Congress adopted a pension law, which, though it would be amended several times, became the baseline of the Civil War pension system until 1890.\(^{21}\)

However, pensions alone were not sufficient to address the aftermath of the widespread carnage of the Civil War. As a result, the postwar era marked the widespread development of residential institutions for its citizen soldiers. The postwar facilities were not the first American military establishments for aging and disabled veterans, but all previous institutions had drawn the bulk of their funding from pay stoppages assessed against the soldiers themselves. For the vast deluge of maimed and disabled men the Civil War had left in its wake, the federal government determined to underwrite the task itself. The facilities it created were an entirely new form of military benefit for the volunteer and regular soldier alike.

The first veterans’ institution built in West Los Angeles was part of a series of federally funded regional homes called the NHDVS. Congress initially created the system


\(^{21}\) Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 106-107.
in 1865, first naming it the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. A congressionally appointed twelve-member Board of Managers (hereafter the Board) oversaw the system.\textsuperscript{22} With the exception of three ex-officio members, the President of the United States, the Secretary of War, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Congress appointed members to the Board for a term of six years. Interestingly, Board membership did not require any special experience in medical or institutional relief. Further, though they were reimbursed for travel and other expenses, Board members served without pay. The result was a Board made up of former generals, politicians and wealthy luminaries.\textsuperscript{23}

Intent on making the institution available to the greatest number of disabled veterans, the Board believed that the men would not willingly seek refuge in facilities located far from their homes, relatives, and friends. Congress and the Board envisioned the NHDVS as a federal institution, but one with a local identity. This meant that facilities would be opened in multiple locations across the nation. Ultimately the Board’s system included ten residential institutions with hospitals on their grounds, as well as one sanatorium.\textsuperscript{24} The first of the facilities opened at Togus, Maine, in 1867. By the time Congress authorized construction of Santa Monica’s Pacific Branch in early 1887, the system had grown to include five regional branches.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Cetina, “A History of Veterans’ Homes,” 87.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 81.
\item \textsuperscript{24} See, Appendix A, “Branches of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.” The Appendix provides a list of the branches of the NHDVS, their locations and the year each branch opened.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Kelly, Creating A National Home, 97-98.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
In order to create a true home for disabled Union soldiers worthy of the name, the Board insisted that NHDVS access be available to all Union veterans who met certain disability criteria.\(^26\) This meant that foreign nationals who had served in the Union army were admitted to the NHDVS on the same terms as American citizens. The Board argued that the men were far from the families that would normally care for them so it was the federal government’s responsibility to do so in their stead.\(^27\) In perhaps the most radical aspect of this policy, more than eighty years before President Harry Truman ordered the integration of US Army troops the Board integrated the NHDVS across racial lines. From its inception, the Board offered admission to the NHDVS to African American veterans. Few disabled African Americans availed themselves of its services, but the mere fact that its facilities and care were available to the men was a truly remarkable achievement in the age of Jim Crow.\(^28\)

When they set about creating the NHDVS, the Board faced not only the challenge of constructing a physical refuge for disabled veterans, but also that of shaping American attitudes about the new form of veteran assistance.\(^29\) Since Gilded Age Americans viewed existing asylums for paupers and the insane as unearned forms of dependency, the Board

\(^{26}\) In addition to being certified as disabled, applicants swore that they had not “been engaged in, or aided or abetted the late rebellion in the United States.” “Application for Admission to The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers,” NARA (Riverside), RG15, “Sample Case Files,” boxes 1-8.


\(^{28}\) Shaffer, *After the Glory*, 137-141. Note, though the NHDVS admitted African American veterans, Shaffer points out that they lived in segregated quarters and ate at separate tables in the dining hall. Segregation was so complete that in the lists of names of NHDVS residents published annually by the Board of Managers between 1877 and 1906. African American veterans were listed separately from white veterans. See, “Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1877-1906).

\(^{29}\) Kelly, *Creating A National Home*, 91-98.
sought to emphasize that the domicile and medical care that would be provided to
disabled veterans was an earned form of care. The Board insisted that its facility was not
charity, but a well-deserved benefit of military service. Moreover, the Board sought to
convince Americans that the federal government for which the soldiers had sacrificed
was obligated to provide those men with the care of a home, not an asylum. It was the
Board’s contention that the federal government should provide the disabled veterans with
the food, shelter, clothing and medical care that wives and mothers traditionally provided
in the nineteenth century. Disabled Union veterans, they contended, “were entitled to care
within a system not of asylums but of federal homes." Finally, Congress agreed. In 1873,
it officially changed the name of the system to the National Home for Disabled Volunteer
Soldiers.

Congress originally intended the NHDVS as a facility that would care for its
disabled veterans but which would not house them permanently. Rather than a perpetual
care facility, the NHDVS was to be a source of temporary respite and rehabilitation.
However, after repeated requests by the Board, Congress agreed to open the NHDVS to
all honorably discharged Union veterans, as well as to veterans of the War of 1812 and
the Mexican War who were “disabled by age, disease or otherwise, and [who] by reason
of such disability are incapable of earning a living.” By the time the Pacific Branch
admitted its first member in 1888, the NHDVS had long since ceased its rehabilitation

30 Ibid., 93.
31 Ibid., 90.
32 U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer
activities. It had transformed into a vast old soldiers’ home, its mandate—the long-term care of the Union’s aging saviors.

Residence in a branch of the NHDVS was the only way that Union veterans were entitled to postwar medical care at government expense. The government expected the majority of veterans to use their federal pensions to pay for on-going war-related medical expenses. Most veterans seem to have agreed with this viewpoint. By 1900 more than a million Union veterans, or 74.13 percent of surviving Union veterans, were enrolled as pensioners.\(^{33}\) In contrast, despite extraordinarily liberal entrance requirements, fewer than one hundred thousand veterans ever entered a branch of the NHDVS over the course of its nearly seventy-five year existence.\(^{34}\)

Despite its designation as a “home,” the NHDVS bore little resemblance to Victorian ideals of what constituted one. Rather than living in the cozy bosom of domesticity, its residents’ lives were governed under a strict code of military discipline. Perhaps the most draconian element of this code was the stipulation that made all NHDVS residents subject to the rules and articles of war and the government of the U.S. Army.\(^{35}\) Officially, the NHDVS was neither an asylum for paupers or lunatics nor a military installation, but it bore a remarkable resemblance to the characteristics of both of those types of institutions. Residents lived in barracks, wore uniforms, ate communally and required permission to leave the premises for extended periods of time. While the Board maintained that military discipline was necessary in order to maintain control of

\(^{33}\) Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 109.
\(^{34}\) Logue, *To Appomattox and Beyond*, 90.
the former soldiers, it also claimed that the discipline “was designed to be firm but kind.”

NHDVS residents may have enjoyed a certain amount of liberty and personal autonomy, but they were permanently consigned to the rigors of a life modeled on the Army.

Each NHDVS branch was a self-contained community inhabited and, until they grew too old to work, maintained by the blue-uniformed disabled veterans. The branches all boasted amusement halls, theaters, libraries, and chapels for the entertainment and religious needs of the veterans. There were pool tables, bowling alleys, and canteens, too. The branches were host to meetings of local veterans' organizations, fraternal organizations, political clubs, and religious groups.

For an applicant to be admitted to the NHDVS, he had to be examined and declared disabled by an NHDVS surgeon. Even so, many of the disabled veterans could still work at their former crafts and trades on a limited basis. Although they did not have to work, many residents earned extra money working in NHDVS workshops, gardens, hospitals, and farms. This labor was of double benefit to the NHDVS; not only did the Board and staff believe that men kept too busy for idle time were happier and less prone to trouble, but the disabled veterans were paid lower wages than outside contractors, which saved the NHDVS a great deal of money.

While the Board of Managers promoted the privileged stature of those who had saved the Union and now required permanent care, it also saw itself as not simply the veterans’ caregiver, but the guardian of their character. Toward that end, the Board of

36 Ibid., 89.

Managers located NHDVS branches several miles from any city or town, hoping to keep the veterans safe from temptation.\textsuperscript{38} They were especially eager to prevent members from having easy access to alcohol, allegedly the most serious health and disciplinary problem at NHDVS branches.\textsuperscript{39} Later, they would go so far in their efforts as to establish beer halls on the grounds of several branches, arguing that beer was less a problem than stronger forms of alcohol, and that by providing controlled access to high quality beer on the grounds of the NHDVS, the veterans were less likely to become drunk or cause trouble in the surrounding community.

As the American population moved west, the NHDVS followed suit, albeit slowly. Congress constructed four branches of the NHDVS by 1870; it did not authorize or fund another new branch until 1884.\textsuperscript{40} Moreover, expecting the NHDVS’s veteran population to diminish as Union veterans aged, the Board of Managers also limited expansion at existing branches. Contrary to expectations, however, the flow of admissions continued to increase, especially after Congress significantly loosened admission guidelines in 1884 to the point that old age itself counted as a disability.\textsuperscript{41}

The 1884 legislation’s impact on the NHDVS’s population was immediate. Previously, the number of veterans who applied for admission had been steadily

\textsuperscript{38} Though the Board argued that there was a difference between the veterans’ homes they were establishing and existing asylums for the insane, it drew its thoughts about the location of its branches from recommendations about the geographic situation of those very institutions. See, especially Chapter 5, “Prisons, Asylums, Cemeteries, Parks” in John F. Sears, \textit{Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century} (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 87-121.

\textsuperscript{39} Marten, "Exempt from the Ordinary Rules of Life," 122.

\textsuperscript{40} Wilkinson, “Forgotten Saviors,” 94.

\textsuperscript{41} Cetina, “A History of Veterans’ Homes,” 182.
increasing each year, but it suddenly became a deluge. An already overcrowded system could no longer serve its constituents. As the Board of Managers’ 1885 annual report declared, the NHDVS refused admittance to more than a thousand eligible applicants that year, citing a lack of space to house them and funds to support them. Stressing the urgency of the problem, the Board pleaded to Congress to authorize construction of a new branch “west of the Rocky Mountains.”

By the time the Board made its request, other efforts to ease the crush of admissions had already begun. The existing NHDVS branches had begun building new barracks, and construction had begun at a new Western Branch in Leavenworth, Kansas, designed to house nearly one thousand disabled veterans. These projects would lessen the system’s overcrowding, but they would not solve it. Moreover, those Union soldiers who had “taken up their residences west of the Rocky Mountains” would still be thousands of miles from any of these homes, essentially cutting them off from the services to which they were entitled. For this latter concern, only a new branch on the West Coast would suffice.

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43 Ibid., 3-4.
CHAPTER II
Blinded by the Light:
A West Coast Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers

I am alone feeble & destitute and need some medical
treatment and wish to come [to the Soldiers’ Home] as soon
as I possibly can.

F. W. Grimes¹

The California and Nevada Department of the Grand Army of the Republic
(hereafter GAR), a powerful Union veterans’ organization, began lobbying for a West
Coast branch of the NHDVS in the 1870s, describing a growing population of “weak and
…unfortunate…old soldiers, and…cases of actual destitution which they were wholly
unable to relieve.”² Finally, on December 17, 1884, the Board of Managers, many of
whom were GAR members, formally resolved that it was imperative to establish a branch
in California.³ They notified Congress that there were a number of Mexican War veterans
and more than six thousand Union veterans living on the Pacific Coast, “many of whom
[were] destitute and [in need of] government care as much as disabled soldiers and sailors
residing east of the Rockies.”⁴ Congress appeared to be in no hurry to respond to the
veterans’ plight, since it was not until March 3, 1887, that it finally appropriated
$150,000 for construction of a branch of the NHDVS on the West Coast.⁵

¹ NARA (Riverside), RG15, F.W. Grimes File, box 3.
² Edward F. Adams “The United States Soldiers’ Home at Santa Monica” The Overland Monthly XII, July-
December, 1888 (San Francisco: Overland Monthly Publishing Co., 1888), 236, accessed March 10, 2007,
⁴ Ibid., 184-185.
⁵ U.S. Congress, House, Letter from the President of the Board of Managers of the National Home for
Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, transmitting his report for the fiscal year 1888, 50th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1888)
Though Congress moved slowly to authorize construction of the new branch, the Board of Managers was poised to act as soon as it did. California’s newly appointed local manager, Captain William Blanding of San Francisco, spearheaded the search for an appropriate site. By early August, the San Francisco Bulletin published the Board of Managers’ formal call for sealed proposals to determine a location for the new facility.\(^6\) Newspapers across the state quickly picked up the story, spreading word about the bidding process. Determined to secure the monetary benefits that the constant supply of goods, services and labor required to build and operate an NHDVS branch would mean to its host city, civic leaders and businessmen all over California began putting together bids. As Patrick Kelly notes, many civic authorities believed that the construction of a branch of the NHDVS virtually ensured any nearby town’s economic future.\(^7\) With stakes so high, the competition was intense. By August 6, Blanding had already received a bid from the state-funded Veterans’ Home at Yountville in Northern California, as well as one on behalf of Anaheim, a small farming community in Los Angeles County.\(^8\) When the Board of Managers met in November of 1887, it had received more than sixty bids for the new branch, including several from Southern California communities.\(^9\)


\(^7\) Kelly, Creating a National Home,” 180.

\(^8\) Today the city of Anaheim is part of Orange County. Orange County was created out of Los Angeles County by an act of the California legislature and signed into law on March 11, 1889. Samuel Armor, The History of Orange County, California with Biographical Sketches, Part I, (Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1921), 33, 53-81.

Initially, the presumed frontrunner in the contest was the Yountville home, especially after newspaper articles suggested that the home’s land would be donated to the federal government if it were selected. In such a case, Congressional appropriations could be used to improve the grounds and existing buildings. As correspondence between members of the Board of Managers and the newly formed Los Angeles Board of Trade made clear, the federal government intended to spend as little as possible to construct the new branch. Board of Managers member L. A. Harris wrote, “everything being equal, it would seem that the place offering the best inducements would secure the Branch.” Though the Board of Managers had purchased sites for the first branches of the NHDVS, the citizens of Leavenworth, Kansas, had recently donated 640 acres of land and contributed $50,000 for improvements to the property in order to secure their bid for constructing the Western Branch on the outskirts of their community. Given the steep competition, Los Angeles’ business and civic elite knew that they would have to submit a remarkably generous bid to the Board of Managers if they hoped to succeed.

Intent on winning what became a statewide bidding war to locate the new federal facility, Los Angeles’ Board of Trade, in partnership with members of several local Union veterans’ groups and city officials, established a special committee (hereafter the Committee) whose sole purpose was to bring the NHDVS to the city. The Committee faced several challenges. First of all, Los Angeles County possessed vast tracts of

undeveloped land, but the region was in the midst of a real estate boom. Land values skyrocketed, and lots changed ownership up to several times in a single day. Given the Board of Managers’ preference for pricey incentives in the bidding process, the Committee needed to convince major land owners or real estate developers to part with increasingly valuable property in the volatile market.\textsuperscript{14} It looked to local businessmen and farmers to supply the necessary cash inducements for the project. On the eve of the Board of Managers’ trip to California to select the site for the new branch, A. M. Lawrence, Secretary of the Board of Trade, asked Los Angeles’ elite, “How much money will we give?”\textsuperscript{15}

The citizens of Los Angeles were not unfamiliar with the necessity of paying an inducement to an entity that promised to bring immigrants, money and new business to their community. In the preceding decade, the Southern Pacific Railroad had demanded a subsidy of more than $600,000, in addition to sixty acres of land for a station site, before it would lay the tracks that connected Los Angeles to San Francisco and the crucial eastern markets. Mindful that the Southern Pacific bypassed any town that refused to pay the ransom—thus dooming it to isolation and abandonment—Los Angeles voters had reluctantly agreed to pay.\textsuperscript{16} When the railroad was completed in 1876, the Southern Pacific brought hordes of “newcomers [who] envisioned Southern California as a region

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\item[14] Glenn S. Dumke, \textit{The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California} (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1944), 9. According to Dumke, during June, July and August of 1887 “over $38,000,000 changed hands in real-estate transactions in Los Angeles County, and the figure for the year was nearly $100,000,000.” (Ibid.)
\item[15] “Soldiers’ Home,” \textit{Los Angeles Times} (Los Angeles, CA), November 1, 1887, 8.
\end{enumerate}
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of unparalleled opportunity.”¹⁷ Those immigrants had transformed the small pueblo of Los Angeles into an American city determined to become the center of business in Southern California. Well aware of the lucrative returns from that earlier investment, the Committee assured Los Angeles that “as a financial proposition, the location of a branch here would be very advantageous to our entire mercantile interests.”¹⁸

The Committee members understood that construction of an NHDVS branch in the region would not create a population explosion similar to the one that followed completion of the railroad. Instead, the new NHDVS branch would concentrate a few thousand pension-dependent and poor veterans into a federally funded facility. In addition to the thousands of dollars of pension money its residents would spend in local businesses each year, the institution would require goods, services and personnel in order to operate which would bring hundreds of thousands more federal dollars annually to the local economy.¹⁹ When the Committee considered that federal expenditures during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1886, at the Dayton, Ohio branch had exceeded $600,000 and that even the recently opened Western Branch at Leavenworth, Kansas had received more

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¹⁹ After Congress liberalized the law in 1890 nearly every resident of the NHDVS received a disability pension. Though their pensions alone were not adequate to support the men, as residents of the NHDVS, they received food, shelter, clothing and medical care at no expense, which made their pensions discretionary income. That the impact of Soldiers’ Home pensions on local businesses was significant is evident when one considers that in his annual report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1898, Governor A. J. Smith reported that Pacific Branch residents had received $220,028.79 during that year. Ten years later, 4,095 Pacific Branch pensioners and their families received payments totaling $567,985.54 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1908. U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1898, 55th Cong., 3rd Sess. (1898) H. Doc. 55, 141; U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1908, 60th Cong. 2nd Sess. (1908) H. Doc. 1106, 185.
than $100,000 for the care of its 528 residents that year, it became clear that construction of a NHDVS branch in Los Angeles would have long-term positive effects on the local economy.\textsuperscript{20} Although the number of Union veterans would decrease over the next several decades, the needs of the aging survivors would continue to increase, ensuring substantial federal appropriations earmarked for their care.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, any inducement Los Angeles offered to the Board of Managers as part of its efforts to secure the new NHDVS branch would yield substantial financial returns well into the next century.\textsuperscript{22}

The Committee’s correspondence, various statements by Board of Trade officials, and contemporary newspaper editorials demonstrated that the Los Angeles business community saw their NHDVS bid as an investment promising rich returns. The Committee began to put together its bid even before the Board of Managers announced its requirements for the new branch. Letters from the Committee to the Board of Managers and governors of existing branches of the NHDVS inquired about the acreage

\textsuperscript{20} U. S. Congress, House, \textit{Report of the Board of Managers of the National for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1886}, 49\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sess. (1886) H. Misc. Doc. 51, 46 and 109. In his annual report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1886, Governor Andrew J. Smith stated that the Leavenworth branch had accepted 14 members by September 1885 despite the lack of accommodations for them. Over the next nine months, the Western Branch population increased more quickly than housing or medical facilities could be constructed for them. The Western Branch population had reached 528 disabled veterans by June 30, 1886. (108-109).

\textsuperscript{21} The Committee may have assumed that NHDVS appropriations would end with the death of the last Union veteran, but they did not. Obviously it could not have predicted either the Spanish American War or World War I, both of which added to the NHDVS population and made continuation of federal appropriations for the care of disabled veterans necessary. By 1932, when the NHDVS was consolidated into the newly created Veterans Administration, the majority of the veterans receiving care were from World War I; however, even then 708 Union veterans were still members of the NHDVS. Kelly, \textit{Creating a National Home}, 198.

\textsuperscript{22} The Committee was correct in its presumptions about the returns the community would receive if a branch of the NHDVS was built in the Los Angeles area. In fact, the Pacific Branch, along with all of the other branches of the NHDVS, remains open today as Veteran’s Administration facilities. As such, the NHDVS continues to provide jobs and a market for local goods and services to host communities. Ibid., 178.
needed for such a facility, preferred construction materials, and even the amount of appropriations that could be expected to be spent in the region, as well as the number of inmates residing in existing facilities. In keeping with their primarily financial motives, however, they expressed no curiosity about the health status of the NHDVS’s inmates. Such an omission is particularly telling because Los Angeles had been marketing its climate to the world for over a decade as a curative for diseases. Numerous Union veterans had already come to Los Angeles specifically to seek the care and protection of its sunny climate and mild weather. Given the city’s reputation, it is surprising that the Committee barely mentioned climate in their overall proposal, treating it as a minor consideration at best.

The curative powers of the local climate were absent from the Committee’s queries for one reason: Los Angeles’ elite had no financial interest in attracting the class of invalid residing in the NHDVS to their city. The Committee sought the myriad of economic benefits a branch of the NHDVS would bring to the region, but it had no particular interest in the invalids who would actually populate it. The dependent, sick and disabled inmates of the NHDVS did not fulfill the criteria for late nineteenth-century masculinity, much less those for suitable immigrants for their growing metropolis. The NHDVS existed only because there were disabled Union veterans whom, many Americans believed, the federal government had an obligation to shelter. The Committee was happy to oblige this need for shelter, but it was not necessary (and probably not desirable, in its eyes) for Los Angeles’ climate to cure the permanently

23 Kelly, Creating a National Home, 166.
dependent men. As the Committee and Los Angeles’ elite saw it, it was sufficient to provide “a delightful and genial resting place…for the veterans, who may gather together there ….”

At the same time that the Committee gathered information for its proposal to the Board of Managers, it also mounted a media campaign designed to win the support of the entire community for the project. This campaign emphasized the benefits of a branch of the NHDVS as a public improvement to beautify the city, but barely mentioned the invalids who would actually inhabit it. A letter from the Board of Trade to the Mayor and City Council advocated that five hundred acres of land owned by the city, known as the Elysian tract, be donated as the site for the new NHDVS. Reprinted in the Los Angeles Times, the letter informed citizens that the grounds “surrounding [NHDVS branches] are laid out and embellished in the most beautiful manner…in fact they are beautiful parks, and are always open to the public.”

The NHDVS’s function as a park has often prompted historians to claim that these branches became integral parts of their host communities. However, though the Board of Trade enthusiastically endorsed a park paid for by federal funds, it characterized each branch as “a small village by itself (italics added).” If their bid for the new NHDVS were to succeed, the Board of Trade would not envision the Soldiers’ Home as a part of their city, any more than they saw other branches of the NHDVS as being integral to their host cities.


26 Kelly, Creating A National Home, 172-191; Marten, Sing Not War, 159-172.

Once again, beyond indicating the number of veterans residing in branches of the NHDVS, the Board of Trade ignored the health status of its invalid population. However, they felt compelled to point out to readers that the pensions of the institutionalized veterans remained the veterans’ property “for their own personal uses, for the Government exercises no control over the pension money, and the veterans are *free to spend it as they choose* (italics added).”\(^{28}\) By a successful bid, Los Angeles would not only gain a superbly landscaped park; it would also acquire both NHDVS residents and the institution itself as a markets for local goods, labor and services that would annually send hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local economy. Viewed in this way, Los Angeles would be well compensated for hosting a separate community of sick and disabled veterans.

In late August, Los Angeles City Attorney J. L. Daly derailed suggestions from the Committee that the city donate the “Elysian Park tract” for the site of the new branch. Daly pointed out that two years earlier, the City Council had adopted an ordinance designating the land for use as a city park. Daly knew of “no implied or incidental authority …” which would “extinguish such a public use once made.”\(^{29}\) Now, months behind the other candidate cities, the Committee scrambled to find other sources of free or cheap acreage as Southern California’s real estate values continued to escalate.

Local real estate developers and land owners responded to the bidding process in a variety of ways. By November, when the Board of Managers arrived in Los Angeles to inspect prospective sites, the Committee had identified seven offers for submission to

\(^{28}\) Ibid.

them. Surprisingly, not one proposed site for the new NHDVS was within the Los Angeles city limits. Nearly all of the offers required that the Board of Managers purchase land, albeit at reduced rates. The most generous offer by far included a donation of several hundred acres of undeveloped rural land fourteen miles west of the city. The parcel was not owned by Los Angeles businessmen, but by the developers of its seaside rival, Santa Monica: John Percival Jones, the United States Senator from Nevada, and his business partner, Colonel Robert Symington Baker.

Jones and Baker joined forces when the millionaire Senator Jones purchased an undivided three-fourths interest in Baker’s Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica in 1874. The colleagues began selling lots in their newly platted town of Santa Monica on July 15, 1875. Within less than a year, the ocean front town site boasted a population of nearly a thousand permanent residents, “160 houses and half as many tents.” However, the Senator and his partner had much bigger plans for the new municipality. They envisioned Santa Monica as a major seaport and the urban center of Southern California. Their intent was to make Santa Monica, not Los Angeles, the regional metropolitan powerhouse. Toward that end, Jones personally financed construction of the


Los Angeles and Independence Railroad, the first local transit system connecting the two towns, as well as a commercial wharf.\(^{33}\)

A combination of Santa Monica’s slow growth, shipping competition from San Pedro harbor and failed mining investments forced Senator Jones to sell the railroad and the wharf to the Southern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s.\(^{34}\) With their sale, the Senator lost any hope of controlling the lucrative Southern California rail freight business, but he did not relinquish his plans for the town’s future as the region’s commercial center. As late as September 1891, Jones still believed that Santa Monica could become “the most important commercial city of Southern California.”\(^{35}\) Thus, at the height of Southern California’s real estate boom, Santa Monica’s foremost landowner looked for ways to increase business in Santa Monica and the value of his properties. Jones determined that the new NHDVS should be located near his developments rather than closer to Los Angeles. As a savvy businessman and a sitting U.S. senator, Jones must have known that he was in a position to influence appropriations for the future

\(^{33}\) With extensive mining investments in the Inyo Mountains, Senator Jones had far more elaborate plans for the Los Angeles and Independence Railroad than as interurban mass transit. He envisioned its tracks leaving Independence, California in the Owens Valley traversing all the way to Santa Monica. Scott, Santa Monica, 37. Though the Senator’s railroad was the first to connect Santa Monica and Los Angeles, it was not the first railroad between Los Angeles and the coast. That distinction fell to the first railroad to be constructed south of the Tehachapi, the Los Angeles and San Pedro Railroad. Constructed at taxpayer expense, that railroad linked the city of Los Angeles to the wharves at Wilmington. Its construction was opened on October 26, 1969 six years before Jones’ Los Angeles and Independence began service on October 17, 1875. Franklyn Hoyt, “The Los Angeles & San Pedro: First Railroad South of the Tehachapis,” California Historical Society Quarterly, 32, no. 4 (1953), 327-348, accessed November 12, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25156449; J. M. Guinn, “Pioneer Railroads of Southern California,” Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, 8, no. 3 (1911), 188-192, accessed January 12, 2013, doi: 10.2307/41168875.


\(^{35}\) Ibid., 18. Quoted from a letter to Georgina Jones from her husband, Senator John P. Jones.
NHDVS and Santa Monica. Jones began considering options to ensure that Santa Monica would be the site chosen for the new Soldiers’ Home. Despite his willingness to assume the risk, he still needed partners to sweeten the deal.

Moving to capitalize on the real estate boom, key members of the Los Angeles business community incorporated the Los Angeles and Santa Monica Land and Water Company in June 1887. In its name, they purchased John Wolfskill’s ranch adjoining the eastern boundary of Jones’ and Baker’s Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica property. The corporation’s shareholders intended to subdivide and re-sell the acreage at a substantial profit. They believed that placing the new NHDVS near their property would not only increase profits from their recently platted town of Sunset, but also that it would assure money, jobs and a market for local goods for the new town’s economy. More importantly, they expected it would generate new communities on the miles of vacant land, much of it owned by them, between Los Angeles and Santa Monica.

Ultimately, what became known as the Baker and Jones offer included three hundred acres of land, a guaranteed water supply, additional land for a reservoir, and $100,000 in cash installments for landscaping and other improvements to the grounds of what would become the newest NHDVS. Jones and Baker contributed the land, while

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36 Gillette, Gibson and Wood, courtesy Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Library, University of California, Los Angeles, “Abstract of Title of that Certain Real Property in the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres, County of Los Angeles, State of California , Bounded and Described as Follows : All of said Rancho as per map appearing on page 53 of this Abstract,” accessed June 15, 2011, http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/.

37 U. S. Congress, House, Letter from the President of the Board of Managers transmitting the Report of the Board for the year ending June 30, 1887, 50th Cong., 1st Sess. (1888) H. Misc. Doc. 86, 5-9. When Judge Theodore Van Dyke first presented the Jones and Baker offer to the Board of Managers, the bid included a $50,000 cash donation, free land, a guaranteed water supply and reservoir property. While generous, the offer did not eclipse those made by other entities. The Board left town undecided. Upon advice from Van Dyke, Baker and Jones upped their offer to a $100,000 cash donation. It clinched the deal.
Sunset’s developers committed to pay the cash contribution. Other California communities also offered the Board of Managers free land, but the $100,000 cash donation was by far the largest monetary inducement promised by any competing city. The Board of Managers found the Jones and Baker offer compelling enough to award the project to the “Santa Monica site” on December 6, 1887. The *Los Angeles Times* crowed, “The Managers Decide on Los Angeles. The Envious Northern Citrus Belt Left Out to Freeze. [There is] Nothing Else in the State So Good as Los Angeles County.”38 A month later, as the three-year boom lost momentum, the newspaper continued to celebrate the award’s value to the community.39 “The location at this point of the home…is worth much to Los Angeles county. It will cause land in that section to advance in value, and the trade thrown into the way of our merchants will be considerable.”40 Interestingly, that money-focused article closed by describing the Pacific Branch’s future residents not as sources of pension revenue, but as “the gray, grizzled and gallant defenders of their country.”41 Through that article and others like it, the future residents of the Pacific Branch entered the public dialog not as men, but heroic scenery.

During the next six months the Board of Managers’ construction committee became a familiar sight in Los Angeles and Santa Monica. The local newspapers

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41 Ibid.
excitedly reported their activities and the construction’s progress. Everyone knew when Captain Charles A. Treichel was appointed as the first governor of the Pacific Branch. 

Two thousand citizens of Santa Monica trekked out to the construction site to participate in flag raising ceremonies on April 27, 1888. Many were so aroused by the patriotic events that they returned to town “and marched through the streets of Santa Monica, proud of this, the most lovely of all places for a location of this, the sixth Soldiers’ Home in the United States.” Meanwhile, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union resolved to make an “earnest effort…to have the Soldiers’ Home, about to be located here, established on temperance principles, and unlike the one in prohibitory Kansas, where Uncle Sam gives away that which the laws prohibit.” However, not a single local newspaper reported the arrival of the man who would become the first resident of the new branch.

On May 2, 1888, the Pacific Branch admitted its first member, Private George Davis. A native of England, Davis had first entered the NHDVS system at the Eastern Branch in 1873. He had already transferred to the Central Branch in Dayton, Ohio, when he heard about the new institution being built in California. Presumably fed up with the harsh Ohio winters, Davis immediately applied for yet another transfer to the new Pacific Branch.

42 “Coming to California,” *The Evening News* (San Jose, CA), December 24, 1887, 4.


44 Ibid.


46 The Board of Managers referred to NHDVS residents as “members” to avoid the opprobrium attached to the word “inmates,” as the residents of alms houses and insane asylums were termed. In this study, residents of the Pacific Branch facility will be referred to as Pacific Branch members.
Branch. Fortunately for him, the Pacific Branch’s new governor needed secretarial assistance during the home’s construction, and Davis earned his living as a clerk. The skills he possessed got him transferred and admitted to the Pacific three months before any other veteran. Even then, other veterans had already submitted their applications for admission to the Pacific Branch and were eagerly awaiting word that they would be moving to Los Angeles. Writing from the poor house in San Francisco, a desperate Felix McHannan pleaded, “I have no way [to] support myself... i have no money i have no strength to work i do not want to end my days in the alms house [sic].” At the same time, family man Winfield Pearson claimed, “California is my home...my family is here and I do not care to be separated from them.” Other veterans simply packed their bags and caught trains bound for Southern California, hoping for immediate admission.

Endeavoring to boost land sales, local realtors ran advertisements in out-of-state newspapers which prematurely announced that the Pacific Branch was open and capable of housing two hundred veterans, thus exacerbating the rush of applicants. Beside himself, Governor Treichel lashed out:

... veterans are pouring in on us daily and we have nowhere to put them. The barracks...will not be finished before... December .... [We] have erected a temporary frame building, capable of accommodating twenty-five persons, but this is already crowded. Some of the arrivals are decrepit

47 NARA (Riverside), RG15, George Davis File, box 2.


49 NARA (Riverside), RG15, Felix McHannan File, box 5.

50 NARA (Riverside), RG15, Winfield S. Pearson File, box 6.
old men, and we cannot…turn them away, but it is a scandalous to bring them here under such false pretenses …  

By the time the contractor put the final coat of paint on the first two barracks buildings in February 1889, nearly fifty disabled veterans lived at the Pacific Branch.  

That March, one hundred more joined them in a single day.  

When the NHDVS’s fiscal year ended on June 30, the Pacific Branch population had ballooned to more than three hundred men.  

The increased veteran presence drew the community’s attention to their new neighbors. 

In many ways, the veterans living at the Pacific Branch were not unusual when compared with other residents of their host community. This is especially true when one considers that no other region of the nation sheltered as many sick and disabled individuals as did late nineteenth-century Southern California. As has been mentioned, national and international advertising campaigns successfully promoted Southern California’s climate as a curative for ailments such as bronchitis, asthma, tuberculosis and rheumatism; the same disabilities that afflicted many residents of the Pacific


53 Ibid. Thereafter known as the “Yountville 100,” tales of the veterans’ mass admission into the Pacific Branch became the stuff of myth. Ultimately the tale lost all semblance of truth beyond the number of men involved. Newspaper reports at the time agree that the Yountville veterans arrived by railroad in Los Angeles on March 15, 1889. They were met at the train by carriages which transported them to the Pacific Branch. “Veterans From Younsville [sic],” Los Angeles Herald, March 16, 1889. In later years, the Los Angeles Times reported that the men had been so anxious to leave the Yountville Home that they walked the five hundred miles from northern California to Los Angeles. Cecilia Rasmussen, “L.A. Scene,” Los Angeles Times, August 29, 1994.  

Branch. The physical appearance of residents of the Soldiers’ Home might not have seemed different from thousands of similarly troubled health seekers living in households, sanitariums and boarding houses throughout the region. Indeed, one historian suggests that emerging ideas about manhood prompted Southern California’s male invalids to attempt to pass as healthy or normal by embracing manly attributes like “strength, power and forcefulness and reject[ing] everything associated with femininity.” In other words, since health and independence defined Gilded Age manliness, chronically ill men continued to work regardless of the consequences to their health. In order to maintain their places in society, they camouflaged their health issues as long as possible. Veterans who entered the Pacific Branch could not avoid admitting, and thus publicizing, their infirmities to the community.

The admission process rendered camouflage impossible for the veterans who accepted their nation’s largesse. Not only did veterans openly discuss their medical conditions in the admission process, but those personal defects were also chronicled in excruciating detail during the required physical examination. “I am an old soldier unable to do hard work and…I have Reuhmatism and nervous dispepsia [sic],” Ebenezer Jones confessed in his letter seeking admission to the Pacific Branch. William Yelton

55 Ancestry.com, National Homes.

56 Ibid.


58 Erving Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 73-91. Goffman argues that individuals who possess what he calls “spoiled identities,” such as the disabled or chronically ill, frequently try to conceal those socially stigmatized characteristics from others.

59 NARA (Riverside), RG15, Ebenezer Jones File, box 4.
confided that he was a “temperate man and have not bad habits nor never had, but [I] am badly crippled [sic] up [with] rheumatism and nervous trouble, and a general breaking down of the system.” This admission of infirmities proved troublesome for residents because Southern California commoditized health, advertising itself as a guaranteed cure for any number of ailments. Because a cure was expected in all cases, any failure to recover signaled a lack in the individual rather than a deficiency in the climate or treatment.

Non-institutionalized invalids might hope to function fairly normally in the community, but the disabled veterans’ distinctive dark blue uniforms set them apart, marking them as incurable in a climate of healing. On Santa Monica’s city streets, their attire trumpeted not only their invalidism and institutionalization, but also their poverty—a state which nineteenth-century Americans considered to be “a consequence (or alternatively a cause) of poor morals and poor habits.” Many felt that those unable to succeed in California and the West, a region equated with opportunity, likely deserved their own failure. Not incidentally, the deliberately military cant of their uniforms reiterated their status as former soldiers, a tainted identity stereotypically associated with

60 NARA (Riverside, RG15, William Yelton File, box 8.

61 Abel, Suffering in the Land of Sunshine, 67.


63 Marten, Sing Not War, 20. Marten notes that observers believed that “anyone who could not make something of himself in the fast-paced and opportunity-rich North probably deserved to fail.”
drinking, gambling, and whoring.\textsuperscript{64} Needless to say, whenever any veteran wearing a Pacific Branch uniform indulged in questionable behavior, the whole town noticed.

As long as the men’s behaviors conformed to social expectations of quaint elderly soldiers, the local newspapers published proud accounts about the aging heroes and the inchoate Soldiers’ Home. In June 1889, the \textit{Santa Monica Outlook} reported that a dozen or so “veterans from the Soldiers’ Home found their way down to the ocean’s side…and thoroughly enjoyed themselves watching the merry crowd.”\textsuperscript{65} That July 6, the \textit{Los Angeles Times} decried purported discrimination by the Los Angeles and Pacific Railroad against the Pacific Branch residents who did not receive an advertised discounted fare when others travelling further on the same line did.\textsuperscript{66} On another day that month, the newspaper chronicled a tour of “The Veterans’ Rest” where the reporter found the residents all had “a tidy, healthy, comfortable look about them.”\textsuperscript{67} However, the \textit{Times} reportage changed after the August 3 pension distribution, when several of the uniformed Pacific Branch residents made news of another sort. The newspaper disclosed,

\begin{quote}
Quite a number of the old soldiers are topers and on receiving their pension money they come into [Santa Monica] … and indulge in a little toot that is unpleasant for the non-participants. Their money came the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 51-54. See also, Steven J. Ramold, \textit{Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army}, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010). Among those vices, Ramold contends that alcohol caused the most severe disciplinary problems. Union soldiers not only demanded access to alcohol but “drank on a scale both epidemically and endemically, creating disciplinary problems from…the first days of the war to its very end” (123).

\textsuperscript{65} “Santa Monica. Improvements and Preparations for Summer,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, June 17, 1889, 8.

\textsuperscript{66} “Discrimination Against Veterans,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, July 6, 1889, 3.

\textsuperscript{67} Cinderella [pseud.] “The Veterans’ Rest.” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, July 7, 1889, 9.
other day and as a result five of them were before the magistrates … on charges of drunkenness.\(^68\)

Tellingly, Santa Monica’s *Outlook* made no particular reference to the miscreants despite far greater proximity. Instead, in its issue of the same date, the newspaper commented, “There was another jam on the beach last Sunday, but the order was good. No arrests of any importance were made.”\(^69\) In spite of its best efforts, Los Angeles had lost the Soldiers’ Home, as well as the greater share of the revenue it generated, to Santa Monica; the *Times* seemed all too eager to publish the negative returns of its rival’s victory.

Another local newspaper, the *Los Angeles Tribune*, focused instead on the day-to-day lives of the residents. The *Tribune* found much to criticize at the Pacific Branch, claiming that the veterans were driven to drink by the atrocious conditions under which they lived. No wonder, the *Tribune* sympathized, “when a few pence fall in their way … [the residents] go either to Los Angeles or Santa Monica to escape their tormentors for a season.”\(^70\) Describing the Soldiers’ Home as a “Hell Upon Earth,” the *Tribune’s* September 15 front-page, multi-columned article exposed the purportedly shocking living conditions there. Seemingly well-documented by an undercover reporter and supported by signed affidavits of Pacific Branch members, the article revealed a plethora of problems at the facility. Among other problems, the report stated that the men were regularly served spoiled meat and coffee that tasted so bad that “the ingredients spoil[ed]

\(^68\) “Santa Monica,” August 7, 1889, *Los Angeles Times*, 3.

\(^69\) “Local Intelligence,” *Santa Monica Outlook*, August 7, 1889, 2.

the water.”\textsuperscript{71} Worse still, the Home’s staff buried deceased veterans like paupers, without ceremony and in unmarked graves. Further, Governor Treichel expelled deserving veterans for the slightest of infractions. Moreover, the reporter asserted that the Governor was mentally ill and possibly insane. In his affidavit, George Davis, who had been Governor Treichel’s clerk, described the Governor as being “peculiar” and “not in his right mind.”\textsuperscript{72} Albion Libby charged Governor Treichel with treating the men like prisoners.\textsuperscript{73} The community reacted quickly and angrily to the charges.

At first concerned, and then furious about the \textit{Tribune}’s accusations, Colonel Harrison Gray Otis dispatched his own \textit{Times}’ reporter to the Soldiers’ Home with orders to ferret out the truth about the situation. Several of the local GAR posts formed a joint committee and mounted their own investigation as well. During their inspection of the Pacific Branch, the GAR committee was unable to confirm several of the \textit{Tribune}’s charges, and at least one man quoted in the \textit{Tribune} article denied making several of the remarks attributed to him. However, many of the veterans who were questioned by the committee complained about short rations, tough meat, bad coffee, and sour milk. A few questioned Governor Treichel’s ability to command, control his temper, and even his sanity. The committee believed that it had observed enough problems during its visit to submit their findings to the Board of Managers with a request that the matter be investigated. Intense press coverage of the GAR’s investigation assured that the situation

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{73} “Shameful,” \textit{Los Angeles Tribune}, 1.
would not go away or get better by itself. In the end, the Pacific Branch members were caught in the middle and the only reputations harmed were their own.

Every newspaper in town became involved to one degree or another, with only the *Outlook* remaining mostly above the fray. For his part, Colonel Otis was not about to allow the publisher of the *Tribune*, a former business partner turned rival, to be correct about the situation. In every issue the *Times* attacked the *Tribune* (which at times it derisively called “The Trombone”), its publisher, its reporter and the men who had complained to them.\(^74\) According to Otis, there were no real problems at the Pacific Branch beyond the occasional serving of weak coffee and tough meat. He characterized the residents’ complaints as “such discontented gossip as may always be found among several hundred elderly invalids thrown together, day after day, mainly without employment.”\(^75\) As was typical of such investigations, when other institutionalized veterans had made accusations about their quality of the care, Otis attacked the character of the complainants rather than ascertaining the truth of their claims.\(^76\) Because Otis had a widely circulated newspaper at his disposal, he was in a position to influence the opinions of a broad spectrum of readers regarding circumstances at the Soldiers’ Home and the veterans’ morals.

Otis’ editorial cartoons turned against the Pacific Branch’s residents. During the weeks preceding publication of the *Tribune* story, the *Times* published at least two

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\(^75\) “A Tempest in a Teapot,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4.

\(^76\) Martin, *Sing Not War*, 179-187.
illustrated articles about the Pacific Branch. In those articles, drawings portrayed the residents as industrious, kindly, elderly men; and demonstrated their disabilities; some were pictured standing supported by crutches or sitting in wheelchairs. The September 15 report about the GAR’s investigation contained similarly sympathetic drawings.\textsuperscript{77} However, as Otis became angrier and the \textit{Tribune} did not back down from its claims, the \textit{Times’} illustrated portrayals of the Pacific Branch residents changed their tenor. Echoing Otis’ well-known anti-labor sentiments, the \textit{Times} baldly asserted that if there were “outrages” at the Pacific Branch, it was the behavior of the residents that was the problem, not those of management. The newspaper animated that opinion in a September 22 editorial cartoon entitled “An ‘Outrage’ at the Soldiers’ Home.” Taking a cue from a \textit{Ventura Vidette} editorial about the scandal, the \textit{Times} cartoon features Governor Treichel remonstrating a drunken resident as he pours a bottle of liquor onto the floor.\textsuperscript{78} The Governor appears in the attitude of a firm parent scolding an unruly child, shaking his finger at the reprobate. On the other hand, the resident’s appearance bears none of the innocence of childhood, much less the dignity of a war hero. Instead, his coarse features, truculent facial expression, wild hair, and unkempt uniform signal an utter lack of repentance and dissolution. Perhaps even more damming, the caricatured veteran appears to lack any physical disability whatsoever. Only a malingering buffoon, the illustration seems to say, would accept his nation’s generosity and then complain about the gift he received.

\textsuperscript{77} “A Mare’s Nest: That is what was found yesterday,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, September 15, 1889, 3.

\textsuperscript{78} “Views of a Veteran Soldier,” \textit{Ventura Vidette}, September 19, 1889, 3.
With the exception of the discontented men liberally quoted in the Tribune, only rarely did the names of Pacific Branch residents appear in press coverage about the situation. Considering the storm created by the press, it is not surprising that several of the Tribune’s witnesses recanted prior to the Board of Managers hearing that October, especially since Governor Treichel discharged some of the quoted veterans from the Soldiers’ Home as troublemakers, even after they had abrogated their Tribune testimonies. Whether or not the Tribune misquoted the men, the incident demonstrated the stakes residents faced when they voiced their dissatisfaction: losing the shelter and protection provided by the Pacific Branch. One resident who sought to express his opinion used a pseudonym in his letter to the Outlook, despite the relatively innocuous opinions expressed. “Resident Soldier” had been living at the Pacific Branch for four

79 “Santa Monica,” Los Angeles Herald, September 26, 1889, California Digital Newspaper Collection, http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cdnc. The article reports that Sergeant Russell and Coachman Peirce have been dismissed from the Soldiers’ Home as “two of the promoters of the late disturbance.” (Ibid.)
months and found it “an excellent institution.” He regarded Governor Treichel as a kind man, but one “whose health [was] impaired, … [who was] not always able to control his irritability, and sometimes [said] things which in his calmer moments he would not say.” Finally, seeking to defend his reputation and those other Pacific Branch residents, Resident Soldier declared, “Here, as in the army, there is and always will be a small percentage of unruly and incorrigible characters, but … [in his opinion] four-fifths of the “vets” [were] sober, self-respecting men.” Despite this resident’s attempt to ease the tension, the damage to local opinion of his compatriots had already been done.

The Tribune’s accusations and the GAR’s allegations not only appeared in the local press, but also were “widely telegraphed over the country.” The negative publicity blitz was not unfamiliar to the Board of Managers. Previous bouts of negative press had resulted in congressional hearings into the management of the Milwaukee and Dayton branches. Seeking to avoid another such inquiry, the Board re-scheduled its annual inspection of the Pacific Branch to October and opened its normally closed sessions to the press and to the GAR’s committee. The Board’s representatives invited members of the Pacific Branch and the GAR to testify in the public forum.

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81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.


84 Marten, Sing Not War, 172-176.

85 “An Investigation: Opened at the Soldiers’ Home Yesterday,” Los Angeles Times, October 2, 1889, 2.
Neither the allegations of Pacific Branch members nor those of the GAR were received without cost to their authors. Though members received the Board’s assurances that they could speak candidly, they still did so at the peril of character assassination such as the press had practiced in the preceding weeks. When Chaplin Corydon Millard complained about the mistreatment of his friend Riley Hobson in the Pacific Branch hospital, Dr. Hasse testified that Hobson was lazy and manipulative.\(^{86}\) Similarly, after George Byfield asserted that he had not received proper medical care at the Pacific Branch, Dr. Hasse insisted that the man was “a consumptive, querulous and nothing satisfied him.”\(^{87}\) The attacks, one historian has argued, demonstrated that legitimacy of the men’s claims was subordinate to their behavior, despite their status as veterans.\(^{88}\) Though an unprecedented number of complaints were lodged by members of the Pacific Branch—10 percent of the population—the Board declined to question Governor Treichel’s competence or investigate the quality of life at the Pacific Branch. Instead, the Board continued to assert that a few trouble makers had caused the entire uproar, assisted by the GAR and a yellow press.

The GAR did not escape the hearings unscathed. As the Board examined charges levied by the GAR, Board member Colonel Leonard A. Harris took umbrage at what he saw as a galling attempt by the GAR to usurp the Board’s own purview, the care of the

\(^{86}\) Ibid.

\(^{87}\) Ibid.

\(^{88}\) Marten, *Sing Not War*, 183.
Pacific Branch members. The GAR’s real offence in Harris’ eyes was treating the dependent veterans living at the Pacific Branch as independent citizens with legal grievances, rather than as dependents under the jurisdiction of the Board of Managers. To the Board, the Pacific Branch’s relationship to the greater community did not extend to questioning the treatment and living conditions of the dependent veterans under its care.

What the inspection committee reported to the full Board of Managers in January 1890 had seemingly little to do with the allegations. The inspectors drew few conclusions from the hearings, preferring instead to have “disinterested” members of the Board examine the testimony and data to draw their own conclusions. Instead, they announced the arrival of new amenities, advising the Board that they had secured funding to build a cooling house and cold storage lockers at the Pacific Branch. Tough meat might still find its way to the Pacific Branch dining room, but it would not be spoiled, and neither would the milk be sour. Further, the committee announced funding for construction of a restaurant and a Home Store—entities that would generate income for the Pacific Branch. Later during that same meeting, almost as an afterthought before adjourning, the Board authorized Governor Treichel to open a Beer Hall and sell beer to members on the grounds of the Pacific Branch.

By establishing a restaurant and Home Store, the Board of Managers sought to repair the Pacific Branch’s relations with the community. When the Board authorized


90 H. Misc. Doc. 38 (1890), 63.

91 Ibid.
establishment of the Pacific Branch Home Store and restaurant, they intended it as a “source of great comfort to the members and visitors, who heretofore have been unable to even get a sandwich on the Branch grounds, and which has been a source of severe comment and numerous complaints.”\textsuperscript{92} Since members of the Pacific Branch received three meals a day, any complaints regarding sandwiches and other items sold by both establishments were coming from tourists, not residents.

On the other hand, the Beer Hall was a “members only” establishment, specifically aimed at managing Pacific Branch residents’ alcohol intake in the community. No one except members could purchase its goods. By the time the canteen at the Pacific Branch opened for business on July 4, 1890, the Board of Managers had already laid the prior calumny to rest, tabling it indefinitely and sending a message to Governor Treichel that:

As chief executive officer of the Home, the Board looks to him as its responsible agent for the proper conduct of the Home in all its departments, and that he is expected to hold the subordinate officers of the Home to a similar responsibility for the departments under their charge, and to keep himself thoroughly informed as to the manner in which the duties of such subordinates are fulfilled.\textsuperscript{93}

When Governor Treichel submitted his annual report to the Board of Managers in August 1890, he seemed to believe that the newly opened beer hall had solved the problem of inebriated members, both at the Soldiers’ Home and in the greater community. He enthusiastically reported of its first weeks, already the good results have been so marked as to have attracted the attention of the citizens and officials of both Santa Monica and Los

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid. Emphasis mine.

\textsuperscript{93} H. Misc. Doc. 38 (1890), 69.
Angeles…There has also been a marked decrease in the number of passes. The men are cheerful and contented, preferring to remain on the place and sit in a pleasant arbor with their glass of beer, pipe and newspaper. During the month the arrests at the Home and in the town have been very few.\textsuperscript{94} 

The idyll that Treichel painted in his report did not last. Rather than “preferring to remain on the place” many of the veterans regularly ventured beyond the Soldiers’ Home gates and into the surrounding communities.\textsuperscript{95} As such, the leisure activities of certain of the men both changed and tested the relationship between the Soldiers’ Home and the citizens of Los Angeles and Santa Monica in ways community elites had not anticipated when they had campaigned for its location in the region.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 150-151.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
CHAPTER III
Sawtelle
A Soldiers’ City at the Gates of the Pacific Branch

Sawtelle is where you get off [the cars] when you go to the Soldiers’ Home. It is a mile square and has…a good variety of stores, paved streets, water mains, street signs and almost everything.

Los Angeles Times, 1922

In 1898 the Pacific Branch began its second decade of providing services to the West Coast’s disabled Union veterans with more than sixteen hundred men squeezed into facilities that had been designed to accommodate hundreds fewer. While the progressive relaxation of admission criteria ensured that its population increased regularly, a series of economic depressions, rampant unemployment and continued western migration created a surge of new applicants. Yet, contrary to the nearly universal perception that only the desperately poor sought refuge at the NHDVS, early twentieth-century applicants to the Pacific Branch included a small but significant cohort of Union veterans who met the admission criteria, but retained some financial means. A unique set of circumstances existed in Los Angeles that allowed these men and some of their poorer brethren to carve out a niche for themselves, defying conventional wisdom about the capabilities and financial status of institutionalized Union veterans.

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1 “To Be or Not To Be Sawtelle?” Los Angeles Times, June 3, 1922, II-1.

2 H. Doc. 55 (1898), 141.

3 In his recent book, Sing Not War, James Marten notes that Americans viewed NHDVS residents as “unmanly and useless” individuals who were “less than truly men.” Further, the frequent physical and printed public presence of veterans resulted in two very negative stereotypes of veterans: “feeble and incapable, or drunken and irresponsible.” Marten, Sing Not War, 198.
Many veterans, especially members of the GAR, believed that the federal government owed all Union veterans compensation in return for their wartime sacrifices. By the early 1890s, more than three quarters of a million Union veterans chose to collect that debt in the form of military pensions. Despite Gilded Age taboos against permanent dependence, many wealthy veterans thought nothing of drawing federal pensions, but with their significant personal resources, they did not require the services offered by the NHDVS. At the other end of the spectrum, poor Union veterans applied for both military pensions and the shelter of the NHDVS. Middle-class veterans joined their wealthier comrades and drew pensions as soon as they became eligible, but they rarely institutionalized themselves during the first three decades after Appomattox. However, by the turn of the century, certain middle-class veterans in the Far West came to view NHDVS medical benefits as rightfully owed to them.

At the Pacific Branch, NHDVS membership became an essential economic element of the old age survival strategy of certain Union veterans. When cataracts left him “totally blind in one eye and very nearly so in the other,” Brigadier General Thomas J. Thorp applied for admission to the Pacific Branch. The Brigadier General explained:

The object of coming here was to get relief from the blindness if possible. I felt justified in doing so, because I said to myself, the Government can

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4 Theda Skocpol argues that the scope of the war’s impact upon the Northern male population coupled with the generosity of the system encouraged early applicants to the pension program. Later, the Arrears Act of 1879 and the Dependent Act of 1890 made Union veteran participation almost universal. Indeed, by 1910, 90 percent of all living Union veterans received disability pensions. Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, 107-118.

afford as fine specialists as there are to administer to the wants of the old veterans; and I concluded that my bills had been paid, if not before, at least at Appomattox ....\(^6\)

The NHDVS advertised itself as a benefit available to any disabled veteran, but Gilded Age assumptions about dependence, disability and poverty led the Board of Managers and the American public to presume that its residents would be exclusively poor.\(^7\) Yet, despite presumptions about the poverty status of its members, NHDVS applications did not inquire into the financial status of applicants beyond the amount of any military pensions they received. Except in rare circumstances, those benefits remained the separate property of the individual members. Moreover, any income earned by members of NHDVS facilities also remained the individual veteran’s separate property.

Given the unique opportunity presented by the new real estate development abutting the Pacific Branch, coupled with the small but regular income of their military pensions, it should not be surprising that working- and middle-class veterans with disabilities relocated to the area. In their former homes, many of the veterans had not


only owned their houses and farms, but their properties had been unencumbered by mortgages. They had earned their livings as small farmers, skilled craftsmen and professionals—seemingly the sorts of individuals that national campaigns sponsored by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce sought to attract to Southern California, except these men arrived with, or would later acquire, the stigma of dependence associated with NHDVS membership.

Absent their dependent status, the veterans who would settle in the new development and become members of the Pacific Branch were desirable immigrants to Los Angeles. For purposes of this study, a “Sawtelle Pacific Branch Resident” is defined as a Union veteran who held membership in the Pacific Branch at any time between 1888 and 1910 and at some point during that same time period resided in the city of Sawtelle, whether or not the Pacific Branch membership and Sawtelle residency were simultaneous. By analyzing a sample of 119 of the Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents drawn from the 1907 Sawtelle city directory, contemporary newspaper reports, surviving membership files held at the National Archives in Riverside, California, and the “Biography” section of Luther A. Ingersoll’s 1908 book, Ingersoll’s Century History:

8 Appendix B: “Statistical Profile of One Hundred Nineteen Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents.” Appendix B provides an analysis of the ages, marital status, occupations and real estate holdings of 119 Pacific Branch Sawtelle residents. Of the 89 veterans from my sample whom I located in the 1900 census, 40 percent of the men owned real property. Note: I compiled a sample of Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents after searches of the Ancestry.com 1910 federal census database returned dual enumeration results for several Pacific Branch members. The original sample included 125 Pacific Branch members. However, upon further examination, six of the veterans in the original group failed to meet the sample’s criteria. Over the years in question, the total population of Sawtelle grew from less than 100 in 1897 to approximately 400 in 1900. It rose to 2,143 residents in 1910. My sample of 119 Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents represents 5 percent of the reported population of Sawtelle in 1910. Angelo Heilprin and Louis Heilprin, eds. Geographical Dictionary of the World in the Early 20th Century (New Delhi: Logos Press, 1906), 1660.; James Miller Guinn, A History of California and An Extended History of its Southern Coast Counties, Vol. 1 (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1907), 443.
Santa Monica Bay Cities, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions about the Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents.⁹

Analysis of the Pacific Branch membership register reveals that Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents were on average 62.44 years old when they were admitted to the NHDVS. Native-born Americans made up 85 percent of the group, while only 15 percent were foreign born. A surprising 75 percent of the veterans in the sample were married.¹⁰ Though the ages of the Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents were comparable with those of NHDVS residents found in earlier studies, the high percentage of married men was not. Indeed, Judith Centina’s 1977 sampling of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century NHDVS residents reported that only 34 percent of those veterans were married, while a whopping 66 percent of the men were either single or widowed.¹¹ A survey of the general population of the Pacific Branch between 1900 and 1910 results in a similar ratio of married to single members among its residents. Both studies concur with prevailing scholarship, which states that the men who sought the protection of the NHDVS did so because they were single or widowed leaving them without the housekeeping and nursing services that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women typically provided for their husbands. The vast disparity between the number of married Pacific Branch Sawtelle

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⁹ Directory of the Santa Monica Bay District Containing a Complete List of Names and Residences of the Permanent Residents of Santa Monica, Ocean Park, Sawtelle and Palms (Santa Monica: Publisher not indicated, 1907); NARA (Riverside), RG 15, boxes 1-11; Luther A. Ingersoll, Century History Santa Monica Bay Cities (Los Angeles: Luther A. Ingersoll, 1908), 357-512.

¹⁰ Appendix B: “Statistical Profile.”

¹¹ Cetina, A History of Veterans’ Homes,” 397. For a more recent statistical analysis of the likelihood that a Union veteran would enter a soldiers’ home see: Logue and Blanck, Race, Ethnicity, and Disability, “Havens of Last Resort,” 129-143. Logue and Blanck use what they call “rootlessness” rather than marital status as an indicator of a veteran’s likelihood of entering the NHDVS. Yet, they found that marrying reduced a veteran’s “rootlessness index” and “halved his odds of institutionalization.” (140).
Residents and the samples of the general NHDVS population suggests that as (mostly) married men, the Pacific Branch Sawtelle Residents had different expectations about their membership in the NHDVS from the primarily unmarried population that made up the majority of the NHDVS system.

Further analysis of the membership register reveals that prior to their admission to the Pacific Branch, 18 percent of the cohort held white collar jobs, including one attorney, a surgeon, a musician, several teachers, clerks, salesmen, and merchants. Another 18 percent of the group was skilled blue-collar workers, including among others: two jewelers, a tailor, two cooks, a restaurant keeper, a harness maker and a dozen carpenters. Forty percent of the men in the sample were farmers, but only 9 percent of the sample was unskilled workers who earned their living as common laborers. There were no factory or mill workers reported in the sample, but there were several miners and carpenters. Based on the occupations reported in the membership register, absent their dependent status as members of the Pacific Branch, the vast majority of the group would have been expected to become worthy members of their new community.

Just as the population of the Pacific Branch had grown during the 1890s, so too had that of nearby Santa Monica. However, despite the explosive population growth experienced by both the Pacific Branch and the city of Los Angeles, Santa Monica remained a relatively small town, with only three thousand permanent residents.

Appendix B: “Statistical Profile.”

Marin J. Wolf and Katherine Mader, Santa Monica Jewel of the Sunset Bay (United States of America: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1989), 39. In his annual report Pacific Branch Governor A. J. Smith reported for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1898, an average of 1,602 members as being present. The maximum number of absentees for the same period was 604 members. In its ten year existence, the institution had grown to support a population over half the size of the entire city of Santa Monica. H. Doc. 55 (1898), 144.
Especially after its crushing loss in 1897 to San Pedro of a federally funded deep harbor project, Santa Monica seemed destined to remain a recreational and retirement community, not a commercial center.\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, though development of “South Santa Monica” had begun, no settlement of any significance had developed between the Soldiers’ Home and the beach city other than the farming village of Palms. The same economic conditions that forced growing numbers of poor Union veterans to seek admission to the Pacific Branch had stalled the development of properties east of Santa Monica.

For Santa Monica, the Pacific Branch proved to be a double-edged sword. Construction of new buildings, as well as improvements to the water service at the Soldiers’ Home, was a regular source of profit for Santa Monica’s contractors, merchants and skilled laborers.\textsuperscript{15} Pension dollars spent in the town by Soldiers’ Home members added to the bounty, but the existence of the saloons where some of the veterans spent those dollars was increasingly at odds with the social mores of the community.\textsuperscript{16} Equally problematic for Santa Monica was having the institutionalized veterans thrust into local affairs, especially at election time. The veterans’ drinking and voting compelled Santa

\textsuperscript{14} Ingersoll, \textit{Ingersoll’s Century History}, 208.

\textsuperscript{15} Businesses in other Southern California communities secured Pacific Branch contracts as well, but Santa Monica’s proximity to the Soldiers’ Home meant that many of its members spent time in the nearby town. Before trolley service from the Soldiers’ Home became available 1890, Santa Monica was considered within walking distance for its members. Indeed, thirsty walkers could stop for a cold beer at a saloon conveniently located halfway to the town. At eleven miles distant from the Pacific Branch, a trip to Los Angeles required a train ride, so many of the veterans preferred the cheaper trip to Santa Monica for their entertainment.

\textsuperscript{16} According to Governor Smith’s 1898 report to the Board of Managers, Pacific Branch pensioners received $220,028.79 during the fiscal year July 1, 1897 through June 30, 1898. That amount was $30,949.71 more than had been paid out in the preceding fiscal year. H. Doc. 55 (1898), 141.
Monica’s citizens to seek ways to segregate Pacific Branch members from their community.

From the town’s earliest days, Santa Monica’s elites sought to control the questionable pursuits of the community’s citizens and visitors by adopting city ordinances that targeted vagrants, “common drunks,” prostitutes and “disorderly houses” with fines and jail sentences.\(^\text{17}\) The community also housed an active religious and temperance population who believed that drinking alcohol was immoral. Over the next several years, that segment of the citizenry transformed temperance in Santa Monica into a political issue that, one historian argues, “would not go away.”\(^\text{18}\) Despite Santa Monica’s professed abhorrence of drunken revelers in its streets, the city continued to issue licenses to businesses that sold alcohol. By 1898, the city boasted more than sixteen saloons and dozens more establishments where alcoholic beverages were readily available for consumption.

In a January 1898 newspaper interview, Senator John P. Jones, still a major landowner and powerful voice in local affairs, declared that “the city need[s] purifying, particularly as regards saloons, and the number should be cut down at least by half…if we expect to attract a desirable class of people, either as visitors or permanent citizens.”\(^\text{19}\) Santa Monica’s Board of City Trustees agreed with the Senator. Within days, it permanently revoked the saloon licenses of William Steirn and Charles Engleman. Police

\(^{17}\) Santa Monica City Board of Trustees. “City of Santa Monica Original Ordinances, Trustees Series, Volume 1.” (Santa Monica: Office of the Santa Monica City Clerk, Records Management Division).

\(^{18}\) Scott, *Santa Monica*, 100.

\(^{19}\) “Senator Jones Talks Quite Freely to ‘The Outlook’ Favors Less Saloons. Will Encourage Everything in the Shape of Progress,” *Santa Monica Daily Outlook*, January 14, 1898, 1.
complained that even after repeated requests, Steirn not only refused to quiet the Sunday night crowd in his establishment, but ordered their officer to leave the premises. The District Attorney accused Engleman and his wife of serving “liquor to a man who was in a beastly state of intoxication.” Witnesses alleged that Mrs. Engleman held an “old soldier’s” head “while he was drunk and poured liquor down his throat…three or four times” during a recent evening at the Gem Saloon. After the Board found both saloon owners in direct violation of existing city ordinances, it moved to further “purify” the city by outlawing female bartenders and banning the issuance of any new saloon licenses.22

The Santa Monica Outlook fully supported the Board’s actions, assiduously publicizing all the drunk and disorderly conduct it could find. In addition to printing temperance-themed editorials and a weekly Women’s Christian Temperance Union column, the newspaper reported the names, fines and jail sentences of drunks on its front page. Most weeks, at least one Soldiers’ Home member’s name appeared in these reports. William Dehn received five days in jail because he could not pay his five dollar fine. Michael Whalen was luckier; he paid his fine, rather than serving time in jail.24


21 “More Trouble. Complaint Against the Gem Saloon,” Santa Monica Daily Outlook, January 13, 1898; “The Trustees. They Start a Good Ball Rolling. And Revoke Licenses,” Santa Monica Daily Outlook, January 18, 1898. Note: Regardless of their ages, Civil War veterans were routinely referred to as old soldiers. Rather than an insult, the designation “old soldier” was one way of articulating the difference between those who had been through battle and civilians who had not. In this instance, use of the term highlights the egregiousness of Mrs. Engleman’s behavior. Marten, Sing Not War, 257-258.

22 “Town Trustees. They Start a Good Ball Rolling And Revoke Licenses,” Santa Monica Daily Outlook, January 18, 1898.

23 “Got Five Days,” Santa Monica Daily Outlook, March 10, 1898.

24 “Paid His Fine,” Santa Monica Daily Outlook, June 2, 1898.
Sometimes the paper omitted the offender’s names—one story referred to “two veterans [who] were locked up last night for being drunk.”

The *Outlook*’s reportage did not stop there. On March 25, the usually newsy “Soldiers’ Home” column provided a window into the prejudices which both the Home’s management and Santa Monica’s elite shared against the character of Pacific Branch members. The article reported recent proceedings at the Governor’s Court, the judicial arm of the NHDVS. The writer praised the dignity and patience of the Governor, but the unnamed member,

swayed in an effort to appear “all right” and in the effort to straighten up came full tilt against the judicial desk, almost overturning it against the dignified presence, and blurted out, –“Skuse me, governor, I’ve bin drinkin’,–hic–a bit an’ couldn’t–hic–elp it.”

*Outlook* readers learned that the lout received fifteen days “on the dump” for his drunk and disorderly behavior, a harsher sentence than a civil court judge might have imposed. Santa Monica’s temperance advocates undoubtedly cheered at the Governor’s verdict.

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25 “Before Judge Wells,” *Santa Monica Daily Outlook* (Santa Monica, CA), November 22, 1898.

26 The “Governor’s Court” convened each week to adjudicate violations of NHDVS rules by inmates. Hearings were not open to either the public or any member of the Pacific Branch who was not charged with a crime. Although witnesses were permitted, the accused was not represented by counsel. He was not judged by a jury of his peers, but by the Governor of the branch where the violation occurred. There was no appeal to the verdict pronounced by the Governor. In a 1912 senate investigation into the Pacific Branch, Brigadier General Thomas J. Thorpe, then a member, testified that the governor’s court was as a “quasi police court” that rendered “arbitrary and oppressive decrees.” S. Rpt. 1167 (1913), 602.

27 “Soldiers’ Home,” *Santa Monica Daily Outlook*, April 1, 1898.

28 Ibid. Though the Board of Managers maintained that “the dump” was unpaid, but not onerous duty, the 1912 testimony of Pacific Branch member Brigadier General Thomas J. Thorp portrayed it as quite the opposite. The Brigadier General claimed that “veterans ranging from any age of 60 odd to 80…[were] consigned to hard labor for 30, 50, 60 or 90 days.” S. Rpt. 1167 (1913), 604,
Not surprisingly, when Governor A. J. Smith instituted a number of reforms at the Pacific Branch, many of the area’s leading citizens did not question the measures. However, some of Smith’s charges complained loudly about life under his regime. At the same time that Outlook articles focused on Santa Monica’s saloon battle, the Los Angeles Record published a number of reports about problems at the Pacific Branch. Concerned because the Record alleged one order issued by the Governor “for[bade] more than one newspaper or periodical being taken by one soldier,” which could have resulted in the cancellation of dozens (if not hundreds) of newspaper subscriptions, the Los Angeles Times sent its reporter to investigate the charges.29 Once the Governor denied his intention to limit the veterans’ newspaper subscriptions, Colonel Otis’ Times and most other news outlets in Los Angeles and Santa Monica dismissed the veterans’ complaints as the grousing of a few disaffected troublemakers, despite escalating charges against him published in the Record.30 Implicit in the Times’ dismissal was the widespread opinion that by “allowing themselves to become dependent” the Pacific Branch members, like any “Americans who submitted to confinement in homes and asylums,” had “made

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29 Prior to the advent of radio, television and the internet, the only way these men could get news about Los Angeles, Santa Monica, their home towns and elsewhere in the nation was through newspapers. Given the amount of disposable income their pensions provided, many of the Pacific Branch veterans subscribed to multiple newspapers. NARA (Riverside), RG15, Scrapbook of Newspaper Clippings Pertaining to the Branch 1894-1898, box 11; “‘Home’ is a Misnomer When Applied to the Old Soldiers’ Quarters at Santa Monica, Under Colonel Smith’s Management,” Los Angeles Record, January 24, 1898.

themselves less than complete citizens.”\textsuperscript{31} Pacific Branch members had no right to complain about the circumstances under which they lived.

Surpassing concerns about the mistreatment and alcohol consumption of the veterans, Santa Monica residents were threatened most of all by Pacific Branch members’ voting habits. Like the saloon issue, the matter of the Pacific Branch franchise was not a new one. Residents of Santa Monica first recognized the problem in 1895. In that year’s election, Pacific Branch members decided who sat on the local school board by delivering 300 votes out of the 465 votes cast.\textsuperscript{32} In response, Santa Monica’s citizens sought legislative relief to exclude any soldiers’ home in California from being part of a school district. They claimed the veterans should vote in national and state elections, but not “in a school district where the home members can outvote the other voters two to one ….” The bill never reached a vote, which left the issue of the Pacific Branch franchise temporarily in abeyance.\textsuperscript{33}

As the 1898 mid-term elections approached, Santa Monica resident Abbot Kinney, himself a large-scale land developer, reignited the issue of the Pacific Branch franchise when he filed a lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Clerk and five veterans living at the Pacific Branch. Kinney’s complaint alleged that the members of the Pacific Branch were paupers supported at public expense who lived on land and in buildings that

\textsuperscript{31} Marten, \textit{Sing Not War}, 160. See also, Goldberg, \textit{Citizens and Paupers}, 31-76.

\textsuperscript{32} NARA (Riverside), RG15, “Scrapbook,” box 11, Undated newspaper clipping, “That School Matter.”

were owned by the United States government. Considered as such, they should not be legal residents of Los Angeles County and so were illegally registered to vote there. If Abbot Kinney prevailed, Pacific Branch members would be ineligible to vote in any election.³⁴

In a series of newspaper articles that bolstered the complaint’s allegations, Kinney argued:

The home is not for all old soldiers …. The veterans who enter these homes declare themselves out of the world’s fight …. They cannot justly impose burdens or control local affairs …. There is no question but that the veterans in the homes are supported at public expense.³⁵

To Kinney, the Pacific Branch members should be considered no differently than any other institutionalized paupers. Therefore, he argued, by state law, they could not vote. When GAR members responded by hanging Kinney in effigy, it became clear that more was at stake than the voting rights of Pacific Branch veterans. Though their own franchise was not in question, the broader community of Southern California’s Union veterans were clearly enraged by the attack on their former comrades and the prospect of a sizeable sympathy vote endangered Democrats up and down the ticket.

When the matter finally came before a panel of judges, they disagreed with Kinney’s allegations. In its decision, the court specifically declared that the Pacific Branch members were “not paupers,” thus skirting a state constitutional provision

³⁴ “Politics,” Los Angeles Times, April 6, 1898, 6; April 29, 1898, 6; September 3, 1898, 7, September 4, 1898, D4, September 4, 1898, A-5; “The Right of Old Soldiers t Vote in This County to be Tested,” The Los Angeles Record, September 3, 1898, 5. Named as defendants in Kinney’s suit were: Los Angeles County Clerk Thomas E. Newlin and Pacific Branch members, Theodore Denmire, Charles F. Groff, William J. Ladd, E. L. DeHaven and George M.D. Shingle.

prohibiting individuals from acquiring local residency while institutionalized. Veterans who resided at the Pacific Branch were entitled to vote in all elections.\textsuperscript{36} If Santa Monica wanted Pacific Branch votes excluded from its school board elections, it would need to take measures outside of the judicial system.

As these issues were being fought in the courts, newspapers and meetings of Santa Monica’s Board of Trustees, the Pacific Land Company of Santa Monica (hereafter PLC) began to offer property for sale in the proposed community of Barrett Villa, located adjacent to the Soldiers’ Home and named in honor of General A. W. Barrett, a member of the NHDVS Board of Managers and commander of California’s National Guard.\textsuperscript{37} The town’s developers targeted Union pensioners and Pacific Branch members as prospective customers by offering small lots, low prices and an “installment plan on terms to suit the purchaser.”\textsuperscript{38} PLC advertised that “being near the Soldiers’ Home, it is by United States authority, forever protected from the moral and social curse of the saloon.”\textsuperscript{39} By implication, Santa Monica need not worry that its saloon reform would be undermined by businesses in the new community.

From its inception, Barrett Villa, or Sawtelle, as it later came to be named, was a community conceived by real estate developers to draw Pacific Branch members into a


\textsuperscript{37} Ingersoll, \textit{Ingersoll’s Century History}, 346.


\textsuperscript{39} “Barrett Villa,” \textit{Santa Monica Outlook}, March 18, 1898.
community of their own: a “Soldiers’ City.”40 As inhabitants of the new community, Pacific Branch members became yet another source of profit for Southern California elites. As property owners, they also redefined the boundaries of membership at the Pacific Branch and the relationship between Soldiers’ Home members and the community.

It was no coincidence that almost immediately after construction of the community’s first homes, Stephen H. Taft, a manager for PLC and resident of Santa Monica, organized a school district, purportedly for the children of the new town. When regulations required that a minimum of fifteen school-aged children reside within the new district, but the children of Pacific Branch officers and Sawtelle residents together totaled just thirteen, Taft expanded the school district’s boundaries to include four children who lived two miles to the north of the Soldiers’ Home. Because Pacific Branch votes would now be cast in the new school district, and not in Santa Monica, this solved the problem of Pacific Branch votes controlling the Santa Monica school district elections.

In order to tap into Pacific Branch pension dollars for real estate investment, PLC negotiated an agreement with the local Soldiers’ Home management that allowed resident

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40 Luther Ingersoll reports that the Barrett Villa real estate development came about after Moses Sherman and Eli Clark planned to build an electric trolley line in 1896 from Los Angeles to Santa Monica. As was the business practice at the time, they requested a cash subsidy to help defray construction costs. Instead, Senator Jones and Arcadia de Baker stepped in with a donation of land to the company. Sherman and Clark immediately sold the land which abutted the Pacific Branch to Robert Jones and Robert Gillis. Jones, Gillis and other investors formed PLC which then subdivided the property and offered the resulting lots for sale.

PLC changed the name of the development after the United States Postal Service asserted that the name “Barrett” bore too close a resemblance to the existing California town of Bassett. The postal authorities claimed that a town named Barrett “would cause confusion.” The name was changed to Sawtelle in honor of W. E. Sawtelle, a PLC stockholder and the elderly S. E. Taft’s replacement as the development’s manager. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History*, 345-348.
veterans to sleep outside the Pacific Branch, but still retain their full membership benefits. Although any member could apply to “sleep out,” the arrangement proved particularly attractive to married men. The new option not only kept more prosperous families intact, it allowed cash-strapped Pacific Branch veterans to spend time with their families but still eat one or more meals each day in the Pacific Branch dining hall. With one mouth less to feed at home, limited pension funds stretched further, keeping families a bit further from the brink of poverty. It also freed up funds, allowing certain poorer veterans to purchase property and build cottages in Sawtelle.

Attracted by prices as low as $60 for a small residential lot and $150 an acre for farm land, a number of the “old soldiers” bought property in PLC’s Barrett Villa Tract; “many of them buying on the installment plan and paying as their pension money came in.” Indeed, Luther A. Ingersoll commented in his contemporary history, “It was noticeable that some men who had hitherto squandered their money in dissipation now purchased land and became valuable citizens. Many families of veterans and widows also

41 At the Pacific Branch each member in good standing was issued a card or daily pass, which permitted the holder to come and go at will between reveille and 8:30 p.m. U.S. Congress, House, War Department, Office of the Inspector General, Report of an Inspection of the Several Branches of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, made from August 9 to November 14, 1901, 57th Congress, 1st Sess. H. Doc. 137 (1901), 37. Men with permission to sleep off the reservation were expected to provide housekeeping assistance in their barracks and attend inspection each Saturday. They were entitled, but not required, to eat their meals at the Pacific Branch. S. Rpt 1167 (1913), 422-23. Apparently the option to “sleep out” was not unique to the Pacific Branch. In his photographic homage to the Eastern Branch, in Maine, author Timothy Smith indicates that by the late 1890s, a number of Togus members had “built camps in the woods and received outdoor relief equal to the amount of money required to house a veteran at Togus.” It is not clear whether the men who lived in the camps received other NHDVS benefits. Timothy Smith, Images of America: Togus Down in Maine, The First National Veterans Home (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), 40.

42 By 1910, even men who had indicated they had earned their living as laborers when they had been admitted to the Pacific Branch reported to the census that they owned their homes and those homes were mortgage free. Ancestry.com, 1910 Census.

43 Ingersoll, Ingersoll’s Century History, 347-348.
secured little homes [there].” In his view, PLC (and by extension, Santa Monica) had saved Pacific Branch veterans’ from the evils of alcohol by taking away their pension money each month as mortgage payments. In reality, however, married members of the Pacific Branch intentionally bought land in Sawtelle in order to return to some semblance of normal family life. Likewise single veterans sought privacy and a resumption of their civilian lives while retaining the safety-net that NHDVS membership provided.

Though Soldiers’ Home members and their families made up a large segment of Sawtelle’s population, they were by no means its only inhabitants. After Henry Laird bought land and built Sawtelle’s first grocery store, businessmen from Santa Monica and Los Angeles invested in and opened businesses in the new town. Several of them built homes there as well. Civilian employees of the Pacific Branch, equally targets of PLC as profit centers, saved both time and the cost of commuting to work by train when they bought or rented cottages in Sawtelle. Able-bodied Union veterans from throughout the western states who sought homeownership, businesses opportunities and the fellowship of other veterans moved to the Soldiers’ City as well. Luther Ingersoll commented that as a result of PLC’s pricing policies that allowed “old soldiers, their families and the laboring people…to secure homes” in Sawtelle, a “thrifty community has grown up which is a valuable addition to the wealth and population of this district.”

44 Ibid.

45 Elmer Wallace Holmes, History of Riverside California with Biographical Sketches (Los Angeles: Historical Record Company, 1912), 676.

46 Nicolaides, My Blue Heaven, 14.

47 Ingersoll, Ingersoll’s Century History, 382.
As the century opened, it was not unusual to find newspaper announcements in California newspapers reporting a local family’s intended move to Sawtelle. In some instances the move signaled the veteran’s imminent admittance to the Soldiers’ Home. However, another phenomenon began to emerge: aging veterans relocated their wives and families to Sawtelle in anticipation of a future day when their health would decline and they would require the free medical care available to members of the NHDVS. For the working- and middle-class veterans who bought property in Sawtelle, membership at the Pacific Branch no longer meant prolonged separations from their wives and children. Instead it ensured that their families could remain intact in their declining years.

Residency and property ownership in Sawtelle signaled a return for certain Pacific Branch members not only to family life, but also to the social and cultural amenities of civilian life. As one historian has recently noted, Gilded Age Americans were organizers and joiners. Pacific Branch members were no exception. However, though the Pacific Branch hosted a number of religious, social and fraternal organizations, it was not until 1899 that a suitable auditorium would be constructed to replace the “shabby little building that [had] for years served as a … general meeting house.” Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents took early action to ensure that the new town did not have similar deficits. Thus, Wyant Hall, a public meeting hall built by long-time Pacific Branch


49 Marten, Sing Not War, 11.

member Andrew Wyant, was among the first structures in the town.\textsuperscript{51} It took until 1900 before a church would be built, but “members of the Holiness church of the [Pacific Branch]” purchased two lots with plans to build a church in March of 1898.\textsuperscript{52} By 1901, four churches and a chapter of the Women’s Temperance Union joined Holiness Chapel to provide religious and temperance instruction to the community.\textsuperscript{53} Notably, Sawtelle’s churches all preached abstinence from alcohol.\textsuperscript{54} Despite veterans’ reputations for drunkenness, the temperance movement sweeping the nation and Southern California was equally popular among many of Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents.

Freed from wearing their NHDVS uniforms and the necessity of returning to their barracks each night, a number of Pacific Branch members opened businesses in Sawtelle. Responding to the current nationwide infatuation with the “wheel,” Thomas Newman commenced business as the “Sawtelle Bicycle Doctor.”\textsuperscript{55} Dr. George Corey hung out his shingle and practiced general surgery at his home on Fourth Street. Former Judge James R. Fairbank was admitted to the Pacific Branch in 1906, where he remained a member until shortly before his death in 1916. During that time he sold real estate and “attend[ed]

\textsuperscript{51} Ingersoll, \textit{Ingersoll’s Century History}, 349.

\textsuperscript{52} “Soldiers’ Home,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, March 20, 1898.

\textsuperscript{53} Ingersoll, \textit{Ingersoll’s Century History}, 349.

\textsuperscript{54} By 1901, in addition to the Holiness Chapel, the Free Methodist, Southern Baptist, Christian and Seventh Day Adventists had built churches in the town. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55} Considering that riding a bicycle was being touted as the ultimate cure-all, Sawtelle’s proximity to the Pacific Branch’s invalid population was an ideal location for a repair shop. Indeed, one historian argues that the “wheel was allegedly able to cure everything from neurasthenia to consumption,” diseases commonly attributed to Pacific Branch members. Harvey Green, \textit{Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society} (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 229.
to pension papers and affairs of veterans” from the home he owned on Fourth Street.\(^5^6\) Sawtelle twice elected Fairbank to its five-member Board of Trustees.\(^5^7\) When he died in July of 1916, Fairbank’s front page obituary in the *Santa Monica Bay Outlook* reported, “He had been in business of some kind the greater part of the ten years he spent in Sawtelle.”\(^5^8\) As merchants, capitalists and public servants, Pacific Branch Sawtelle Residents became influential members of their adopted community.

Since federal law prohibited the sale of alcohol within a mile and a half of the Pacific Branch, no establishments that offered intoxicating beverages received business licenses in the new town. However, the existence of a community so close to the Pacific Branch veterans and their federal pensions drew wily individuals with illicit schemes to get that money.\(^5^9\) As was the case in the towns adjacent to every branch of the NHDVS, Pacific Branch veterans soon imbibed “the most villainous concoctions of alcohol at ‘blind pigs’ in Sawtelle.”\(^6^0\) If illegal booze was not enough of a problem, the *Los Angeles Times* declared, “Sawtelle [was] simply overrun with every sort of sure-thing nickel-in-the-slot machine known, even to the poker-card hand, which has never been beaten


\(^{5^7}\) Ibid.

\(^{5^8}\) Ibid.

\(^{5^9}\) Because virtually every NHDVS member received a federal pension by 1900, an enormous amount of money was at stake. The lure of so much disposable income drew predatory entrepreneurs to establish unlicensed saloons, gambling dens and brothels just outside the gates of all the branches of the NHDVS despite federal law prohibiting them. Kelly, *Creating a National Home*, 175.

\(^{6^0}\) A “blind pig” was an unlicensed drinking establishment like the speakeasies of the 1920s. “Robbing Veterans of Pension Money,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1904.
yet.” The 1904 article portrayed the dependent veterans not as uncouth drunkards, but rather as the hapless victims of heartless predators who were intent on bilking Pacific Branch members out of every single one of their pension dollars, even if it meant killing the men in the process.

Not all of Sawtelle’s beasts of prey were civilians. The same “sleep out” policy that encouraged Pacific Branch members to open legitimate businesses also allowed those who were less scrupulous to open illegal establishments in Sawtelle. Bootlegger and barber Hiram H. Bolster trimmed beards and cut hair in the front room of his establishment, but his real profits came from the “demijohns, beer bottles and flasks of liquor” that he served to clients in the back room. John F. Brown, who ran a pool room across Fourth Street from Bolster’s place, also supplemented his income with illegal liquor sales. Another comrade, John Dupree, operated a nearby underground card parlor. All of their establishments offered their wares just steps from the Pacific Branch gates. Heavy enforcement—police raids, hefty fines, jail time and even dishonorable discharges—did nothing to stop a relentless quest for pension dollars that left some Pacific Branch members penniless, even as their predatory comrades amassed profits with every pension payday.

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61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.


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John Dupree’s dishonorable discharge for running an illegal gambling den had the potential to bar him permanently from receiving shelter or services at any NHDVS facility. However, Dupree’s seemingly foolhardy venture paid off. While his choice of employment remained questionable, its proceeds, when combined with his disability pension, allowed Dupree to support himself outside the institution. In 1907 the formerly dependent veteran purchased a home on Fourth Street and by 1910 owned it outright. Two years later, Dupree apparently entered the realm of respectability to become an active member of Sawtelle’s political community, where he served as a precinct judge during local and national elections. Sawtelle provided the opportunity for some ambitious members to build new lives of relative self-reliance and respectability outside the Pacific Branch.

African American Pacific Branch members also settled their families in Sawtelle. African American veterans ostensibly received the same services at NHDVS branches as their white counterparts, but they lived in segregated quarters and ate at separate dining tables. Given those conditions, even considering their small presence in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, it is not surprising that the African American veteran population of the

65 Cetina, *A History of Veterans’ Homes*, 414-415. Note, at the request of a dishonorably discharged member, the NHDVS Board of Managers could lift the lifetime ban. In 1919 Dupree applied for such consideration and was readmitted to the Pacific Branch. He remained a member of the Pacific Branch until his death in 1923. Ancestry.com, *U.S. National Homes*.


Pacific Branch remained low in number.⁶⁹ Governor Cochrane reported 2,271 Pacific Branch members as present on June 30, 1910.⁷⁰ In a separate entry he described 19 of the men as being “colored.”⁷¹ That same year Pacific Branch Sawtelle Resident William Johnson and his wife Rosa told census takers that the former laborer had retired and owned their mortgage-free home on First Street.⁷² Only four households were identified as “colored” or “mulatto” in the census pages for Sawtelle’s 1910 enumeration. Notably, all of these households were located on the outskirts of town.⁷³ The arrangement seemed to mimic the de facto segregation of African American veterans who lived at the Pacific Branch, offering no alternative to the racial politics of the day.

Though many of Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents retained their NHDVS memberships until their deaths, they considered themselves to be citizens of the town rather than inmates of the Soldiers’ Home. As a result of their property and business investments in the town, Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents regained responsibility for their own welfare, thereby restoring their independence, a significant element of

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⁶⁹ Merry Ovnick. *Los Angeles: The End of the Rainbow* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1994), 233. Donald R. Shaffer argues that the African American population remained low at all NHDVS branches because the black veterans may have considered it unmanly to become dependent in a soldiers home. Instead the black community preferred to care for its own rather than come to rely upon outside help. Shaffer, *After the Glory*, 137-142.


⁷¹ Ibid., 197. In 1910 it was not unusual for African Americans in Los Angeles to own their homes. Josh Sides notes that by 1910, “almost 40 percent of African Americans in Los Angeles County owned their homes.” Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 16.


⁷³ Ibid.
Victorian manhood. They took active roles in the civilian community: holding political
offices, voting in the town’s precincts and reporting Sawtelle as their primary residence
to 1910 census takers.74 The unique status of Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents set
them apart from the Soldiers’ Home even as it cemented their standing in the civilian
community.

The Soldiers’ Home management identified Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents
as a distinct class of members when it segregated the men into a separate unit in the
basement of one of the barracks.75 Persistent overcrowding at the Pacific Branch
probably drove the move, but the absence of beds and a paucity of storage space in their
new quarters served to emphasize that those men no longer resided at the Pacific Branch.
When coupled with a policy that strictly forbade the Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents
from wearing any item of their government-issued clothing outside the institution’s
boundaries, the men who did not regularly receive NHDVS services, such as food or
medical treatment, had little reason to consider themselves as part of the Pacific Branch
population.76

Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents so thoroughly separated themselves from
their former institutional lives that they formed their own GAR post, despite the existence

74 Ibid.; Appendix B: “Statistical Profile.”

75 S. Rpt. 1167 (1913), 420.

76 In the minds of certain of Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents, the separation between their membership
at the Pacific Branch and their life in town became so complete that they chose to be enumerated twice in
the 1910 federal census. Ancestry.com, 1910 Census. The Los Angeles Times reported in 1910 that on
Friday, April 15th work would begin on the census. While the Pacific Branch staff may have responded to
census questions on behalf of some members, according to the Times, veterans at the Soldiers’ Home had
already “assured the appointed enumerator of their readiness to facilitate the work” suggesting that the
majority of the Pacific Branch members responded for themselves. “Recall Scene at Appomattox: Veterans
at Soldiers’ Home Celebrate,” Los Angeles Times, April 10, 1910.
of two such groups at the Soldiers’ Home. The Burnside Post 188 GAR welcomed Sawtelle’s Union veteran residents, even those who held a membership at the Pacific Branch. Indeed, eight members of its first slate of officers, including the Commander, held current enrollments at the Soldiers’ Home. However, though the Burnside Post sponsored and attended activities with the Soldiers’ Home posts, full-time Pacific Branch members did not join the Sawtelle post.

The Pacific Branch veterans who lived in Sawtelle may have considered themselves to be residents of that community, but regardless of their segregated unit within the Pacific Branch, the institution’s management still saw itself as their benefactor and, when necessary, as their disciplinarian. For Sawtellians this proved to be both a blessing and a curse, especially at those times when Pacific Branch management took it upon themselves to govern areas of the men’s lives beyond the Soldiers’ Home gates, whether or not it had the authority to do so.

A case in point is the matter of Thomas Newman’s repair bill for eleven-year-old Evalina Groh’s bicycle. Newman seemingly should have been among the most favored of the Pacific Branch inmates. The partially blind and badly crippled Englishman had been admitted to the Pacific Branch at the request of his “old friend,” Senator John P. Jones. Because of the senator’s support, Newman’s application sailed through the admissions process, despite an on-going moratorium on NHDVS admissions. Newman’s six-foot-tall, four-hundred pound frame would have made him conspicuous whether he was at

77 “Notes from the Soldiers’ Home,” Santa Monica Outlook, October 14, 1904. Note: the Pacific Branch GAR Posts assisted with the institution of the new Burnside GAR Post.

78 NARA (Riverside), RG 15, Thomas Newman File.
work in his shop or trudging to the Pacific Branch for dinner. He seems to have been a hardworking, law-abiding citizen. In fact, according to his Pacific Branch file, the only charge ever brought against him was in connection with the reconditioning of little Evalina’s bicycle at his Sawtelle shop, The Bicycle Doctor. 79

When Evalina left her bicycle at Newman’s shop it was a rusted hulk, with broken spokes, a damaged saddle, and one flat tire. Newman had to soak its guard screws in coal oil overnight just to be able to work on the bicycle. By the time he finished his work he had sanded off the old finish and given the bicycle a new coat of black paint, trued and polished the spokes on both wheels, repaired the damaged saddle, repaired both pedals, and installed a second-hand inner tube in the flat tire. 80 For restoring Evalina’s bicycle to near mint condition, Newman charged her mother $4.00. 81 The amount reflected a $2.00 discount from his initial bill of $6.00, presumably because Evalina’s mother was a Pacific Branch employee. Despite the discount, mother and daughter claimed that the bill was too high, but they paid it anyway. Later, Evalina complained to Soldiers’ Home authorities about what she claimed was Newman’s price-gouging. Rather than referring the girl to Sawtelle’s municipal court for redress, the matter made its way to the desk of Pacific Branch Governor LaGrange. LaGrange stepped in to settle the matter. Newman was forced to defend his business practices and repair fees in Sawtelle to the governor of the Pacific Branch. The governor’s final verdict in the matter has not survived. However, that Newman was told to lower his bill even further is suggested by the credence that the

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., Thomas Newman’s signed statement, dated June 3, 1902.

81 Ibid., handwritten invoice to Mrs. Lovejoy from Thomas Newman, dated June 3, 1902.
The governor’s staff gave to outside opinions about the value of the work. Interestingly, the staff seemed so intent on proving their case that when they compared an outside quote of $3.25 for cleaning and painting a ladies bicycle to Newman’s invoice, they failed to notice that Newman’s bill also included the second-hand inner tube. He had charged Evalina only $2.00 for services well beyond cleaning and painting her bicycle. Despite his ownership of a successful business in Sawtelle, Newman was perceived by the Pacific Branch administration as a morally questionable individual liable to cheat his customers. The very existence of the case is evidence that the Pacific Branch management saw even relatively prosperous out-living members as less than independent citizens who were unfit to govern themselves without the moral guidance of the institution.82

Regardless of their separate GAR posts and declared residence, social and commercial exchanges between Sawtelle and Pacific Branch members occurred daily. Though the majority of these encounters took place in the town, Sawtellians could often be seen passing through the Pacific Branch’s south gate. Sawtelle’s women’s philanthropic groups regularly hosted events at the Soldiers’ Home for members.83 Wives made the trek to visit hospitalized husbands. Sawtellians not only attended friends’ funerals in the chapel at the Pacific Branch, some of them attended regular church

82 In addition to his personal effects, Thomas Newman’s estate, upon his death in 1914, included a small amount of cash, a savings bond with a face value of $300 and a savings account with a balance of $700. Letter from Adjutant and Inspector of the Pacific Branch to Mr. William A. Newman dated September 11, 1914. NARA (Riverside), RG15, Thomas Newman File.

83 By 1905, the women of Sawtelle had formed at least three auxiliary groups to support the veterans living at the Pacific Branch. These included the John A. Martin Women’s Relief Corps, the Uncle Sam Women’s Relief Corps and Ladies Auxiliary, and the Appomattox Circle of Ladies of the G.A.R. In addition to hosting and entertaining the veterans at events held both at the Pacific Branch and in town, the ladies participated in the annual Pacific Branch Memorial Day observances. “The Program at the Soldiers’ Home.” Santa Monica Daily Outlook, May 30, 1905.
services there as well. Residents of the town walked through the gates of the Pacific Branch to see movies or enjoy the variety of live entertainment offered in the institution’s amusement hall. Adding to the traffic flowing between the two communities were a number of Sawtelle citizens who were paid employees in the offices, hospital, farm or shops of the Pacific Branch. Also, certain of the veterans walked up to the Soldiers’ Home each day for their meals or to see a doctor. Less frequently, wagons filled with free firewood, the gleanings from recently pruned trees, left the Pacific Branch bound for the pot-bellied stoves which many veterans’ used to heat their cottages.

Social interactions between the Pacific Branch and outside communities were not limited to Sawtelle, however. Residents of cities across the Los Angeles basin considered the Pacific Branch a rural park, often holding meetings, picnics, and patriotic observances on its grounds. Tourists joined the mix as part of a day-long Los Angeles-Pacific trolley tour which looped through the Soldiers’ Home on its way to Santa Monica. When a tour stopped at the Pacific Branch, a group photograph would be taken on the steps of the dining hall or the library, to be processed and delivered to the tourists later that same day.

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84 Although they did not necessarily have to work, many Pacific Branch members earned extra money by working in the NHDVS workshops, gardens, hospitals and farms. As has been mentioned, their labor was of double benefit to the NHDVS—the Board of Managers believed that men without hours of idle time on their hands were happier and tended to stay out of trouble, but more importantly, members were compensated less than outside contractors.

85 S. Rpt. 1167 (1913), 720-721.

86 Similarly, James Marten notes that Milwaukee viewed the Northwestern Branch of the NHDVS as a “community resource” where local residents regularly hosted parties, meetings, and picnics. Marten, Sing Not War, 163-164.

87 The $1.00 Los Angeles-Pacific trolley tour was advertised as the Balloon Route Excursion because its route resembled a hot air balloon. The day-long journey began in Hollywood and moved west, stopping at
In 1905 Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch businesses and homeowners joined other of the town’s electors to petition the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to “incorporate and to organize the government as a municipal corporation.” At stake was Sawtelle’s direct control of its city government, law enforcement and fire protection. In order to be considered by the Board of Supervisors, the petition required the signatures of fifty qualified electors residing within the limits of the proposed city. Notably, twenty-one of the required signatures were those of current Pacific Branch members who, as property owners, had moved their voter registrations into Sawtelle.

While a number of Sawtellians were anxious for the town to attain cityhood, many were opposed. A special election was called in 1905 to determine the issue. The campaign ended on August 16, 1905, when, to the dismay of the incorporationists, the anti-incorporationists won the election by a vote of 130 in favor of incorporation to 79 against it. Sawtelle was not to be a city, at least not yet. An undaunted minority continued to campaign for nearly a year before a second special election resulted in an overwhelming vote for incorporation as California’s newest sixth class city.

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90 Ingersoll, Ingersoll’s Century History, 350.

91 The results of that second cityhood election were 241 votes for incorporation and 58 against it. Ibid. Pursuant to a legislative act adopted on March 2, 1883, and subsequently amended in 1901 and 1911, California classified incorporated municipalities with populations of less than 6,000 residents as “sixth class” cities. Frank C. Jordan, Secretary of State, California Blue Book or State Roster 1911 (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1913), 139.
On November 16, 1906, Sawtelle finally became a city. As an incorporated municipality it gained the right to make and enforce local laws governing the behavior of its citizens and its visitors.\(^\text{92}\) Despite the existing federal ban on the sale of alcohol within a mile and a half of the Soldiers’ Home, drunken Pacific Branch members increasingly disturbed the streets, tanked up on illegal booze. The imminent closure of the Pacific Branch canteen by an increasingly prohibitionist Congress augured a torrent of newly cut-off veterans looking for new places to get drunk.\(^\text{93}\) As the nearest town to the Soldiers’ Home, Sawtelle would attract the bulk of them. If the new city did not act quickly to control the flow of illegal alcohol within its borders, it risked becoming the out-of-control community that the press had so often accused it as being. Legitimate new businesses and real estate investors would be repelled by this shift to degeneracy, so Sawtelle’s property owners, temperance advocates and newly elected Board of Trustees moved to control the situation using the additional powers conferred by cityhood. The city’s investors understood what historians Carey McWilliams and Greg Hise later recognized: that expansion was Southern California’s “primary business; a growing population opened opportunities in construction, manufacturing, and commerce, if immigration …diminished the result would [be]…as ‘disastrous as a drought.’”\(^\text{94}\)

\(^{\text{92}}\) Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History*, 350.

\(^{\text{93}}\) Cetina, “A History of Veterans’ Homes,” 446. In 1906 Congress tied NHDVS appropriations to an order that abolished all NHDVS canteens as of March 4, 1907. If the Board of Managers did not close the canteens, no funds would be appropriated for the operation of the NHDVS. (Ibid.)

Sawtelle’s first Board of Trustees promptly adopted city ordinances which outlawed gambling and punished “Drunkenness and Disorderly Conduct.”95 Next, in an effort to shore up the existing federal regulations regarding the sale of alcohol in the area, it limited to one pint the “Amount of Vinous or Alcoholic Liquors any Person or Corporation May Have in His or Its Possession” within city limits.96 Finally, the Board contracted with Los Angeles County to run its new satellite jail at Sawtelle in return for being able to use the facility to incarcerate its own lawbreakers. Within months the soldiers’ city had adopted regulatory laws that were stricter than similar ordinances in either Santa Monica or Los Angeles. More importantly, the new city had the means to punish those who ran afoul of those laws, both controlling illicit behaviors of Pacific Branch members and protecting the veterans from those who would prey upon them.

Despite the considerable Union veteran population of the town, not one of the five “representative business men” elected to Sawtelle’s first Board of Trustees had served in the Civil War.97 However, Union veterans were elected to other city offices. Now in their sixties, City Clerk Leroy S. Fallis and Recorder Oris W. Jewett had survived some of the most horrific battles of the war. Private Jewett saw battle at 2nd Bull Run,

95 Los Angeles City Clerk, Records Management Division, Los Angeles City Archives, box 82, Sawtelle Municipal Records, Ordinances 5 – 52, 1901-1908, Ordinance Nos. 9 and 26.

96 Sawtelle Municipal Records, Ordinance No. 37. Following an appeal of a guilty verdict on charges of possession of more than one pint of liquor within Sawtelle’s city limits, the ordinance was declared unconstitutional. In his verdict, the judge in the case declared “No one can say how much liquor a man may keep in his cellar without breaking the law.” “Says Liquor Law Won’t Hold Water,” Los Angeles Herald, June 23, 1907.

97 “City Officials of City of Sawtelle,” The Daily Outlook, November 22, 1906, 1.
Chancellorsville and Gettysburg with the 20th Indiana Infantry. Sergeant Fallis marched with the Indiana 8th Cavalry and Sherman to the sea. Both men now owned businesses and homes in Sawtelle. Jewett, the man elected to adjudicate any violations of Sawtelle’s city ordinances, was also a member of the Pacific Branch. Like their younger civilian colleagues, personal business interests motivated Jewett and Fallis to keep the new city crime free and property values on the rise in Southern California’s highly competitive real estate market.

Notwithstanding the public service and economic success of men like Oris Jewett, only a small segment of Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents attained financial


100 Oris W. Jewett, his wife Annie and their two children arrived in Sawtelle in 1903. Until then despite years of failing health he had operated a successful law practice in Sturgis, South Dakota. However, by 1903 it seem clear that he would soon required the long-term medical services provided at the Pacific Branch.

On February 17, 1903, the *Santa Monica Outlook* announced that Oris Jewett had purchased a home on Fifth Street in Sawtelle with plans to make it the “family home.” That same year he opened a law practice and became partners with fellow veteran John Farley in a real estate sales business. The Pacific Branch finally admitted him on May 5, 1904. As his political and business careers attest, Oris W. Jewett became a popular member of the Sawtelle community before and during his Pacific Branch affiliation. He remained a member of the Pacific Branch until his death in Sawtelle on October 24, 1907. Attesting his position in the community, the successful Jewett chose to be buried in Santa Monica’s Woodlawn Cemetery rather than the Pacific Branch’s home cemetery. Ingersoll. *Ingersoll’s Century History*, 386-387; Ancestry.com. *U.S. National Homes*.

101 In the next decade, Sawtelle’s voters elected other veterans to public office. Their vested interest in the city’s success fueled a relentless battle against blind pigs, gambling dens and the inebriated Pacific Branch members who lurched through the streets of Sawtelle following each pension distribution. Of particular note, concurrent with membership at the Soldiers’ Home, James R. Fairbank and John Farley served together on the city’s Board of Trustees as that Board sought to control not only sundry behaviors of Pacific Branch members, but also sewage disposal practices of the Pacific Branch that effected the town. Sawtelle Board of Trustees, “Board of Trustee Minutes, Volume 1 and 2. For lists of Sawtelle city officials see, *California Blue Book* (Sacramento: California State Printing Office 1907, 1909, 1911, 1913-1915).
independence. Many more of the veterans relied upon government assistance and an assortment of self-provisioning strategies in order to eke out a living outside of the Soldiers’ Home.\textsuperscript{102} The average invalid pension was $172.00 per year in 1910, or about “30 percent of the annual income of the average employed American.”\textsuperscript{103} Contemporary photographs attest that for some of Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents, survival meant that rabbit hutches, chicken coops, fruit trees and vegetable gardens were common additions to their yards. Then, as would be the case in the working-class suburbs Los Angeles, residents’ ability to produce their own food minimized dependence on cash assets, especially for families who relied completely on disability pensions for their income. A very thin line separated certain of Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents from the poverty that historians have often associated with members of the NHDVS. For those couples and families, the veteran’s Pacific Branch dining privileges and the home-production of food became critical sources of security as the aging veterans struggled to avoid complete dependence.

The prolonged illness or death of one spouse would threaten disaster to the economic well-being of Pacific Branch couples. Though the Pacific Branch hospital and medical facilities were available to veterans, the entitlement did not extend to their wives. For less fortunate couples, an invalid wife might necessitate the permanent return to barracks life for the veteran. However, the death of the Pacific Branch member had even

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{102} Historian Becky Nicolaides argues that self-provisioning was one way that families in working-class suburbs in twentieth-century Los Angeles minimized their dependence on cash which provided them some insulation from the marketplace. Sawtelle’s pension-dependent veterans used similar techniques to live on fixed incomes outside the NHDVS. Nicolaides, \textit{My Blue Heaven}, 12-13, 121.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{103} Skocpol, \textit{Protecting Soldiers and Mothers}, 135.
\end{flushleft}
worse implications for his surviving spouse. The loss of their husbands’ disability pensions meant that Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch widows often faced destitution, even if they received the twelve dollars per month widows’ pension mandated by federal law.\textsuperscript{104} The exclusion of family members from NHDVS benefits and lower pension rates for dependents resulted in a steadily growing population of indigent widows, leading to ongoing concern in the community.

As Americans entered the twentieth-century, it was not easy for widows to survive without some assistance. Though certain low-level white collar jobs admitted women to the workplace, they were still blocked from many sectors of employment.\textsuperscript{105} Sawtelle widows faced an additional hurdle to entering the job market. Most of the women were already in their fifties and sixties, far older than the single young women whom employers sought to employ as office workers and clerks.\textsuperscript{106} When a number of Sawtelle widows addressed the situation by re-marrying veterans, the \textit{Los Angeles Times} snidely reported: “Marrying and giving in marriage is one of the chief occupations of the widows of Sawtelle.”\textsuperscript{107} What the \textit{Times} ignored was that the widows and other Pacific

\textsuperscript{104} Widows of veterans who received the minimum pension probably experienced little change in their standard of living. However, as Theda Skocpol points out, many Union veterans received more than the minimum monthly rate. Indeed, by 1910 a few individuals received $1,200 in pension payments per year. For the wives of men at the higher rates, a husband’s death meant a significant drop in annual income. In some cases, it resulted in destitution. The federal government responded to the growing number of poverty stricken widows in a 1916 act increasing widows’ pensions to $20 per month, still far below the average working American’s income at the time. Skocpol, \textit{Protecting Soldiers and Mothers}, 135; William H. Glasson, \textit{Federal Military Pensions in the United States} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1918), 141.


\textsuperscript{106} Clark Davis points out that the average age of female office workers living in Los Angeles between 1910 and 1920 was twenty-seven, decades younger than the majority of widows of Civil War veterans. (Ibid., 9).

\textsuperscript{107} “Widows are Not Widows Very Long at Sawtelle,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, March 18, 1917, II-10.
Branch veterans shared the same social circles, so marriages within this group were natural occurrences. It is true that the security of the larger veterans’ disability pensions and the NHDVS benefits of their new husbands made such an arrangement an attractive alternative for some widows, but the prospect of home-cooked meals, housekeeping and nursing services made marriage an equally attractive accommodation to Pacific Branch members. Admittedly, there were women who took advantage of the aging veterans, but the dire circumstances of an increasing number of elderly widows living in Sawtelle became an issue among women across California.

The belief that Pacific Branch membership fractured poor families during veterans’ lives and left behind destitute widows when they died led the California and Nevada Department of the Ladies of the GAR (hereafter Ladies) to purchase land and build cottages in Sawtelle. The groundbreaking for the first of the Nevada Street cottages for “aged couples” took place in March 1905. By 1917 the Ladies had built seven cottages for the rent-free “use of indigent widows of veterans and for indigent veterans and their wives.” Through this housing program, the Ladies provided needy widows and indigent Pacific Branch couples a level of protection that was not available at


109 Founded in 1886, the Ladies of the GAR was a national women’s organization that limited its membership to women with blood ties to Union veterans. See, Wallace Evan Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans’ and Hereditary Organizations in America 1783-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 38, 101-102; 146-147.


the Soldiers’ Home. Moreover, they assumed responsibility for the care of the widows of Union veterans beyond the veterans’ lifetimes.

Meanwhile, inside the relatively lovely exteriors and well-kept gardens of the Pacific Branch, members faced the over-zealous enforcement of NHDVS regulations and wanton disregard of their comfort. Thanks to the more than forty-year-old NHDVS bureaucracy, an inflexible aging governor and the Board of Managers’ continued commitment to the Soldiers’ Home’s status as a community park and tourist attraction, the quality of life for the rank and file had deteriorated to little better than that found at the average county poorhouse.\footnote{Major T. J. Cochrane served as Governor of the Pacific Branch from February 1908 until February 1913. Cochrane had resigned his commission to accept the position of Treasurer at the Pacific Branch ten years prior to his appointment as its Governor. Upon rising to the governorship, Maj. Cochrane told reporters that he was determined to discipline “unruly veterans…and protect the more quiet element…against annoyances on the part of their bibulously inclined associates.” “New Officers Are Announced.” Los Angeles Times, February 18, 1908.} The situation came to national attention when West Coast Magazine published muckraker John S. McGroarty’s 1911 article entitled “A Nation’s Disgrace.”\footnote{S. Rpt. 1167 (1913). McGroarty's article, A Nation's Disgrace, is reprinted in full on pages 6 through 11.} Contradicting the promises made to Pacific Branch members during President McKinley’s 1901 visit, a decade later they were not "surrounded with all the comforts and blessings which a grateful nation can provide."\footnote{“Veterans Salute President,” Los Angeles Times, May 10, 1901, A-7.} Rather, the utter lack of privacy and the strict military regimen under which the old men lived shook McGroarty to his core during his 1911 visit to the Soldiers’ Home. Outraged, he wrote, "The present method of conducting both the mess rooms and the barrack rooms at our soldiers' home is
such as to degrade the men, not to speak of the sufferings it imposes on them.” Pacific Branch administrators not only mistreated Union veterans, he proclaimed, they robbed the veterans of their manhood. After reading McGroarty’s article, an apoplectic Senator John D. Works of California demanded a full senate investigation into its accusations of mismanagement at the Pacific Branch.  

Steadfast in its support of the Pacific Branch administration and its own disdain for the permanently dependent poor, the Los Angeles Times claimed that such a hearing was unnecessary because “unfortunately there are in this as in all like institutions a number of persons afflicted with the “kicking” habit.” In other words, the Times conveniently disqualified any wrongdoing, taking the view that no matter what the situation might be at the Pacific Branch, certain inmates would always find something to complain about. Decades of self-inspections conducted by the Board of Managers, which always found the institution above reproach, and its members somehow lacking, seemed to support the Times’ position.

However, at the hearing which opened in Los Angeles on November 20, 1912, testimony by McGroarty, dozens of Pacific Branch members and their families, Pacific Branch employees, Union veterans, civilians, and Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents overwhelmingly refuted the Times’ assertions. Significant problems existed in nearly all facets of life at the Pacific Branch. Together members of the community and Pacific

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116 Ibid., 6.
118 S. Rpt. 1167 (1913), 12-1243.
Branch veterans testified that the conditions under which the Pacific Branch members were expected to live robbed them of their manhood and rights as American citizens in a myriad of large, small and even petty ways. When the Senators considered all of the testimony, they found the NHDVS, and the Pacific Branch within it, to be a thoroughly broken system. In particular, rather than providing a real home to deserving aged Union veterans, the Pacific Branch was instead, “a vast detention barracks, under an unnecessarily rigid system of discipline.”\(^\text{119}\)

Unlike any previous inquiry by the Board of Managers or the GAR into the workings of the Pacific Branch, the Senate hearing led to massive changes at the institution. Almost immediately, Governor T. J. Cochrane and many of his officers were either transferred or forced to resign their positions. However, despite nearly universal testimony that condemned the harsh existence imposed by barracks life, the barracks system of residence was not abolished, nor was housing provided by the government for married couples at the Pacific Branch. Reform did not solve the central problems faced by Pacific Branch members, yet many had little choice but to remain. Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents continued to reside in the town rather than leave their wives or submit to the communal living conditions at the Pacific Branch.

Though Sawtelle residents supported the quest of Pacific Branch members for improved living conditions, tensions between the two groups did not magically disappear following the 1912 Senate investigation. Afterwards, Pacific Branch members still managed to find sources of alcohol in the town; the worst offenders often could be seen

\(^{119}\) Ibid., xii.
passed out and sprawled in the back of an open handcart as Pacific Branch guards hauled them back to the reservation.\textsuperscript{120}

Certain Sawtelle residents continued to view the Pacific Branch members as outsiders and members of a neighboring community, but one clearly separate and less savory. Others conceived political uses for the old soldiers’ votes. These issues erupted in 1913 when Stephen H. Taft, the man who had organized the Sawtelle school district to include the Pacific Branch in 1898, allegedly lost his election to the Sawtelle Board of Education because “a large portion of the vote was that of the veteran dwellers at [the] Soldiers’ Home, who voted almost solidly for [his opponent, A. J.] Stoner.”\textsuperscript{121} The enraged Taft took action to remove Pacific Branch voters from Sawtelle elections permanently.

Stephen Taft bided his time until the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting on the night before the annual deadline to change school boundaries.\textsuperscript{122} Taft was well aware of the approaching deadline, but unfortunately for the Pacific Branch members, the supervisors who attended the meeting were not. That night the supervisors gerrymandered the Pacific Branch precincts into the Van Nuys district some fifteen miles away. Not only were Pacific Branch veterans ineligible to vote in Sawtelle’s school board elections, it was unlikely they would be able to make the long interurban railway trip via Hollywood and the Cahuenga Pass to Van Nuys to cast their votes there either. Until the


\textsuperscript{121} “Sawtelle Has Busy Day,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, April 5, 1913, I-16.

\textsuperscript{122} “Cunning. Disfranchise Veterans by Political Jobbery” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, February 24, 1915, II-1.
district could be redrawn, the wily Taft had once again succeeded in removing what he considered to be unwanted Pacific Branch votes from a local school board’s elections.

Stephen Taft’s maneuver demonstrated a presumption that the greater community had a right to control certain behaviors of Pacific Branch members. From the institution’s earliest days, Santa Monica residents repeatedly took action to regulate the ways that Pacific Branch members spent their leisure time outside the facility, how they voted and even where they lived. One such foray resulted in PLC’s development of a community platted and priced specifically for pensioned and disabled Union veterans. Sawtelle’s proximity to the Pacific Branch allowed certain disabled and aging Union veterans to purchase homes and start businesses there while they retained their NHDVS benefits. For those veterans, Pacific Branch membership became not a stigma, but rather an old-age survival strategy to be accessed on an as-needed basis, not the permanent dependence with which it had come to be identified. Their status as citizens of the city represented a key source of identity for Sawtelle’s Pacific Branch Residents that separated them from full-time Pacific Branch members and ratified their inclusion in the community.
CONCLUSION

After PLC’s successful development of Sawtelle, Santa Monica Land and Water Company (hereafter SMLWC) began offering lots in a real estate venture called Westgate.¹ As its name suggests, the new project was situated immediately outside the west gate of the Pacific Branch. Undoubtedly, Union veterans bought lots in Westgate, but unlike Sawtelle, SMLWC did not specifically market Westgate properties to Pacific Branch members. Though newspaper advertisements claimed “the man of moderate means is given the opportunity to own a spacious villa home at terms easily within his reach,” they also reported that Westgate “is much nearer to the Home where over $1000 per day is distributed.”² Westgate’s sales pitch depicted Pacific Branch members as profit centers rather than as potential members of the community. Throughout its existence, outside communities considered the Pacific Branch and its members to be perpetual sources of income.

The elites who attracted construction of the Pacific Branch to the region did so to bolster the economy and drive development of Los Angeles’ west side, which set a precedent for Santa Monica and other Southland communities to identify the institution and its members in terms of their economic contributions to their cities. Though Union veterans were deemed worthy of the services provided by the NHDVS, long held prejudices left the morality of veterans, the disabled and the permanently dependent in

¹ Santa Monica Land and Water Company was originally incorporated by the Baker and Jones interests as a holding company for their Rancho San Vicente property. By 1905 the corporation was owned by Robert Gillis one of the original shareholders in PLC. Loomis, Brentwood, 8.

² “Westgate The Sure Winner,” The Daily Outlook, April 13, 1905, 1; “Westgate,” The Daily Outlook, April 17, 1905, 5.
question. These prevailing views segregated Pacific Branch residents into a separate and lower class of veteran with questionable rights of franchise. Not even the development of Sawtelle as the Soldiers’ City brought about the reintegration of full-time Pacific Branch members with that city’s veteran community. Because admission to the NHDVS compromised the veteranhood of Pacific Branch members, they, and by extension, the Pacific Branch, were not integral parts of their host community.

PLC’s development of Sawtelle in 1897 attracted a very different veteran from those who had been admitted to the NHDVS in the first decades after the war. Though many of the Pacific members suffered from war-related disabilities, all of them were approaching old age. Many of them were married men with families to support. The integral role played by Pacific Branch members in the business, political and cultural life of Sawtelle suggests that by the early twentieth-century, laboring- and middle-class Union veterans were re-evaluating the nature of their federal benefits. For certain Pacific Branch members, their NHDVS membership became, like their federal pensions, an earned benefit, the use of which they alone would determine. They did not intend to endure long separations from their families or a permanent return to military life in order to collect what they were owed by their government. For those veterans, residence in Sawtelle, with its easy access to the NHDVS benefits, became one aspect of an overarching old age survival strategy outside the Soldiers’ Home.

At the turn of the twentieth-century, Sawtelle and the Pacific Branch undoubtedly represented the largest concentrations of Civil War veterans living Los Angeles, and for that matter, in California. That Union veterans were drawn to live in Sawtelle whether or not they were ever admitted to the Pacific Branch illustrates that there was more to life in
Sawtelle than simply aging veterans redefining their federal benefits. The existing history of Civil War veterans, and even the history of disability, has yet to include the shift in the NHDVS’ function at the turn of the twentieth-century. As a result, our prior understanding of these old soldiers underestimated the agency of those veterans who were able to leverage their dependent status in order to live independently in an era often inhospitable to those in need.

Even before the turn of the century, the Pacific Branch had become an oppressive institution that bore little resemblance to what the Board of Managers intended when they organized the NHDVS in 1867. By 1912, when the Senate investigated living conditions at the Pacific Branch, witness testimony declared that inmates of poorhouses received better treatment than members of the Soldiers’ Home. In contrast, Sawtelle provided new opportunities in a new century for Union veterans still open to the challenges of building a community and embarking on new businesses endeavors forty years after Appomattox. Though unexamined in existing scholarship, the struggles and successes of these two disparate communities of Union veterans reveal the significant role that Civil War veterans played in the development of West Los Angeles and by extension, Southern California.

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**Unpublished Secondary Sources.**


APPENDIX A

National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year Opened</th>
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<td>Eastern Branch</td>
<td>Togus, Maine</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern Branch</td>
<td>Milwaukee, Wisconsin</td>
<td>1867</td>
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<td>Central Branch</td>
<td>Dayton, Ohio</td>
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<td>Leavenworth, Kansas</td>
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<td>Bath Branch</td>
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SOURCE:

APPENDIX B

Statistical Profile of One Hundred Nineteen Sawtelle Pacific Branch Residents

Pacific Branch Register of Members:

Average age at entry to Pacific Branch 62.42 years

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nativity</th>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Born</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Born</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Collar</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Blue Collar</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Laborer</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1900 Census:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Pacific Branch</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former member Pacific Branch</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran not found in 1900 census</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 A “Sawtelle Pacific Branch Resident” is defined as a Union veteran who held membership in the Pacific Branch at any time between 1888 and 1915, and at some point during that same time period, lived in the city of Sawtelle.
### 1900 Census (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-member owns home or farm mortgage free</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-member owns mortgaged home or farm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-member rents home or farm</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-member housing status not reported</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Pacific Branch or veteran not found in census</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>119</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1910 Census:

#### Population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Pacific Branch (single census report)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Pacific Branch (double census report)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Member Pacific Branch</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>119</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Occupation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired Own Income (PB member enumerated twice)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Own Income (former PB member)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still employed (PB member enumerated twice)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still employed (former PB member)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job status not recorded (former PB member)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Branch Inmates</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>119</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Real Estate Holdings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Branch member living at the Soldiers’ Home</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Branch member owns home or farm mortgage free</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Branch member owns mortgaged home or farm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Branch member rents home or farm</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Branch member housing status not recorded</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former member owns home or farm mortgage free</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former member owns mortgaged home or farm</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former member rents home or farm</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former member housing status not recorded</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>119</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1910 Census – Real Estate Holdings (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former member living with family</th>
<th>Whole Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former member living with family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawtelle Pacific Branch Resident not found</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawtelle Pacific Branch Resident deceased</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES:


