



10.1962.1 Civil War Hospital 1864-66
Clark County
Marker Text Review Report
07/19/2011

Marker Text

Site of Jefferson General Hospital, the third largest hospital in the United States during the Civil War. Under Dr. Middleton Goldsmith's command it served over 16,000 patients.

Report

IHB has not been able to locate primary sources for much of the marker text. The development of the hospital across state lines poses a challenge in locating these sources. IHB staff has thoroughly researched Jefferson General Hospital, using the following tools: ISL Evergreen Index, ISL Biographical and Newspaper Indexes, ISL Clippings File, IHS Collections, Newspaper Archive, Indiana Magazine of History, Making of America website, Googlebooks, National Archives, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana (1861-1865) and Sanitary Commission Reports (1865). IHB staff contacted the Jefferson County Historical Society and Kentucky Historical Society, but was given no response. The following report attempts to provide more information about Jefferson General Hospital.

The marker text correctly identifies the site of Jefferson General Hospital, but lacks details about the hospital's development. According to secondary sources, such as *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, the land used to construct the hospital was seized from Indiana Senator Jesse D. Bright after he expressed support for the Confederacy.¹ Primary sources such as the 1862 New York Senate Journal confirm that Congressional debate occurred regarding the expulsion of Senator Bright, but the order to confiscate his land cannot be located by IHB staff.²

Prior to the establishment of the hospital, the land confiscated from Senator Bright was renamed Camp Joe Holt and utilized by Lovell H. Rousseau.³ According to the *Indianapolis Star*, Rousseau used the Indiana land, then referred to as Camp Joe Holt, to recruit volunteers from Kentucky for the Union cause "out of respect to the neutrality doctrine"⁴ being practiced in Kentucky. Secondary sources refer to the location as ideal because the Ohio River facilitated the transportation of wounded soldiers from Louisville and Nashville to Indiana.⁵ Primary sources including *The United States Army and Navy Journal* (1865), photographs of Camp Joe Holt and the diary of soldier Louis C. Webber (1864-1866), confirm that Jefferson General Hospital was located in Jeffersonville, Indiana.⁶ Primary sources cannot be located regarding the period of transition from the confiscation of Senator Bright's land to the establishment of Camp Joe Holt, but newspaper articles from the early 1910's mention Rousseau's activities at the camp.⁷ Additionally, the transformation from Camp Joe Holt to the Jefferson General Hospital during the Civil War is undocumented and cannot be confirmed by primary sources. Garry J. Nokes' *Images of America: Jeffersonville Indiana* claims that the first soldiers wounded in the Civil War were cared for at Camp Joe Holt, but that the army established more facilities in the area due to the extreme amount of soldiers in need of medical assistance.⁸



10.1962.1 Civil War Hospital 1864-66
Clark County
Marker Text Review Report
07/19/2011

Sources could not be located to confirm the marker's statement that Jefferson General was the third largest hospital during the Civil War. The published diary of Elvira Powers (1866), a nurse at Jefferson General during the war, alludes to the magnitude of the hospital with her statement, "Patients in this hospital do not think much of other hospitals in comparison."⁹ Secondary sources, *Images of America: Jeffersonville Indiana*, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana* and IHS Collection Guide, state that Jefferson General was the third largest hospital in the U.S. during the war.¹⁰ However, these sources may have referenced the same source or each other. Further research is needed to validate the claim that the hospital was the third largest in the country.

Powers' diary emphasizes the significance of women in war, which should be mentioned on the marker. Powers states "there are very many wise and noble surgeons in the service who rightly appreciate woman's influence in a hospital, and have assisted her in every noble word and work" and that a nurse "may feel assured that her efforts are blessed to the sick boys in her care. She is amply repaid if at the last she may so overcome the prejudices of a physician..."¹¹ For more information about the role of women in hospitals see Nancy Pippen Eckerman's *Indiana in the Civil War: Doctors, Hospitals, and Medical Care* and Peggy Brase Seigel "She Went to War: Indiana Women Nurses in the Civil War."¹²

Details about Dr. Middleton Goldsmith's role at Jefferson General Hospital have not been found, although it is likely that he commanded the hospital as the marker text states. Powers writes that as a result of overcrowding at the hospital "orders have been sent Maj. Goldsmith to enlarge it so that it may contain 5,000."¹³ She goes on to state that Major Goldsmith had the authority to transfer the responsibility for maintenance of the hospital's flower gardens.¹⁴ Powers' account appears to be the only primary source regarding Goldsmith's influence. *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana* states that Goldsmith was the hospital's chief surgeon and that "in civil life had been a surgeon of large experience and great success."¹⁵ Primary sources like an 1864 *American Medical Times* article confirm Middleton's expertise as a surgeon, although they do not reference his work at Jefferson General.¹⁶

The number of soldiers treated at Jefferson General cannot be confirmed with primary sources. *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana* states that the hospital had to "erect tent divisions because of the increasing number of wounded soldiers"¹⁷ and that 16,120 patients were treated at the hospital¹⁸, which confirms the marker text. *Images of America: Jeffersonville Indiana* also claims that the hospital cared for 16,120 patients. According to the IHS Collection Guide for Camp Joe Holt, the hospital served more than 16,000 men over a three year period.¹⁹ Primary sources still need to be located to confirm this number.

According to *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, the hospital was discontinued in 1866 and the state of Indiana claimed the grounds with the aim of creating a soldiers' home. Powers' account reflects this objective, as she writes "And when no longer needed for the sick, what place could be found more suitable for a 'Soldier's Home?'"²⁰ However, after two months, the property was recovered by the United States and from that point on, until 1874, the buildings were used to store leftover materials,



10.1962.1 Civil War Hospital 1864-66
Clark County
Marker Text Review Report
07/19/2011

such as blankets and clothing.²¹ The *Indiana History Bulletin* states that the hospital site became the grounds of the Holt Masonic Orphan's Home.²²

¹ Lewis C. Baird, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, Publishers, 1909), 161.

² *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York: at their Eighty-Fifth Session* (Albany: 1862), 110 (accessed June 28, 2011 through GoogleBooks).

³ Evert A. Duycknick, *National History of the War for the Union, Civil Military and Naval, founded on Official and Other Authentic Documents II* (New York: Johnson, Fry and Company, 1861), 81.

⁴ "Union and Confederate Camps," *The Indianapolis Star*, September 11, 1911, 6 (accessed July 7, 2011 through NewspaperArchive).

⁵ Nancy Phippen Eckerman, *Indiana in the Civil War: Doctors, Hospitals, and Medical Care*. (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 30.

Nokes, Garry J., *Images of America: Jeffersonville Indiana*. (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 91.

⁶ "Army and Navy Personal," *The United States Army and Navy Journal, and Gazette of the Regular and Volunteer Forces, Vol. III, 1865-66*, October 21, 1865, 135 (accessed July 5, 2011 through GoogleBooks).

"Camp Joe Holt in Jeffersonville," photograph (accessed June 29, 2011 through Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections).

Webber, Lewis C. Personal Diary, 1864-66, Indiana Historical Society Manuscript Collection.

⁷ "In Mexican War Days," *Logansport Reporter*, September 8, 1910, 5 (accessed July 7, 2011 through NewspaperArchive).

"Union and Confederate Camps," *The Indianapolis Star*, September 11, 1911.

⁸ Nokes, *Images of America: Jeffersonville Indiana*, 91.



10.1962.1 Civil War Hospital 1864-66
Clark County
Marker Text Review Report
07/19/2011

⁹ Powers, Elvira. *Hospital Pencillings; Being a Diary While in Jefferson General Hospital, Jeffersonville, Ind., and Others at Nashville Tennessee, as Matron and Visitor* (Boston, 1866), 174.

¹⁰ Baird, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, 161.

Collection Guide. *Camp Joe Holt Jeffersonville, Indiana Photographs, CA. 1865*. Manuscript and Visual Collections. Indiana Historical Society.

¹¹ Powers, *Hospital Pencillings*, 209.

¹² Eckerman, *Indiana in the Civil War: Doctors, Hospitals, and Medical Care*. (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2001).

Peggy Brase Seigel, "She Went to War: Indiana Women Nurses in the Civil War," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 86, Iss. 1 (March 1990), 1-24 (accessed online June 28 2011).

¹³ Powers, *Hospital Pencillings*, 154.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 197.

¹⁵ Baird, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, 162.

¹⁶ "Original Lectures," *The American Medical Times* 8, April 2, 1864 (New York: Bailliere Brothers), 158 (accessed July 22, 2011 through GoogleBooks).

¹⁷ Baird, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, 162.

¹⁸ Baird, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, 163.

¹⁹ IHS Collection Guide, 3.

²⁰ Powers, *Hospital Pencillings*, 197.

²¹ Baird, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, 163.

²² Indiana Historical Bureau, *Indiana History Bulletin* 43, no. 3 (March 1966), 26.