

# MOUNTAIN HOME NATIONAL CEMETERY

## National Home

The ninth of eleven branches of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS), the Mountain Branch was authorized in 1901. The first resident arrived in 1903, a year before the home officially opened. Civil War veterans were the largest population initially.

The sprawling complex in Johnson City, Tennessee, covered some 400 acres. Architect Joseph H. Frelander designed the campus, which included administrative and hospital buildings, barracks, staff housing, mess hall, chapel, two lakes, and a cemetery. The buildings were constructed in the Beaux Arts style using local timber, brick, and limestone.



*Mountain Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, c. 1910. Souvenir Booklet: National Soldiers Home Tennessee, McClung Historical Collection.*

Frelander's plan remained unchanged until the care of World War I veterans required the construction of new facilities and repurposing of old buildings.

The National Homes were merged with the U.S. Veterans Bureau and Bureau of Pensions to form the Veterans Administration (now U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) in 1930.

## NHDVS Cemetery

The original 38-acre cemetery was established on the north side of the campus to bury National Home residents. On September 18, 1903, Francis Conaty, formerly a private in the 18th New York Infantry, became the first interment here. Sections A through H, which surround Monument Circle, are the oldest burial areas of the cemetery.

In 1973, the cemetery was designated Mountain Home National Cemetery. It is part of the Mountain Home Branch-NHDVS National Historic Landmark district, designated in 2011.

## Medal of Honor Recipients

Three Civil War Medal of Honor recipients are buried here. First bestowed in 1863, it is the highest award for military valor in the U.S. Armed Services. For acts above and beyond the call of duty, 1,522 individuals who served in the Civil War received the medal.



*Civil War Army Medal of Honor. Gettysburg National Military Park.*

Pvt. Henry G. Buhrman, 54th Ohio Infantry, was among a party of volunteers who stormed Confederate works at Vicksburg, Mississippi, May 22, 1863 (Section C, Grave 12).

Lt. Frederick Clarence Buck, 21st Connecticut Infantry, although wounded, refused to leave the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, Virginia, September 29, 1864 (Section F, Grave 9).

Seaman Thomas Smith, U.S.S. *Magnolia*, demonstrated coolness under fire in the assault at St. Marks, Florida, March 5-6, 1865 (Section G, Grave 3).



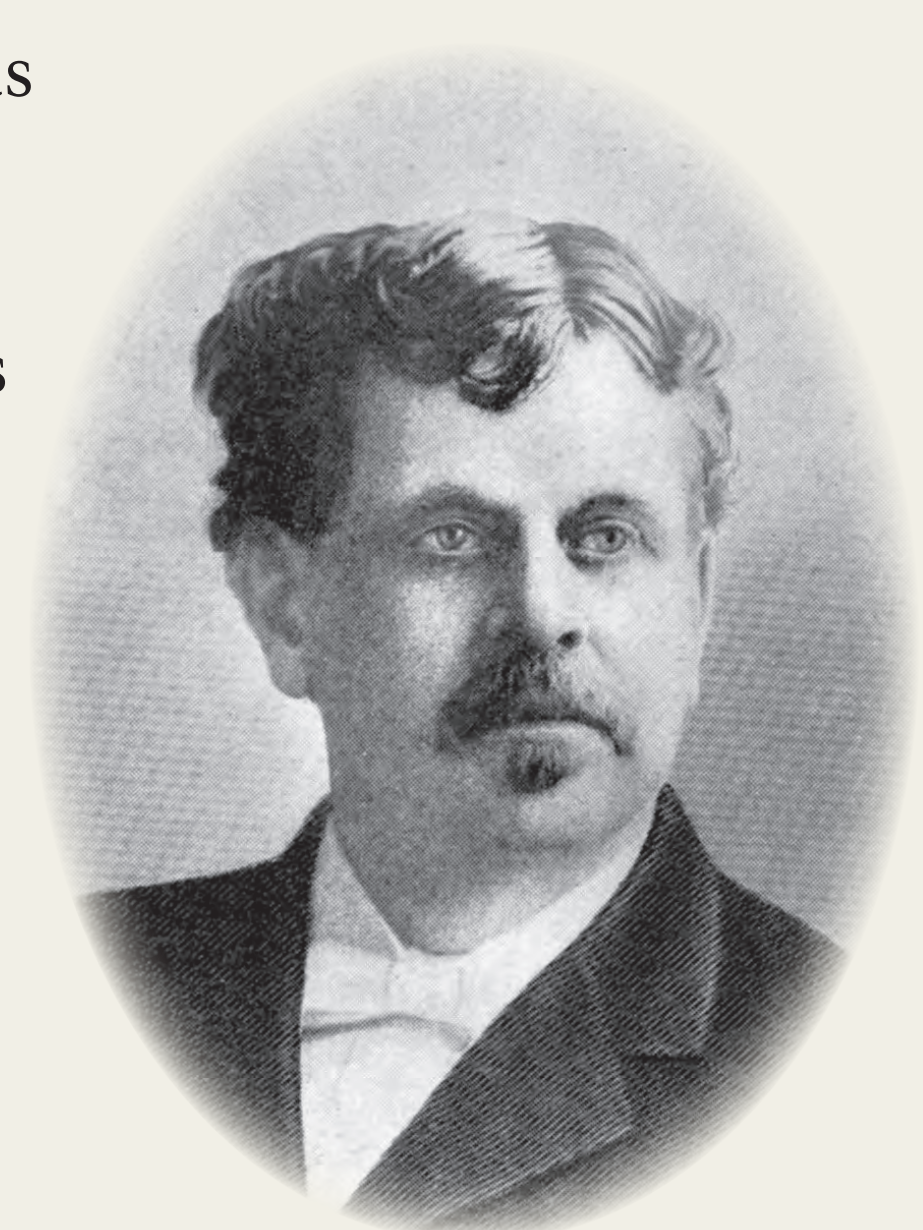
*Mountain Branch Cemetery, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, c. 1910. Souvenir Booklet: National Soldiers Home Tennessee, McClung Historical Collection.*

## Walter Preston Brownlow

Walter Preston Brownlow, a prominent East Tennessee businessman, was the driving influence behind the NHDVS Mountain Branch. He worked in the newspaper business and served as postmaster at Jonesboro, Tennessee.

A Republican, Brownlow was elected to Congress in 1897, and went on to serve six continuous terms. He sat on the National Home Board of Managers from 1902 until his death in 1910.

A large granite obelisk in Monument Circle marks the graves of Brownlow and his wife, Clayetta.



*Walter Preston Brownlow (1851-1910). Tennesseans 1901-1902 (1902), McClung Historical Collection.*