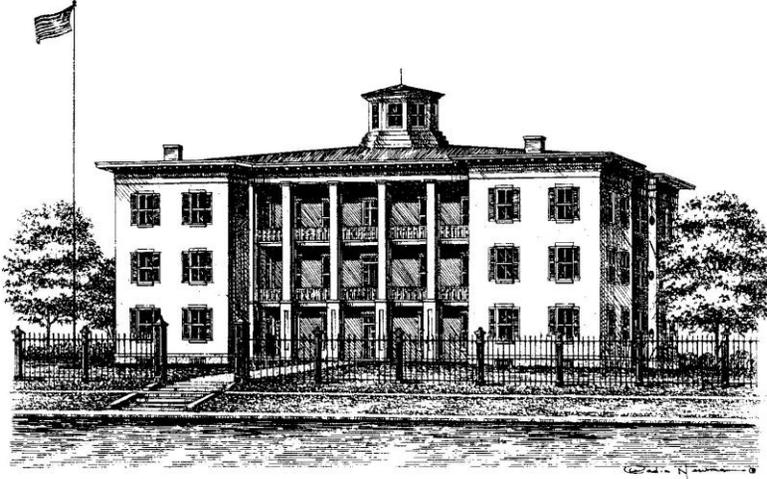


*To restore and renew
A local Landmark and a National Treasure*

LOUISVILLE'S U.S. MARINE HOSPITAL



*U.S. Marine Hospital
Louisville, Kentucky*

The elegant old hospital building in Portland is the most direct link to our community's medical heritage. Built during the golden days of steamboating, the U.S. Marine Hospital reminds Louisvillians of life, commerce and public health during the formative days of the 19th Century.

Declared a National Historic Landmark in 1997, the hospital provides a challenge to determine how best to renew this historic and architectural treasure. It is the most significant pre-Civil War building in Louisville not to be restored. A cornerstone of public health care in Louisville, the U.S. Marine Hospital reflects the past and looks to the future.

1798

President John Adams signed the first Federal health law, "*An Act for the Relief of Sick and Disabled Seamen*" creating the Marine Hospital Service. This plan marked the nation's first pre-paid health insurance plan and was the birth of the modern American medical system.

1836

Kentucky Senator Henry Clay sponsored legislation for the construction of the U.S. Marine Hospital in Louisville "*for the benefit of sick seamen, boatmen, and other navigators on the western rivers and lakes.*" The hospital's site, midway between the Louisville and Portland wharves, was selected for the "*beneficial effect of a view of the water, and the impressions and associations it would naturally awake in the minds of men whose occupation were so intimately connected with it.*"

1837

Federal architect Robert Mills completed his initial designs for marine hospitals. His plans focused on making the hospitals durable, fire-proof, well-ventilated, and comfortable for the patients. Louisville's hospital provided 100 beds and was the prototype for seven U.S. Marine Hospital Service buildings authorized by Congress.

1845

Congress authorized funding and construction of the Marine Hospital began. Other hospitals built at this time were in Natchez, MS; Paducah, KY; St. Louis, MO; Napoleon, AR; Pittsburgh, PA and Cleveland, OH.

1852

On April 1, the U.S. Marine Hospital was opened to receive patients. Also this year, the independent town of Portland was permanently annexed by the city of Louisville, marking the first major expansion of the city westward from downtown.

1863

During the first two years of the Civil War, the Marine Hospital treated wounded Union soldiers from Shiloh, Perryville and other

major battles. The Marine Hospital was closed for the duration of the war, and boatmen returned to the Louisville Marine Hospital for treatment.

1869

The Sisters of Mercy accepted an offer to come to Louisville and operate the U.S. Marine Hospital. The Sisters continued their supervision until the Marine Hospital Service was reorganized and resumed operation of the facility in 1875.

1922

During the early 1920s, over two-thirds of the patients treated at the Marine Hospital were World War I veterans. While the hospital continued to serve merchant boatmen, it also treated Coast Guard lifesavers, lighthouse personnel and other Federal employees.

1933

Recognizing the need for a more modern facility, and as an economic stimulus to provide jobs, a modern medical facility was built behind the original Marine Hospital. The 1852 hospital was converted into quarters for nurses, medical officers and pharmacists. This building today is the Family Health Center-Portland and serves thousands of patients every year.

1950

The City of Louisville purchased the hospital property for \$25,000 and used it primarily for office space. In 1975, ownership of the hospital complex was transferred to the Louisville and Jefferson County Board of Health.

2003

The Marine Hospital was named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's *Eleven Most Endangered Places* list and was awarded Save America's Treasures status by the National Parks Service. In 2004, the U.S. Marine Hospital Foundation and Friends of Marine Hospital were organized to raise funds and awareness of the importance of saving the grand old building in Portland.

Louisville's U.S. Marine Hospital is a national landmark and a local treasure. Almost entirely intact, it is the only surviving example of inland marine hospital structures in the nation. The three-story building, constructed between 1845 and 1852 in modified Greek Revival style, was based on plans by Robert Mills, America's first native-born professional architect.

Except for a brief period during and just after the Civil War, the site served as a hospital for ill or injured boatmen until the 1930s. Following World War I, the facility also was used to care for Veteran's Administration patients.

The original U.S. Marine Hospital was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1997, due to its importance to maritime history and public health. In 2003, the structure was named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's *11 Most Endangered Places* list and was awarded Save America's Treasures status by the National Park Service. Today, the Marine Hospital Foundation, Friends of Marine Hospital, and other groups are working to restore and renew the venerable structure.



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