

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

CULPEPER NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. VA-18-A

Location: 305 U.S. Avenue, Culpeper, Culpeper County, Virginia.

The coordinates for the Culpeper National Cemetery, Lodge are 77.992143 W and 38.46967 N, and they were obtained in August 2012 with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Present Owner: National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Prior to 1988, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs was known as the Veterans Administration.

The Veterans Administration took over management of Culpeper National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1872.

Builder/Contractor: Henry W. Scott.

Description: The Second Empire style lodge at Culpeper National Cemetery is a stone masonry building standing one and one-half story in height over a partial basement. It is distinguished by a mansard roof covered in slate and surmounted by a shallow hip roof covered in tin originally. Dormer windows punctuate the slope of the mansard and light the second-floor bedrooms. Two brick chimneys served the building initially. The windows are wood sash and, as most often in the national cemetery lodges from this era, are double hung and glazed with six-over-six lights. The doors are wood and paneled. The interior walls are plaster on lath and the floors are wood.

Plans for the Second Empire style lodge typically were L-shaped, with a wood porch in the space of the L that provided direct access into the adjacent rooms. These rooms were the office of the superintendent and the living room for the superintendent and his family. The principal elevation of the Culpeper lodge appears to face northeast toward the walkway leading from the entrance gates to the flagstaff. The entrance porch occupies the north corner of the building. Additions to the southwest (rear) elevation are visible in aerial photographs.

Historic photographs of the lodge, on file with the Veterans Administration, show that the exterior, stone walls of the building were covered in ivy making it impossible to tell if the quoining at the corners and window openings was done. There was an ell off the rear of the building, most likely for a kitchen.

Maintenance ledgers kept by the Veterans Administration chronicle changes made to the lodge between 1920 and through the 1960s. In 1925, for example, the front porch was constructed and

in 1927 a new tin roof and cornice were installed. Oak flooring was laid in the rooms of the first floor in 1931 (and more added in 1934), and linoleum was rolled out for the kitchen and bathroom around 1940. The linoleum floor was updated in 1960. A mantel made of brick was added to the office, whereas the dining and living rooms received wainscoting in 1934. The coal bin in the basement was fashioned at this time as well. The gutters and downspouts were cleaned and repaired as necessary in 1931 and 1934; repairs were made to the mansard in 1967. The stonework was tuckpointed in 1968. Two brick piers were placed under the porch in 1934, the same time as a railing and lattice were added to it. In 1940, the lavatory was repaired and a skylight was installed in the building. Storm windows were affixed to the building in 1952, the kitchen and bathroom were remodeled in 1957, and the basement rooms were plastered in 1959. The lodge was periodically painted throughout these years.

Site Context: The main entrance to the burial ground is from US Avenue along the northwest boundary line of the cemetery. A brick enclosing wall marks the original boundaries of the cemetery, and the entrance gates open from this enclosure. A walkway extends from the main entrance gate to the centrally-located flagstaff. The lodge is to the southeast of the gate, and faces northeast toward the walkway. The northwest side elevation of the lodge looks to the boundary wall and beyond to US Avenue.

History: Please see the contextual report for an analysis of the architectural development of the lodge as a building type for the national cemeteries and its place within this prescribed landscape (HALS No. DC-46).

In 1862 Congress authorized the appropriation of land for use as national cemeteries so that the Union soldiers who perished in service to their country could be buried with honor. These became the first cemeteries in the national cemetery system; by the end of the decade almost 300,000 men were buried in seventy-three national cemeteries. By that time the Office of the Quartermaster General, and the Quartermaster Montgomery C. Meigs in particular, had developed an architectural program for the cemetery. The program created for the national cemeteries included an enclosing wall demarcating the grounds and ornamental iron gates cast to instill reverence to those who entered and calm the wrought emotions of a nation in mourning for its lost sons. Specific plantings, such as the Osage-orange hedge and various trees, were selected to give a pleasing appearance and, likely, to screen outbuildings - the business of cemetery maintenance - from public view. Less a commemorative architectural statement, the superintendent's lodge combined practicality with a respectful presence.

Lodge plans first evolved from expedient wood-frame "cottages" to masonry buildings one-story in height and with a three-room floor plan. Construction of the temporary wood-frame lodges took place in the years 1867 to 1869, and overlapped with the construction of the first permanent masonry lodges built to a standard, single-story design from 1868 to 1871. Officers in charge of the cemeteries soon found the floor plans of the temporary wood lodges and the first permanent masonry lodges inconvenient and, increasingly, unattractive.

Moreover, representatives from the Quartermaster General's Office noted these three-room models were often too small for a superintendent and his family, and so in 1869, plans for a six-

room, one and one-half story type were acquired from Edward Clark, Architect of the Capitol Extension. The design was refined over the next two years and in 1871 drawn for the Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs's approval. This standard plan featured a mansard roof and so became associated with the French or Second Empire style. Contemporary buildings, domestic and civic, exhibited this aesthetic and so the choice of the Quartermaster for a Second Empire style lodge is in keeping with national architectural trends as well as the personal taste of Meigs whose house also was erected in the Second Empire style. On the national stage, Alfred Mullet designed the Old Executive Office building in Washington, DC, a building whose construction in the 1870s coincided with the building of lodges in the Second Empire style in many of the national cemeteries.

The National Cemetery Administration identifies the Second Empire style lodge, referred to in the 1880s as the "usual" type, or even the "full Meigs plan" likely in reference to the Quartermaster's endorsement of the design, as the first generation of permanent lodges. It reflects a concerted effort to standardize what a national cemetery, including the lodge, should look like. The last cemeteries for which the Quartermaster contracted for this style of lodge were for Mobile, Alabama, and Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1881.

The L-plan was revised in 1885 for the lodge in San Francisco, and then employed for the lodges in Mound City and Loudon Park. The revised plan was further improved for the construction of the lodge at Cypress Hills. The revision to the standard L-plan primarily included a change in roof form from the mansard to a cross-gable and the use of banded brick in the exterior walls. Cypress Hills was a simpler expression of the type, with segmental arches over the windows instead of stone lintels and having no banded exterior brick in the walls. In the 1890s, the plans called for an elongated office wing. This change to the L-plan accommodated an entrance hall in the middle of the building; the elongated L-plan was built in Santa Fe, Fort Smith, and Fort Leavenworth.

By the century's end, standards of living called for conveniences the L-plan lodges lacked. Advances in plumbing and heating technologies, in particular, made the L-plan outdated as expectations about the appropriate level of domestic sanitation that the government should provide to its employees changed. Even so, the Quartermaster omitted indoor toilets from the lodge floor plans until 1905. Maintenance of the existing lodges, as well as ell additions, addressed some of the inconveniences of the older buildings, and made the lodges more comfortable as living spaces. Between the 1880s and 1940s, improvements to the existing lodges included the installation of indoor plumbing and bathrooms, central heating, closets and cupboards; adding a kitchen ell and converting the original kitchen into a dining room; and maintenance of windows, shutters, and porches.

By 1905, the Quartermaster determined some lodges warranted a complete overall, rather than renovation, and the department began to replace some of the buildings in the national cemeteries. For the new lodges, it created a succession of twenty-two different plans between 1905 and 1960. Nine of these plans were used to build multiple lodges, but thirteen were unique designs, used only once. Compared to the extended popularity of the L-plan, which lasted from 1870 to 1881 in its mansard-roof form and to 1904 in its later variations, the rapid succession of designs

in the twentieth century suggests a new awareness among those directing the cemeteries of the need to construct lodges that were aesthetically and technologically up-to-date. Over five decades, the Quartermaster endorsed a progression of plans from four-squares to bungalows to Colonial Revival designs and then to suburban ramblers. This progression paralleled the changes in form, style, building materials, and construction practices that occurred in the private housing market.

Most of the lodges built in the twentieth century are indistinguishable from typical American middle-class and upper-middle-class suburban dwellings, with the exception of a second entrance for the superintendent's office. In some instances, such as in Hampton, Virginia, and in Annapolis, Maryland, the army made a particular effort to match new lodges to their local surroundings, usually by building period-revival designs in places where those designs would have particular resonance. In a nod to the colonial heritage of the Chesapeake, the Quartermaster built one-and-one-half-story brick lodges in a Colonial Revival style at these cemeteries in 1940. In another example, the desire to match designs to localities prompted the alteration of the L-plan lodge at San Francisco into a Spanish Mission Revival building in 1929 and the similarly extensive reconstruction of the Santa Fe lodge into the Pueblo Revival style in 1942.

Within the architectural history of the superintendent's lodge as a building type, the lodge at Culpeper National Cemetery is especially important as an extant example of the one and one-half story, Second Empire style lodge built in stone to the definitive L-plan design. Completed in 1871-72, it was among the first constructed using the newly refined plans. Now iconic, the L-plan lodge type signified the importance the Quartermaster's department placed on a regularized and identifiable cemetery landscape while simultaneously trying to accommodate the daily needs of the superintendent. The Culpeper lodge is also important because of certain modifications to the plan, such as digging a partial basement, as the Quartermaster's contractors adjusted the building specifications to conditions at various sites.

Established in 1866, Culpeper National Cemetery was dedicated the following year and at that time, a small porter's lodge was on the premises, near the gate. Many of the interments inside the cemetery gates are the remains of those who died in the Battle of Cedar Mountain (1862) or of those who died in the military hospital attached to the Union camp at Brandy Station in the winter of 1863 to 1864. After the war, the superintendent for the cemetery lived in a temporary wood-frame lodge, likely what had been described as the porter's lodge of "ordinary construction." The temporary lodge had three rooms inside and measured 21'8" x 12' overall.

By 1871, work began on a new lodge made of stone. The Second Empire style lodge was built according to the newly issued, definitive L-plan design and specifications from the Quartermaster's office, however, there were several differences in plan and construction. The basement had two rooms, not three, and there was no interior access to the floors above. There was no scuttle to the roof or fixed ladder to reach it. The stairs connecting the first and second floors entered the sitting (living) room rather than the office. The contractor, Henry Scott, recommended changing the specified stone for the windowsills and lintels. Scott subcontracted with a Mr. Malls for the carpentry, and his slow payment schedule caused protest. Other variations on the standard plan included a handrail and balusters for the steps, for safety

purposes, but not all modifications were approved by the Quartermaster. For example, the department turned down the request for more closets.

Plans for a rear porch and pantry were drafted in the early 1880s, and the survey of the cemetery conducted in 1909 reveals that there was an addition for a kitchen in 1899.

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Historian: Virginia B. Price, 2012.

Project Information: The documentation of the lodges and rostrums in the national cemeteries was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), one of the Heritage

Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Sara Amy Leach, Senior Historian. Project planning was coordinated by Catherine C. Lavoie, Chief of HABS. Historical research was undertaken by HABS Historians Virginia B. Price and Michael R. Harrison. NCA Historians Jennifer Perunko, Alec Bennett, and Hillori Schenker provided research material, edited and reviewed written reports. Field work for selected sites was carried out and measured drawings produced by HABS Architects Paul Davidson, Ryan Pierce, and Mark Schara.