

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

FORT LEAVENWORTH NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. KS-1-A

Location: 395 Biddle Boulevard, Leavenworth, Leavenworth County, Kansas.

The coordinates for the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, Lodge are 94.888227 W and 39.275444 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 Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1904-05.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: In 1905, the two-story, brick lodge replaced the nineteenth-century, Second Empire style stone lodge; it kept the L-shaped floor plan but raised the second floor – eliminating the mansard – and covered the whole with hipped roofs. A small, triple window dormer was cut into the roof on the southeast front elevation. The foundations of the lodge were stone and concrete and the roof was initially covered in slate. The window lintels and sills appear in early twentieth-century photographs to be made of stone, and the double-hung sash glazed with one-over-one lights. The chimneystack was constructed of brick and is visible above the roofline. There were twenty-six screens and twenty-three window shades in the building.

Maintenance ledgers from the Veterans Administration for the cemetery supplied the 1905 construction date for the present lodge, and the ledgers listed a series of repairs undertaken in the 1920s to 1960s. In the 1920s through the 1940s, the repairs primarily consisted of routine maintenance such as painting and electrical wiring, although in 1928-29, the walls were papered.

In 1948 an exhaust fan was installed, linoleum placed on the office floor, and stair treads put in place. The following year, some repairs were made to the kitchen including plastering, painting, cabinetry, and pipes. Also, the porch was re-screened, window blinds were installed, and awnings hung on the exterior. The walk in front of the lodge was “cemented.” In 1951, a canvas awning was placed over the northwest (rear) entrance and new doors hung at the kitchen and back porch doorways.

Commentary about the heat and humidity, and the need for ventilation (especially in the two bedrooms on the west side of house) underscored the effects of climate on the livability of the lodges. These were fairly constant concerns. Equally important was the advent of indoor plumbing and the accommodations made for bathrooms in the floor plan. The bathroom in the 1905 lodge was improved in 1950, repaired in 1961, and remodeled in 1967. The kitchen was redone in 1967 as well. Part of the back porch was made into a bathroom in 1968. Other changes involved accessibility, including the rebuilding of the stair to the basement in 1950 and the straightening of another run in 1951. The wood steps in back of the lodge were replaced with concrete steps in 1952. These led to the pantry. Also in 1952 the pantry roof was replaced and down spouts were installed.

The lodge was redecorated in 1959, but painting and minor cosmetic work occurred throughout the twentieth century.

Site Context: Biddle Boulevard runs along the southeast edge of the national cemetery grounds, while Hancock Avenue crosses on a northeast to southwest diagonal through the lot toward the northeast side. The main entrance to the cemetery is from Biddle Boulevard, and a drive extends east to west from Biddle to Hancock with several internal drives dividing the grounds into burial sections. The lodge and service complex are located inside the cemetery, just southwest of the intersection of the east to west entrance drive and Hancock Avenue. This location suggests the main entrance might once have been from Hancock. The L-plan lodge faces southeast, with parking to the southwest side and service buildings behind (northwest).

The present lodge was constructed in the same location as the L-plan, stone lodge built in 1874 in the Second Empire style. The earlier lodge also faced southeast, and its location is noted on the 1892 map of the cemetery.

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.

The lodge in Fort Leavenworth is significant as an example of the Quartermaster's adaptation of the definitive L-plan for the lodges into a more elongated floor plan in an effort to accommodate changes in living standards. The elongated L-plan was built only three times, with the last constructed in Fort Leavenworth, before new designs for the lodges were drafted.

Fort Leavenworth is also significant in U.S. history, tied as it is to the opening of the west and to frontier culture. In the 1820s trade routes to points west and south crossed into Indian territories and soon followed were the military outposts to supply and protect the traders and their caravans. Fort Leavenworth is the oldest continually active military post west of the Missouri. It was settled in 1827 under the direction of Henry Leavenworth of the U.S. Army. The cantonment became Fort Leavenworth in 1832. It was little more than a tent camp at first, shielded by a stone wall. Cavalry units were stationed here; travelers on the Santa Fe Trail crossed through here; and the gold-rush hopefuls swept past. The deadly encounters between Native Americans and white settlers and those between pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces earned the moniker, Bloody Kansas. The fort was of strategic importance during the Civil War, poised as it was between opposing sides. Legends of the west, Bill Cody, Wild Bill Hickok, and Kit Carson, ambled the streets of the town in the 1880s and General William T. Sherman returned to the area to establish a school for military education, now the Command and General Staff College.

The cemetery grew in step with the fort. Initial casualties came from disease, and two burying grounds were maintained, one for officers and the other for soldiers, until 1858. The present site of the cemetery was selected in the 1850s, and remains from the earlier graveyards were transferred. During the war, Fort Leavenworth became part of the national cemetery system in 1862. Remains of soldiers hastily buried in the vicinity were re-interred in the national cemetery once the war ended. Many of the Civil War-era were “unknown.” Seven Confederate prisoners of war were also buried here. Leavenworth himself was reinterred in the cemetery in 1902 on Memorial Day.

Other heroes came to rest at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, including James Calhoun and Thomas Custer, brother in law and brother of General George Custer. Thomas Custer perished in the Battle of Little Big Horn, and twice during the Civil War he had been awarded the Medal of Honor.

Fourteen German prisoners of war were buried in Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery. Their graves are placed along the enclosing wall of the cemetery.

Prior to the construction of a permanent lodge in 1874, the superintendent lived in a temporary lodge made of wood-frame. The wood lodge was one story and constructed sometime before 1868. In summer 1874, proposals were sought for a lodge of the definitive L-plan design, at one and one-half stories in height and made of brick or stone to be built at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and also at Springfield, Missouri. Two proposals were received. The bid for the stone lodge came to just over \$4000. It was submitted by Anderson and Liddell. In a discussion within the Quartermaster General’s office about allocating funds for an outbuilding at Fort Leavenworth that took place in September and October 1874 completion of a stone lodge was noted. With the erection of the stone lodge, the former, temporary wood lodge that consisted of three rooms could be converted into an outbuilding for less cost than building anew.

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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 materials, 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.