

**HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY**  
**GLENDALE NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE**

**HALS No. VA-5-A**

Location: 8301 Willis Church Road, Richmond, Henrico County, Virginia.

The coordinates for the Glendale National Cemetery, Lodge are 77.234990 W and 37.436103 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 Glendale National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1874.

Builder/Contractor: John C. Comfort.

Description: The Second Empire style lodge erected in Glendale National Cemetery in 1874 is a one and one-half story, masonry building with a mansard roof. The foundations are stone and the walls are brick. The slate tiles further enhance the distinctive mansard roof, particularly through the diamond and quatrefoil patterns created within the tiling. Also spelled out in the slate tiles along the west face are the letters “U” and “S” for the United States. The corners of the building have quoins rendered in the brick and quoins give emphasis to the first-floor window openings as well. While the ornamentation of the west elevation lends prominence to the street-facing façade, the front façade is more likely the north elevation looking to the entrance drive.

The floor plan follows the three-room, L-shape of the design issued by the Office of the Quartermaster General; the office, kitchen and living room are on the first floor while three bedrooms are on the second. There are two porches, one to the front in the northwest corner of the building in the space of the L-plan, and the other at the south (rear) of the building. In 1928 a kitchen addition was constructed. Historic photographs filed with the maintenance ledgers in the records of the Veterans Administration suggest the front porch was screened.

Maintenance records kept by the Veterans Administration note routine jobs, such as the painting or repairs to the screens or upgrades to the boiler and kitchen appliances, occurring throughout the 1920s, when the ledgers begin, through the 1960s, when the entries cease. In 1934 improvements were possible with the funding available through the WPA programs. Projects at this lodge include work on the front porch, the installation of oak flooring in the living room and dining and of pine flooring in the office, two bedrooms and hall, the installation of a stairway, an

application of plaster to the walls and ceilings, the rebuilding of the chimney, a change of windows or repair to some of the windows on the second floor and in the basement, and the pouring of concrete for a floor in the basement and for steps. The year 1940 brought repairs and plaster work and locks for the closets. The floors were refinished in 1948 and the gutters and downspouts were renewed that same year. Stair treads were put in during 1953. Other changes dating to the mid 1950s provided a new laundry tub, a map case for the office and vinyl tile flooring, storm doors and modifications to the kitchen. The 1960s ushered in new bathroom tiles, Venetian blinds, and casement windows (where necessary), plus painting woodwork and repairing mortar joints.

Site Context: Glendale National Cemetery is about two acres, and within the square lot and stone enclosing walls are graves laid in concentric circles emanating outward from the central flagstaff. The main entrance is from the west, leading into the pedestrian-only grounds from Wills Church Road (State Route 156). The lodge is in proximity to the entrance gates and the arms of the L-plan face north to cemetery drive and west toward the road. Emphasizing the street-facing, west façade are the letters “U” and “S” spelled by placing decorative tiles among the slates of the mansard roof.

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.

Similar to the lodge built in Seven Pines National Cemetery, the lodge in Glendale was also constructed in 1874 to the definitive design for the Second Empire style. It, too, is particularly important to the chronology of architectural work by the Quartermaster's department. The Glendale lodge shares with Seven Pines a complex masonry structure, quoins, and stone sills and lintels, as well as the contractor, and yet it exhibits a level of ornamentation others of the era lack. This makes the lodge at Glendale National Cemetery resonate, and emphasizes its significance as an example of the L-plan type.

Glendale National Cemetery is located outside of Richmond and stands in silent testimony to the high cost of General George B. McClellan's Peninsula Campaign and, particularly, the six battles fought over seven days in late June and July 1862. Glendale was the name of the Union Army's headquarters on what became the cemetery parcel. The Battle of Nelson's Farm took place nearby, on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and the sixth, and final, encounter erupted at Malvern Hill within a few miles of the cemetery on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Engagements at Frayer's Farm (or Glendale), as well as Savage Station and White Oak Swamp slowed McClellan's retreat to the James River and positioned the armies for the Battle of Malvern Hill. Losses were high on both sides, with 1734 Union soldiers killed, over 8000 wounded and over 6000 missing, and with 3478 Confederate soldiers dead, over 16,000 wounded and another 875 missing by the end of the seven days of fighting. The first interments in Glendale National Cemetery were those transferred from the battle sites, such as Malvern Hill and Frayer's Farm.

Although title to the land came in 1869, care for the cemetery began with the initial burials. The Quartermaster's department constructed a temporary, wood-frame lodge for the superintendent by the main gate in 1867 or 1868. The temporary lodge was a one-story building with two rooms, plus a kitchen over a cellar.

The location by the main gate proved to be the most desirable site for a lodge, so that in 1873 when plans for a permanent lodge were proposed, moving the old wood lodge became part of the

negotiation between the Quartermaster's office and the contractor, John Comfort. In April 1873 Comfort estimated costs of moving the old lodge out of the way of the new lodge to be \$100. Once relocated, the wood-frame lodge would be repurposed as a tool house and water closet. Details about the fate of the wood-frame building are known because of the debate that ensued over moving it. Representatives from the Quartermaster's office complained that Comfort had not moved the building as requested. Instead of taking the old lodge through the gate and carting it along the exterior of the cemetery wall, Comfort merely shifted it to the entrance drive. The argument persisted as Comfort refused to move the old lodge a second time without further compensation. It was resolved a year later, in July 1874, when the Quartermaster determined his man had "permitted himself to get confused" over an "unimportant" case. Inspection of work on the new lodge approved of the progress being made, the quality of the materials used, and the workmanship. The main recommendation involved moving several gravesites because of the proximity of the back steps and cellar entrance of the new lodge to the burials. In December 1876, the inspector, Oliver Cox, requested shutters for six dormer windows. The shutters were needed to combat the rain that came in during storms and injured the plaster. Cox attributed this to the "peculiar" method of construction and offered that other lodges were fitted for shutters. In April 1885 some painting was needed but otherwise the lodge was in good condition. This remained true at the time of the 1909 survey, with commentary reserved for the frame tool house. That building leaked badly and wanted re-shingling.

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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.