

## HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

### LONG ISLAND NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. NY-3-A

Location: 2040 Wellwood Avenue, East Farmingdale, Suffolk County, New York.

The coordinates for the Long Island National Cemetery, Lodge are 73.400103 W and 40.746693 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 Long Island National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1937-38, office addition, 1941.

Builder/Contractor: Frank O'Connor.

Description: As built in 1937-38, the Georgian Revival style lodge measured 44' x 22' and was two stories over a basement. It was brick over concrete foundations. The roof was hipped and covered in slate. Two gable-roofed dormers pierced the plane of the roof in the (south) rear elevation. The wood sash windows had multiple lights and shutters, and are likely double-hung in keeping with the Georgian Revival style of building. There are two exterior end chimneys; at west end, two doors with hoods flank the chimney. Photographs show downspouts on the north front façade, and a pedimented door surround that was later obscured with an enclosed porch at the entrance. Linoleum was installed in the office in 1938. WPA funding allowed for the painting of the exterior woodwork in 1939.

Also in 1939, the wood floors were varnished. The records did not specify whether this work was facilitated by the WPA or not. In 1939, the office was moved from the lodge to the shelter house. A wing for the office was completed on the west side of the lodge in 1941.

Maintenance records reveal that painting of the interior (1943) and exterior (1944) was needed shortly thereafter, and repairs to the woodwork, plaster, plumbing, tile work and tile roof, and doors were carried out in 1945. The wood floors were sanded and refinished in 1946. The office wing was converted into a viewing area in 1950, at a cost of \$2000, and the office removed to the former chapel. Changes to the heating system for the lodge occurred in 1950 as well, and an oil-burning furnace was installed in 1955. A storm door and several aluminum storm windows were added to the lodge in 1961.

Site Context: The main entrance to the cemetery opens from Wellwood Avenue near the south end of the grounds and near to Pinelawn Memorial Park and Garden Mausoleums. The national cemetery entrance is marked by gates of brick. Southeast of the gates is the lodge complex. The principal elevation of the lodge faces north, and the wing initially built for the office extends to the west. Behind the lodge stretches the service building, zigzagging past the south rear and west side elevations of the lodge. The burial grounds and walkways are to the north and east of the lodge complex.

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.

One of the historic revival and regional house forms that the Office of Quartermaster tried in the national cemeteries was the Georgian Revival style of building. Three lodges were built in the national cemeteries according to this design between 1937 and 1940: Long Island, Raleigh, and Springfield. The plan of the first lodge built in this idiom lacked sufficient space for the office, and a wing for the office was added in 1941. The second lodge, in Raleigh, was constructed in 1938, but it was the last, in Springfield, that had a modified floor plan and so kept the office within the footprint of the building. The Long Island lodge is significant as the first example of this revival design, and its rapid expansion in 1941 represents the evolving plans for the lodges as new designs were drafted and adapted for use by the cemetery superintendents.

Long Island National Cemetery was established in 1936, in anticipation of the need for burial space for the area's veterans of the First World War. Cypress Hills National Cemetery in Brooklyn could not accommodate that many burial plots, and so the Army bought 175 acres from Pinelawn Cemetery to develop as a national cemetery. The first interments occurred in 1937, and construction of the Georgian Revival style lodge began in the same year. The lodge cost just over \$19,000 to build. Frank O'Connor was the contractor, while Walter Construction Company of Woodside, New York, added the office wing in 1941.

Sources:

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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.