

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
CHATTANOOGA NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. TN-1-A

Location: 1200 Bailey Avenue, Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee.

The coordinates for the Chattanooga National Cemetery are 85.292679 W and 35.033870 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 Chattanooga National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1931, demolished after 1966.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: Three lodges were constructed in succession in Chattanooga: a wood-frame temporary lodge in 1867 or 1868, a Second Empire style lodge in 1875, and a Dutch Colonial Revival style lodge in 1931, which has since been razed. In 1946 an inspection of the cemetery grounds recommended a new lodge be built near the Bailey Avenue and Spruce Street entrance, and that the "old" Dutch Colonial Revival style lodge be retained for use by an assistant superintendent or superintendent-in-training.

The Dutch Colonial Revival-style lodge was two stories in height. It was covered by a gambrel roof and rested on concrete foundations. The walls were hollow tile and stucco. The entrance to the building was through the porch; the porch was integral to the building in plan and was approached by four concrete steps. A long dormer, with four sash windows each glazed with six-over-one lights, broke the front slope of the gambrel roof. A brick chimneystack, for the exterior end chimney, rose above the roofline. In a historic photograph another chimneystack is visible to the rear of the building suggesting an ell for a kitchen. The kitchen chimneys became obsolete as ventilating fans and modern appliances were installed. On the front façade the first-floor sash is paired; each sash is glazed with nine-over-one lights.

The gambrel roof provided ample space for three bedrooms on the second floor. First-floor spaces included a living room, dining room, and kitchen for the superintendent, plus the office. The lodge also had a bathroom.

Maintenance records for the cemetery indicate that the building was routinely painted and cleaned from the time of construction through the 1960s when the project ledgers end. The porch was screened in 1948, and aluminum awnings were installed in 1958. The windows were “retrofitted” in 1964, although Venetian blinds and aluminum screens had been put up in 1956. The floor in the office was altered in 1948 when an asphalt-based tile was used; a floor “covering” was added in 1955. The kitchen floor was tiled, probably with a similar material or linoleum, in 1957 and replaced again in 1965. The plaster of the walls were repaired and painted in 1958, the same year as the wood floors were refinished. In 1964, the gutters and downspouts were replaced. Mechanical systems were upgraded, including the furnace and air conditioning units, and the building was treated for termites.

Site Context: The layout of Chattanooga National Cemetery follows the topography and the initial pathways meandered between the burial sections which added curves to the walkways and created irregular shapes for the lots. A flagstaff was placed on the central hill, and two walkways radiating northward and westward extend from that center circle to the oval shaped perimeter walk. A low stone wall capped with iron fencing extends along the northeast boundary of the cemetery, along Bailey Avenue. The north entrance gate to the cemetery grounds opens from this wall, across from Spruce Street. In 1946 it was recommended that a new lodge be built in proximity to this gate. The main entrance to the cemetery is on the southeast side, along Holtzclaw Avenue, and another secondary entrance is to the southwest, off of Central Avenue. A monumental arch, constructed in 1880, and pond occupies the west corner of the cemetery.

A map of uncertain date indicates that a lodge with a L-plan was built in this western quadrant of the cemetery, inside the perimeter walkway and north of the path, and an administrative building was located along the northeast boundary. Likely the Second Empire style lodge is the lodge shown, given the L-shape footprint, and the administration building’s placement suggestive of the location of the present structures. Historic photographs show the front elevation of the 1931 lodge in landscaped grounds, but given contemporary tree cover, the lodge could have been in the same location as the L-plan building or closer to Spruce Street.

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.

Of the twentieth-century lodge forms, the design in the Dutch Colonial Revival oeuvre was selected most often. Fourteen lodges were built using this plan between 1921 and 1934. The design called for a one and one-half story building with masonry construction at the first floor and wood-frame gambrel roofs enclosing the upper floor. The building footprint was rectangular and included an enclosed porch and office in the front, a living room and stair in the middle, and a dining room and kitchen at the rear. The second floor contained three bedrooms and a bathroom opening off of a central hall. Three versions of the design were used. The first in four lodges erected between 1921 and 1928, with hollow core tile walls covered in stucco, shingled roofs and gable ends, and dormers two windows in width on the front and rear. The second version expanded the dormer from two windows to four, adding more light the upper floor. This plan was used twice, for lodges in Nashville and Chattanooga, in 1931. PWA funds paid for the construction of lodges in 1934, including eight built to a third rendition of the Dutch Colonial Revival design. In 1934, the building materials included a brick construction on the first floor and faux half-timbered or brick gables, whereas in the 1931 iteration of the design, the materials, like those used in Chattanooga, included stuccoed hollow tile and frame. The Chattanooga lodge was a significant component of the Quartermaster's building program as only one of two built to

the 1931 scheme.

In December 1863 Major General George H. Thomas selected the site for the cemetery in honor those who fought in the battles of Chattanooga that year. The cemetery faced Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, and formally became part of the national cemetery system in 1867. The first superintendent was appointed in 1868, although interments of the dead from the Chattanooga campaign and development of the grounds had been ongoing. Over 12,000 were buried in the cemetery by 1870. To accommodate the superintendent, a frame lodge with three rooms under a gable roof measuring 43' x 18' was built on the premises by in 1867 or 1868. By 1874, it was slated for replacement. The new lodge, of stone and in the Second Empire style, would be built by the main entrance. This lodge, in the L-plan, was newly completed in 1875 and two of the cellar rooms were used as the kitchen and dining room. This may explain why rats were in the basement by 1877, coming in through the drains. The problem was quickly remedied. Also in that year the inspections of the cemetery cited how the framing for the windows and doors had shrunk and repairs were needed. Maintenance on the L-plan lodge kept it in service until the early twentieth century when a new lodge in the Dutch Colonial Revival style was built.

Sources:

Annual Report of the Secretary of War. [to Congress]. Washington, DC: GPO, 1865-1920.

Deetz, James. *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life.* New York: Doubleday, 1977.

Dickinson, William C., Dean A. Herrin, and Donald R. Kennon, eds. *Montgomery C. Meigs and the Building of the Nation's Capital.* Athens: University of Ohio Press for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 2001.

General Correspondence and Reports Relating to National and Post Cemeteries, 1865-ca. 1914, Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Holt, Dean W. *American Military Cemeteries: A Comprehensive Illustrated Guide to the Hallowed Grounds of the United States, Including Cemeteries Overseas.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1992.

Message of the President of the United States [to Congress]. Washington, DC: GPO, 1862-63.

Meyer, Richard E., ed. *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture.* Logan: Utah State University Press, 1992.

National Cemetery Historical File, Department of Memorial Affairs, Record Group 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Sloane, David Charles. *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History.* Baltimore:

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Zipf, Catherine W. "Marking Union Victory in the South: The Construction of the National Cemetery System." In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, edited by Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003.

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.