

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

GRAFTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. WV-1-A

Location: 431 Walnut Street, Grafton, Taylor County, West Virginia.

The coordinates for the Grafton National Cemetery, Lodge are 80.030548 W and 39.336145 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 Grafton National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1876-77; demolished ca. 1957.

Builder/Contractor: George W. Lambden.

Description: The lodge built for Grafton National Cemetery in the 1876-77 was one of the Second Empire style buildings erected according to standardized plans issued by the Office of the Quartermaster General and strongly associated with Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. The standard plan called for an L-shaped footprint and three rooms on each floor. The office and living room, and kitchen or dining room, occupied the first floor while the bedrooms were on the second. The space of L provided room for a porch. Early changes to these buildings often included the introduction of indoor plumbing in the form of a bathroom on the second floor and generally an ell for an updated kitchen. Typically there was a basement under the three principal rooms, and a bulkhead entrance to the basement in addition to the connecting interior stair.

The foundation and walls of the Grafton lodge were stone; the fenestration was marked by quoins. The double-hung sash was wood. Dormers pierced the slate-covered mansard roof and two brick chimneys punctuated the roofline. A shallow hip roof covered in standing seam metal (usually tin) surmounted the mansard. The doors were wood and paneled on both faces. Photographs show a small ell that was stuccoed over and covered by a gable roof. The door into the ell was tucked under a porch; in historic photographs, the door appeared to be wood and was glazed over the lock rail. "1876" was carved into the stone lintels over the first-floor windows. The window sills were stone as well.

Maintenance ledgers indicate that the kitchen ell was added in the 1920s, around the same time as the bathroom. From 1932 to 1934 many changes were made to the building, including the

laying of oak flooring in the office and living room, installing a new stair and windows, putting on a new front porch, raising the chimney, changing the radiators, repairing the skylight, and improving the mechanical systems. In 1937 a laundry tub was installed. Generally these were put in the basement, but the ledger does not specify where inside the building the tub went. In 1942 and 1943, linoleum flooring was put down in the kitchen and office and the heating system was overhauled. A decade later further renovations and repairs came to the lodge, and as late as 1959, the building was maintained. In 1959 a partition with folding doors was put in the office along with a new ceiling with recessed lighting and paneling for the walls. By 1970 little or no entries were made in the ledgers which suggests the Veterans Administration adopted another method of accounting for the buildings' maintenance.

Site Context: On the 1892 map of the national cemetery, the lodge and service building are shown in the southern section of the large, square lot, and southwest of the main entrance from the southeast boundary line. The principal entrance to the L-plan lodge was by way of the entrance porch at the north corner of the building. The porch was connected to the entrance drive by a walkway. A secondary walk followed the southeast elevation of the lodge and turned northwest to wrap the rear (southwest) elevation and provide access to the door at the south end of the southwest elevation as well as to the service building, likely the multi-purpose toolhouse, off the south corner of the building. Today the southeast boundary is Walnut Street and the entrance drive bisects the cemetery grounds, extending beyond the lower tier where the lodge was located to the northwest edge. Just beyond the north to west boundary line of the cemetery are railroad tracks.

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 Second Empire style, L-plan lodge constructed in Grafton followed this definitive design, and 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 all 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 Second Empire style lodge built in Grafton National Cemetery is significant as an example of the definitive L-plan design issued by the Office of the Quartermaster. The renovations that saw a kitchen ell and a bathroom added are representative of the Quartermaster's effort to update the L-plan buildings, even as new models were designed and built in other cemeteries.

Grafton National Cemetery emerged in 1867 when the War Department charged Major R.C. Bates with creating a burial ground for the Union soldiers who had died and were buried throughout West Virginia. Just over three acres were chosen in 1867 for the consolidated burying ground. The property was acquired outright in 1874. The condemnation of the land in 1871 suggests some reluctance or negotiation for rights to the property by the then owner, James A. Yates. Yates's heirs conveyed the title to the government. It was during this period that the first lodge was laid out and constructed. The lodge was described in the records of the Office of the Quartermaster General as a wood "cottage" containing two rooms, plus a kitchen, over a cellar. The one-story, temporary lodge was built about 1868, and some repair work occurred in 1874 when the weathering caused the front door to warp. Around this time, too, the building was noted as being one story with a 10' x 12' wing.

In 1876 Geo. W. Lambden won the contract for erecting a stone lodge, one and one-half stories in height and covered by a mansard roof, according to the standard plan of the time. The Quartermaster's Department accepted the lodge in Grafton as complete in May 1877. A change-order for the kind of lumber used was made in August 1876, and in 1881, the inspection

indicated the lodge had not been painted since its construction and some repairs to the plaster were underway. The inspector called for two coats of paint to the building and stipulated that the steps and flooring of the rear porch be removed (and presumably replaced).

Because of the mountainous terrain, the cemetery is terraced and the lower sections of the slope became the first gravesites. The remains of deceased Union soldiers were reinterred, including those exhumed from Maple Avenue Cemetery and Clarksburg. In 1903 the body of Thornesbury Bailey Brown was moved to Grafton; Brown allegedly was the first Union casualty of the war dying after an exchange with a sentry near a Baltimore and Ohio Railroad bridge in Fetterman. He died on May 22, 1861.

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.