

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

NASHVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. TN-5-A

Location: 1420 Gallatin Road, South, Madison, Davidson County, Tennessee.

The coordinates for the Nashville National Cemetery, Lodge are 86.722649 W and 36.239011 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 Nashville National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1931.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: The lodge was built in the Dutch Colonial Revival style notable for its tile and stuccoed walls and gambrel roof. In 1931, the design for the Dutch Colonial Revival lodge expanded the long shed-roofed dormer in the front slope of the gambrel roof to include four windows: two paired double-hung sash with multiple lights in the upper sash. Another dormer punctuated the rear slope; it housed two double-hung sash windows each glazed with six-over-one lights. The Nashville lodge is one and one-half stories in height, with the upper floor tucked under the gambrel, and it has a concrete foundation. The gambrel roof is covered in asbestos shingles. The south front façade is characterized by the low dormer on the second floor, and by the integral porch on the first floor. The porch is also the entry into the building. A paired double-hung sash window with each glazed with nine-over-one lights completes the façade. The porch was screened.

Maintenance records kept for the cemetery document the repairs to the lodge from its construction in 1931 to the end of the ledger books, in the 1960s. An early entry dated November 1931 recorded the application of tin to the roof of the back porch. No description of the roof form was given, and in historic photographs, the porch appears to be covered by a flat roof.

Not long after the lodge was completed a storm damaged the roof and two chimneys; these were repaired in 1934. The roof remained tight until 1952 when some other repairs were needed. Work on the porches began in 1938 when the back porch was rebuilt; its roof and gutters and downspouts fared well, not slated for replacement until 1957. The steps to the rear porch were redone in 1968. Asphalt tile was put in the sun porch and the insulation was added in 1948. Nine

cloth awnings were installed in 1941; these are shown in one of the historic photographs associated with the maintenance files for the cemetery. The building was rescreened in 1957. Miscellaneous improvements were made, such as the railings (1968), cabinetry (1965), painting (various), electric lights for the office (1946), and tile in the bathroom (1966). The mechanical systems were also updated periodically, including the water, heating, and electrical components, as part of the maintenance program.

Site Context: With a square footprint, Nashville National Cemetery covers 64.5 acres of undulating ground and is bisected by a railroad running north to south through the grounds. Meandering drives divide the cemetery into burial sections of various naturalistic shapes. A monumental archway marks the main entrance on Gallatin Pike today, and the lodge, office, utility building, and flagpole are located in the far northwest corner of the cemetery, adjacent to the north boundary wall (section y on one map). The Second Empire style lodge is shown in this location in 1892, having replaced the 1867 temporary wood lodge in 1872, only to be replaced in 1931 by the Dutch Colonial Revival style lodge. The Dutch Colonial Revival style lodge faces south to the cemetery and the office and flagpole are to the east. The utility complex is farther to the west.

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. The Nashville lodge is significant as an example of the second iteration of the Dutch Colonial Revival plan, exhibiting the larger dormer and retaining the floor plan of the initial design.

Created in 1866, Nashville National Cemetery is distinguished by the railroad tracks that run through it and by the monumental arch at its entrance. The cemetery's location is said to have been selected by General George Thomas to remind those traveling to Nashville, either by train or by the turnpike, of the sacrifices made for the preservation of the country every time they entered the city. The transportation nodes that served Thomas's poetic ends also made the city a valuable supply depot during the war. Nashville remained in Union control for most of the war, although in December 1864 the Confederate army tried to retake the city. Approximately 6000 Confederates and 3400 Union soldiers lost their lives in the Battle of Nashville.

By 1867 there were several buildings within the fenced parameter of the cemetery, including temporary quarters for the superintendent. This frame building became "old" by 1872 when a

representative from the U.S.C.T. (U.S. Colored Troops) community living near the cemetery petitioned to have one of the two buildings on the grounds for use for a school. They joined together to purchase land and had no funds left for the building. The only suitable structure was the temporary frame lodge, which the Quartermaster agreed to move for them. It is unclear if they surplused the building for the community, or if the Quartermaster offered the building to the community for a fee, as first suggested. Construction on the new lodge was underway by this time; intermediate housing for the superintendent came in the form of another temporary frame lodge erected around 1870 and removed in 1874. This second lodge was located near the main entrance; it was a one-story building.

In 1872, the Quartermaster let a contract for a L-plan lodge in the Second Empire style in Nashville National Cemetery. This lodge was constructed in the location of the first temporary lodge, built in 1867 and deaccessioned to the black community living nearby, and so also was in proximity to the cemetery's entrance. (On maps, it is in the northwest corner of the grounds and the main entrance is to the east). After Jones and Snow won the contract to build the stone L-plan lodge, the Quartermaster's Department issued revised plans and specifications for the job. These work-order changes were to accommodate the attic and mansard of one and one-half story lodge plan. The contractors, Jones and Snow, asked for an additional \$1123 to cover anticipated increases in labor and materials costs for the lodges at Nashville and at Stones River (Murfreesboro). The Quartermaster General counter-offered \$173.60, bringing the cost of the Nashville lodge to \$2938.60. The communication between the contractors and the Quartermaster's Department speaks to the shift that occurred in the design for the Second Empire style lodge that had not yet manifested itself fully in the specifications. It also hints at the broader questions within the Office of the Quartermaster General about how to implement the commemorative landscape they were creating across the country.

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.