

## HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

### BALTIMORE NATIONAL CEMETERY, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S RESIDENCE

**HALS No. MD-4-B**

Location: 5501 Frederick Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland.

The coordinates for the Baltimore National Cemetery, Assistant Superintendent's Residence are 76.708478 W and 39.277400 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 Baltimore National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1940.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: The Assistant Superintendent's Residence was renovated in 1940 under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration. The one and one-half story building is Tudor Revival in appearance with a stone first floor and half timbering above. The cross gable roof and dormer windows are covered in patterned slate, adding to the richness of the revival-style form. The principal elevation faces east, and the footprint of the building measures approximately 19' x 30'. In the east front gable there is a paired, double-hung wood sash window with each sash glazed with six lights. The first-floor level has an entrance porch with columnar supports and decorative brackets to give an arcaded form. The porch roof appears flat, or possibly with a low pitch, in the historic photographs. The entrance to the building from the east front appears to be a wood double door, with multi-light glazing above the lock rail and panels below. The east end of the south elevation has a dormer window with a gable roof and a paired sash window; likely the sash is wood and double-hung with multi-light glazing as those in the east elevation. Just west of the dormer window is the south gable with half timbering over a stone first floor. The first-floor of the west elevation has a stuccoed and half-timbered addition; perhaps this was a porch that was later enclosed. There are two windows in the west elevation of this addition, and this is the view of the building from Taylor Street. Inside, the floors are pine. They were refinished in 1968.

Records of the Veterans Administration from the 1940s and through the 1960s outline the routine maintenance for the building. It was regularly painted on the exterior and on the interior, and Venetian blinds were installed in 1948. The gutters and downspouts were overhauled in 1949, and repaired again in 1958 when the roofs and gutters on all buildings in the cemetery were

repaired. A hot water heater was installed in 1949, and new appliances for the kitchen arrived in 1965 and 1966.

Site Context: The Assistant Superintendent's Residence is the southernmost building in the northwest section of the cemetery and an area bounded generally by Taylor Street on the west, Frederick Avenue on the north, and the entrance or portal drive on the east. In this area of the cemetery, west of the entrance gates on Frederick and extending south to the parking area, are the lodge, the office and utility building, and the Assistant Superintendent's Residence as well as the parking area and service building. The picturesque portal drive winds throughout the grounds, and a roundabout possibly for a flagstaff no longer in-situ is in the southwest section of the cemetery, closest to Taylor Street and to the Short Line Trail. The Assistant Superintendent's Residence remains in its original location.

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.

Dedicated in 1941, Baltimore National Cemetery overlooks Frederick Road and afforded views of the harbor, views that during the War of 1812 witnessed the arrival of the British fleet as it sailed for Fort McHenry in 1814. The national cemetery is located on the site of an eighteenth-century estate known as Cloud Capped and the ca. 1810 country house on the property was expanded in the nineteenth century into a picturesque ramble with a tower. This house was taken down in the late 1930s and a lodge for the cemetery superintendent was built in its stead. The two-story, side gabled brick section of the eighteenth-century house provided a model for the design of the lodge (HALS No. MD-4-A). The residence for the assistant superintendent was fashioned from an existing structure on the grounds. Like the lodge, it was expanded by WPA funds and labor in the late 1930s to 1940. The cemetery consists of over 72 acres and was planned to provide burial space for veterans since space was no longer available in nearby Loudon Park National Cemetery. The first interment was in 1936, and the superintendent was on-duty by 1937. The Tudor Revival style lodge renovated for use by his assistant is significant as a singular example of the style found in the national cemetery system and as one of the buildings known to be improved through the WPA.

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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.