

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

HAMPTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. VA-6-C

Location: Cemetery Road at Marshall Avenue, Hampton, Elizabeth City County, Virginia.

The coordinates for the Hampton National Cemetery, Lodge are 76.325906 W and 37.019519 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 Hampton National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1940.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: The present, Colonial Revival style lodge replaced the (1872) Second Empire style lodge that was built by the Office of the Quartermaster General on a standardized plan throughout the national cemetery system in the 1870s and 1880s.

The present lodge is one of two lodges constructed in the Colonial Revival style; the other example of the type is in Annapolis (HALS No. MD-6). The change in style from the Second Empire to a Colonial Revival, Cape Cod form for the lodge was done in an effort to highlight regional preferences and vernacular traditions, here, those of the Chesapeake, by the Quartermaster in the twentieth century.

As the Second Empire style lodge was, the Colonial Revival style building is one and one-half stories. The second-floor rooms illuminated by dormer windows. There are four dormer windows in the side gable roof; each contains a double-hung sash glazed with six-over-six lights. The fenestration of the front (southwest) façade resembles that for a duplex, with two doors opening onto the wide landing for the steps leading to the front walkway. A sash window, also double-hung and glazed with six-over-six lights, is placed the outside of the doors and creates a four-bay wide elevation. Alleviating, visually, the wide space between the second and third bays (the doors) is a small round window (ox-eye or bull's eye). There are two interior end chimneys. The side entrance is marked by a run of several steps, with an iron railing, and a wood door glazed above the lock rail and set in a frame beneath a glazed transom. The (northeast) rear of the building features paired sash windows on the first floor and a rear porch integrated into the main

building by, under cover of, a projecting or continuous roof. The side gable roof, and its extension over the rear porch, is covered in asbestos based shingles.

Records of the Veterans Administration note maintenance efforts at the lodge and were kept routinely from the 1920s through 1960s. Painting occurred periodically, as did cleaning, scraping, and renewing screens, gutters, and woodwork. Rubber stair treads were mounted in 1941 and replaced in 1957. Redwood door hoods (1948) and awnings (1951) were installed, although later, in 1955, aluminum awnings were used. Venetian blinds were put in the windows in 1948; in that year, most efforts concentrated on the basement spaces with attempts to waterproof it and with cleaning and neatening of the rooms for the furnace and coal bin. The coal chute was removed in 1956. The porch was screened in 1950 and enclosed with jalousies and glass in 1958. Twenty aluminum storm windows were purchased and attached in 1953, and the French doors were replaced in 1954. The linoleum floor in the kitchen was changed in 1953 and a tile floor was laid in the office in 1955.

Site Context: Located at the entrance to the cemetery, the lodge faces southwest toward Cemetery Drive. The roadway terminates at the flagpole; there is an internal drive that skirts the perimeter of the cemetery and this drive passes on the northwest side elevation of the lodge. A hedge and tree line define the south and east corners of the lodge yard to separate it from the burial ground, and a small parking area is in front of the building.

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, residential standards rendered the L-plan obsolete. Advances in plumbing and heating technologies, and an increase in the average standard of living for many Americans, made the L-plan outdated for expectations about the appropriate level of domestic sanitation and comfort 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.

Characterized by a symmetrical front facade with double entrances—one for office, one for private quarters—and four gabled dormers projecting from a steeply sloping roof, the Colonial Revival design used in Hampton and Annapolis included the standard interior spaces: office, living room, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, and bathroom. A rear porch under a partial saltbox roof supplemented the living quarters. The Colonial Revival style lodge is significant as one of two constructed in the national cemeteries, and as a signifier of the shift in the Quartermaster's building program in the twentieth century.

An earlier lodge, seen in historic photographs in records of the Veterans Administration, built at Hampton National Cemetery belonged to the era of national cemetery planning that produced the mansard-roof, L-shaped designs and one that was recognizable as part of a particular national landscape of commemoration. In Hampton, the nucleus of the national cemetery was a small burying ground set aside for those who died in the military hospital. It was declared a national cemetery in 1866 and a temporary wood lodge for the superintendent was constructed shortly thereafter. This was referred to as the "old lodge" in early 1872 when it was moved to make way for the building of a new lodge in the Second Empire style made of stone. At that time, too, permission was sought of the Quartermaster General to sell the old wood fence. The new lodge was a one and one-half story brick and stone building with a mansard roof covered in slate. There was a water table of stone, but this building lacked the quoining at the corners and fenestration seen in other examples of the type. The wood sash windows were double-hung and glazed with six-over-six lights. At the time of the file photograph, the porch was screened and the cast iron Gettysburg Address plaque was affixed to the wall. In 1878 repairs were made and painting was completed, and in 1881 some alterations were made for ventilation purposes.

Records of the Quartermaster General reveal that the contract for erecting the lodge at Hampton was concurrent to those for Wilmington, North Carolina (HALS No. NC-5) and New Bern, North Carolina (HALS No. NC-1). F.A. Gibbons was the low bidder, with estimated costs for the Hampton lodge at \$2980. (Note \$2980 is the bid after the inclusion of \$550 for mansard roofs. The original bid was \$2430. See summary in Wilmington dockets). The call for proposals requested estimates for a one-story building, not the one and one-half story, Second Empire type, and the contractors were asked for a price to change the plan. Gibbons was again the low bidder, at \$550 per lodge, and the change to the mansard roof was authorized. Gibbons's competitor, K.A. Murphy, estimated costs for the change at around \$1000 per lodge. His might be more accurate since Gibbons ran into trouble over his low cost estimate for the enclosing wall in Wilmington, in charging for the coping, and it was canceled in 1871. Regardless, Murphy won a contract to build seven lodges, and it was as the next phase of building marked by Gibbons's bond that the change in lodge plan from one to one and one-half stories was made.

Hampton belonged to an important naval complex reaching from Norfolk to Fort Monroe, and beyond. It was strategically important to both the Union and Confederate forces, and the Union's successful naval blockades suffocated port cities throughout the South, from Hampton to St. Augustine to New Orleans. The 1862 battle between the *Virginia* and the *Monitor* occurred in waters nearby and proximity to Fort Monroe meant that Hampton was also a hospital center for the sick and for those wounded in war. The burying ground associated with the military hospital gave rise to the national cemetery in 1866.

Hampton National Cemetery also served as the burying ground for the Southern Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers until an outbreak of yellow fever in 1898. During the epidemic, the Southern Branch campus was under quarantine and, out of necessity, officials established a cemetery for the burial of the deceased. Twenty-two men died from the disease. This cemetery (today, Hampton VAMC) was recorded for the HABS/HAER/HALS collection as HALS No. VA-7. Both cemeteries are in proximity to Hampton University and Interstate 64; the university campus surrounds Hampton National Cemetery and abuts the Southern Branch facility.

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.