

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to KEOKUK NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HABS No. IA-197-A

Location: 1701 J Street, Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa.

The coordinates for the Keokuk National Cemetery, Lodge are 91.406890 W and 40.398264 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 Keokuk National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1871.

Description: The lodge is a one and one-half story brick masonry building in the Second Empire style. The foundations are stone. Detailing of the main floor is rendered in brick, including the quoining at the corners and the arched window heads on the first floor and for the dormers. The characteristic mansard roof was originally covered in slate, and the shallow hip was covered in tin. The first-floor windows were wood sash initially. The lodge is L-shaped in plan, designed with a porch in the space of the L at the northeast corner. The principal facades looked north and east, joined by the entrance porch. All that remains of the porch today is a concrete slab, poured in 1936. Initially, the office and the living room opened onto this space and it was the entry point into the building. Exterior doors to the porch were replaced in 1936 concurrent to the change in the porch flooring; original doors were made of wood, paneled on both faces, and accentuated with robust molding. An early change to the lodge came with the kitchen addition, first built of wood frame and expanded, in brick, in 1931. Without the kitchen ell, the lodge had three rooms on each floor, plus the porch and the cellar.

The mid-1920s, the plumbing systems in the lodge were upgraded and the bathrooms were modernized. Work on the bathrooms usually precipitated other remodeling, such as a shift in the walls of the stair to accommodate the new space. At Keokuk, the stair was redone and plans indicate it was moved. A stainless steel flue was inserted in the furnace chimney in 1941, and after World War II ended, further improvements were made. These included the eight new window sashes and two new door sills. In the basement, the coal chute and window well received attention in 1946, while the roof was repaired in the next year. In 1947 the first floor was redecorated, with projects such as installing linoleum in the bathroom and new oak floors in the dining and living rooms. In 1948 the basement walls were re-plastered, and the upper floor

ADDENDUM TO
KEOKUK NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE
HABS No. IA-197-A
(page 2)

redecorated. In the mid-1950s, the upper windows were replaced, the bathroom upgraded, Venetian blinds were installed, and other maintenance chores completed. In 1957 cracks in the masonry walls and foundation were repaired and in 1961 the exterior was painted.

Water damage prompted the work on the gutters and repairs to the living room wall in particular. In 1963 the residual effects of the water leak were erased with the repairs to the walls and ceilings of the kitchen, dining room, and office. In 1966 another wave of remodeling occurred to update the lodge interiors. The office was paneled and the ceiling tiled; the dining room ceiling was also lowered and tiled. The living room floor was replaced, and the floors refinished. Electrical wiring and outlets were installed. The exterior doors were replaced, substituting for those installed in the 1930s. The false fireplace in the living room was taken out. The bathroom was renovated as well.

The superintendent moved out of the lodge in 1982 and the building is vacant.

Site Context: Present day Keokuk National Cemetery is divided by a ravine, with the original burying ground to the east and main entrance gates opening at the northeast boundary from Ridge Street. The entrance drive curves gently from the northeast to the south and loops around the flagpole. The walkway from the lodge connects to the drive at the southwest corner of the loop. The L-plan lodge faced north and east, and the entrance porch was located in the northeast corner of the building in the space created by the L shape. A hipped roof addition to the south gave the building a T-shape footprint in the 1962 map, but the L-plan of the lodge is intact. In 1962, and again in contemporary aerials, a maintenance building is shown off the northeast corner of the lodge. In a historic map from 1892, the service buildings were located to the south and east of the lodge.

West of the ravine, graves are located in the southwest quadrant of the cemetery and that section of the cemetery is accessed through another entrance at the west boundary from J 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.

The brick lodge built for the superintendent at Keokuk National Cemetery is significant in the evolution of designs for the lodges as one of the first constructed to perhaps the best known of those plans, those for the Second Empire style, L-shape structures. Dating to 1870-71, the lodge is the only one constructed with the round-headed windows and doors, features drawn in Edward Clark's original design. It also has a straight-sided mansard. These features distinguish the lodge at Keokuk from the others in the Second Empire style. In addition, the location of the chimney between the living room and kitchen differed from its only contemporary, the lodge in Richmond, Virginia. The lodge at Keokuk National Cemetery is a particularly important representative of the building type and of the building practices of the Quartermaster's office.

Located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Des Moines rivers, Keokuk was a strategic campsite for the Union Army. Supplies and troops passed through Keokuk on their way to the South, and many casualties of the war returned for treatment in one of the five Army hospitals established here. The initial interments in the cemetery were those who died in those facilities.

ADDENDUM TO
KEOKUK NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE
HABS No. IA-197-A
(page 5)

The cemetery was then a municipal cemetery known as Oakland and the section where the Union men were buried became known as Soldiers' Burial Ground. This lot was donated to the government and additional acreage was purchased. Plans for a temporary, frame lodge were drafted, although the building was not erected and the superintendent rented quarters in town. This arrangement sufficed until January 1871 when the Office of the Quartermaster General determined that a one and one-half story masonry lodge should be constructed on the cemetery premises. The brick lodge cost \$2250 to build, and the contractor was John Perdew. The brick lodge at Keokuk has the arched openings associated with the original concept for the lodge, before the Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs and the Architect of the Capitol Extension Edward Clark discussed simplifying the design to make it more cost efficient. The brick lodge remained in good order throughout the decade, as noted in the inspection reports, and remains on the premises today.

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

ADDENDUM TO
KEOKUK NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE
HABS No. IA-197-A
(page 6)

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.

Note: Documentation for the cemetery landscape can also be found under HALS No. IA-1; drawings of the superintendent's lodge were completed prior to the photographic survey of national cemeteries and so this short form report for the lodge joins the pre-existing HABS record.