

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

KNOXVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. TN-2-A

Location: 939 Tyson Street, Northwest, Knoxville, Knox County, Tennessee.

The coordinates for the Knoxville National Cemetery are 83.927511 W and 35.976350 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 Knoxville National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1907, razed 1993.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: Knoxville National Cemetery had a series of lodges for the Superintendent, with the first built in 1868. This temporary structure had a three-room, linear plan and was wood-frame. It was razed in 1874 upon completion of the stone, one and one-half story, Second Empire style lodge. The materials from the wood-frame lodge were salvaged for the construction of a tool house. A sketch plan reveals that the Second Empire style lodge was to be placed across the main entrance drive from the old lodge, and its location southeast of the main drive was confirmed in the 1892 map of the cemetery grounds. In 1907 a Four-Square lodge of brick was constructed. It was demolished in 1993.

The Four-Square was two stories under a hip roof. Two interior chimneys served the fireplaces inside. The foundations of the building were stone and concrete, while the walls were brick. There was an eyebrow dormer in the front and rear slopes of the roof. The windows were wood, and appear to be double-hung sash glazed with six-over-two lights on the second floor, and two-over-two lights on the first floor. The sills look to be made of stone. Historic photographs in the maintenance files for the national cemeteries show the windows with and without shutters, and they indicate that the lodge was in proximity to the perimeter wall.

Ledgers kept for the Veterans Administration tracked not only the routine maintenance but also renovations and alterations to the building fabric that occurred between the 1920s and 1960s. In the 1907 Four-Square lodge, the mechanical systems were periodically replaced, such as the plumbing in 1931 and the introduction of steam heat in 1942 and the re-wiring of 1946, and it was systematically painted, wallpapered, and cleaned. The bathroom was renovated in 1947, and

a lone toilet was installed in the basement in 1941. The steps to the rear porch were replaced with concrete steps in 1931. The front porch steps survived longer, only replaced in 1951. The porch floor was replaced in 1960. The pillars of the front porch gave way to aluminum posts in 1965. The porch roof was repaired in 1946, the main roof in 1950 and 1955. The cornice was fixed in 1951. The windows received new screens (1931), new shades (1952), and Venetian blinds (1957). The floors were refinished in the 1940s and again in 1958, but were replaced altogether in 1963. The office and kitchen floors were tiled by this time.

Site Context: In 1892 the cemetery was bounded by Jenning Street and Gray Cemetery on the southeast, Holston (now Tyson) to the northeast, Munson (now Bernard) to the northwest, and Jacksboro (now Cooper) to the southwest. The Second Empire style lodge completed in 1874 was located near the main entrance at Jacksboro and southeast of the transverse drive extending from Jacksboro to Holston. It faced northwest toward the cemetery drive and the tool house was placed to the northeast of the lodge. The rostrum was located north of the entrance from Holston and placed along the perimeter wall. The graves were laid out in a circular pattern radiating outward from the flagstaff to a gravel path forming the circumference of the burial ground. Two gravel pathways divided the burial ground into four sections; the pathways ran on axis from northeast to southwest connecting the entrances at Jacksboro and Holston and from northwest to southeast within the circular burial ground. The pathways intersected at the flagstaff.

Today, the main entrance gates and stone perimeter wall with the iron fence survive along Tyson Street (formerly Holston), but the entrance from Jacksboro and the section along the southwest wall where the 1868 lodge and 1874 lodge and tool house stood are now part of the burial grounds of the cemetery. There is no gravel pathway from the entrance gates to Jacksboro, however, the internal path from the northwest to southeast appears to have been paved. The gravel pathway forming the outer edge of the 1890s circular burial ground also has been paved. Photographs indicate that the Four-Square built in 1907 was located near the stone and iron fenced perimeter wall, and given the location of the current service building and break in the rows of headstones marking the gravesites, likely the Four-Square was placed in the north corner of the cemetery.

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 Four-Square plan used by the Quartermaster between 1906 and 1910 was first tried in wood-frame buildings with double verandas in Florence, South Carolina, and Barrancas, Florida, and then repeated in six lodges made of brick. The brick Four-Squares are found in Gettysburg, Knoxville, Camp Butler, Little Rock, Andrew Johnson, Tennessee, and San Antonio. The Four-Square plan provided space for the hall, office, parlor, dining room, pantry and kitchen on the first floor, and space for the hall, four bedrooms and bathroom on the second floor. These were nearly identical in plan and form, each with center hallways and hip roofs and a projecting room for the office marked by a balustrade along its roofline. The lodge built in 1907 in Knoxville followed this formula, and like the wood-frame Four-Square in Barrancas, the Knoxville lodge was demolished in the 1990s. The Knoxville lodge, like the others erected along the Four-Square plan, derives its significance as part of a collective example of an early twentieth-century house form adapted for use in the national cemeteries. The construction of the Four-Squares marks a point of departure from the long standing L-plan lodge.

Knoxville National Cemetery was established in 1863 and originally consisted of just over nine acres in the north part of the city. The Assistant Quartermaster Captain E.B. Chamberlain, laid out the cemetery grounds so that from the beginning Knoxville looked like a national cemetery with organized burials, a flagstaff, and pathways. After the war, as the Union dead were located and reinterred in the national cemeteries created for them, remains of soldiers found buried at battle sites, camps, and hospitals in eastern Tennessee, southwestern Virginia, southeastern Kentucky, and western North Carolina were transferred to Knoxville. The temporary wood lodge built on in 1867 or 1868 was replaced with a Second Empire style masonry lodge in the 1870s as the commemorative landscape matured. This stone lodge followed the Meigs plan and included three rooms in the cellar. Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General indicate that Bearden and Patterson received the contract to build the Second Empire style lodge, and they built in 1873-74. By 1876 the “usual complaint” about water leaking through the upper windows was made, and in 1877, the inspector recommended changing the window sash like was done at Fort Scott rather than adding exterior blinds to mitigate the problem. In 1884 part of the roof framing was blown off and in 1886, although the roof was “tight”, there was still some residual leaking around the chimney of the office attributed to the storm damage. This L-plan lodge remained in service until the Four-Square lodge was constructed in 1907. In the 1909 survey, the L-plan lodge needed some exterior repairs and was used by the Assistant Superintendent. The new Four-Square lodge was in good condition, with the lack of (electrical) lighting the only deficiency recorded.

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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.