

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

LEBANON NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. KY-3-A

Location: 20 Highway 208, Lebanon, Marion County, Kentucky.

The coordinates for the Lebanon National Cemetery, Lodge are 85.269380 W and 37.552468 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 Lebanon National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1875.

Builder/Contractor: William T. Foster.

Description: The Second Empire style lodge was constructed of complex masonry along the standard plan and design of the Quartermaster General that specified a one and one-half story building with a mansard roof and rooms arranged in an L-shaped floor plan. The principal elevation faces northwest. On the first floor are the office, a kitchen and living room; the office and living room open onto a porch set into the space of the L in plan, at the west corner of the building. Historic maps show that a small porch or landing opened off the kitchen at the east end of the southeast (rear) elevation. The second-floor rooms are behind the mansard roof and are illuminated by dormer windows. These rooms mirror those below in dimension, and they served as bedrooms for the superintendent and his family when the building was occupied. There is a full basement that adds another three rooms to the interior space.

The foundations of the building are made of stone, and the walls of brick. The lintels and sills of the first-floor sash windows are stone, while the corners of the building have quoins rendered in brick. Inside the building, the walls are plaster on lath and the floors are wood on the primary levels. The basement floor has a concrete finish. The double-hung, wood sash windows are glazed with six-over-six lights. The doors are wood and paneled.

Maintenance records for the cemetery note the presence of a front porch (10' x 16') and a rear porch (5' x 10') at the time the cemetery was transferred to the Veterans Administration. In the mid-1920s, improvements to the water systems allowed the installation of a bathroom on the second floor. In 1932 a kitchen was added; photographs associated with the maintenance files show this as a one-story, gable-roofed ell on a concrete foundation. Aerial photographs indicate

that the kitchen addition was built at the east end of the southeast elevation. The brick walls also had quoining at the corners and the fenestration repeated the wood sash and glazing of the main house. This ell is the only significant change to the floor plan recorded on the ledgers.

Other changes include upgrading the mechanical systems in the lodge, such as the plumbing, heating, and electrical systems and changing the radiators, plus routine chores like painting and repairing the plaster, replacing sash cords, cleaning and renewing gutters and downspouts, and even mending door and window frames. Oak flooring was installed in 1932, and linoleum flooring was put in the kitchen in 1940. The wood floors were refinished in 1950 and again in 1962. The kitchen was remodeled in 1961, after the bathroom was redone (in 1959). Window screens were installed and repaired, and then replaced with storm windows in 1959. Storm doors were installed at this time as well. The northeast cornice was repaired in 1942, and all the exterior woodwork sheathed in aluminum siding in 1966. The front porch was enclosed with aluminum awnings and the brick corner post was rebuilt. The cast iron Gettysburg Address plaque was affixed to the building in 1963.

The mansard roof was covered in slate originally with decorative tile patterns; the roof was replaced in 1961 at the same time the kitchen was remodeled and the kitchen roof was scraped and painted. The shallow hip roof that surmounts the mansard on the main building was covered in tin originally and the ledgers note that it was painted at routine intervals.

Site Context: At the time of its designation as a national cemetery, the burial ground at Lebanon consisted of two acres in a triangular shaped plot. The main entrance to the cemetery was at the northern corner, with gates opening from the road (State Route 208), and the lot was enclosed by a low stone wall. The lodge is in proximity to the entrance, facing northwest to the entrance. The entrance drive runs past the southwest (side) elevation. The cemetery grounds were expanded and now include fifteen acres. To accommodate the increased size, a new entrance to the cemetery was created. It also opens from State Route 208.

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.

Within the continuum of architectural design by the Quartermaster's office, the lodge at Lebanon National Cemetery represents a seminal moment. The lodge, along with five others in 1875, was constructed under the oversight of the Quartermaster's department and built to a standardized plan and building style. The Second Empire style, L-plan lodges came to symbolize the architectural program for the national cemeteries as distinguishing markers in the landscape as well as recognizable cues to the larger, commemorative program. They also are a product of U.S. Army efficiency and are important examples of a standardization occurring throughout the construction industry. The Lebanon lodge also is significant as an intact example of the L-plan design, built in brick with a stone foundation.

Lebanon National Cemetery was established in 1867, and as part of the effort to locate and reinter the Union dead, the remains of over eight hundred soldiers are buried here. Two hundred and eighty-one of them are unknown. During the Civil War, in 1863, General John Hunt Morgan came through Lebanon and destroyed the county clerk's office and all the records. The land of the cemetery became a burying ground around that time. A stone wall enclosed the grounds, and a temporary wood-frame lodge for the superintendent was built in 1868. The frame lodge was one story, and its floor plan included just three rooms.

As the cemetery landscape evolved, a new lodge was desired. Yet the footprint of a masonry lodge delineated according to specifications of the Office of the Quartermaster General prohibited construction of the lodge on the site. There was not enough room. Permission was sought to take down part of the wall to accommodate the lodge in early 1874. The wall would be rebuilt once the lodge was complete. The Quartermaster awarded the contract for the construction of a brick lodge to William T. Foster in spring 1875. Foster estimated his costs at \$2900.

By August 1875 construction stalled. Foster noted the rainy weather, but reported the foundations were laid and the walls were raised to the first-floor joists. The inspection by Civil Engineer Clarke produced a difference of opinion about the window openings. Clarke wanted quoining on windows, but Foster relied on the specifications that called for quoining only at the corners and facing at the openings. In order to make the quoining work for both the doors and windows, and be in alignment with the brick courses and corners, the window frames would have to be a different size. Foster inquired if Clarke was acting under orders from the Quartermaster, as the change would delay the work and the sashes, frames, and shutters were already made. Clarke wrote to the Quartermaster about Foster's interpretation of events, commenting that Foster had not changed the length of the frames despite their conversations about it. Historic photographs reveal that there is no quoining on the windows. Other alterations were implemented more quickly, such as the substitution of marbleized iron mantels and the furnishing of finished iron grates. The lodge was accepted as complete by December 1875.

Six months later, inspectors for the Quartermaster deemed its acceptance premature. The walls settled. This generated cracking in the plaster and pulled the floor from the baseboards and walls. The drying of the likely unseasoned wood used for the joists exacerbated this separation. The plastering of the inside walls and ceilings was described as the "most miserable" in how it was applied and in the materials used. The paint was still "sticky." The cellar floors suffered the worst; they were limestone coated with concrete and the finish had worn off. Repairs commenced, and by the following year progress was reported. The cellar was in "excellent" condition and used as a kitchen and dining room; the office, on the other hand, wanted attention. Even the furnishings were shabby. The analysis of the building's remaining defects was more nuanced, attributing the settling and material choices to the kind of construction and lack of an engineer on-site. If a mixture of lime and plaster of Paris was used on the walls, rather than the lime and sand, the walls would be brighter. To mitigate the gap between the floor boards and the baseboard, the addition of a quarter-round molding was suggested. By May 1878 alternatives about the floor were still sought; one option was wedging the floor from below however due to its expense altering the baseboard in some way was preferred. In 1909 these initial problems were corrected and the lodge was described as only in "good condition."

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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.