

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

LITTLE ROCK NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. AR-2-B

Location: 2523 Confederate Boulevard, Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas.

The coordinates for Little Rock National Cemetery are 92.258744 W and 34.724084 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 Little Rock National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1949, demolished after 1968.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: The contemporary, Four-Square lodge was constructed in 1949, and was demolished sometime after 1968. Earlier lodges in the national cemetery include a one-story brick lodge characterized by piazzas erected between August 1868 and March 1869 and its successor, a L-shaped, one and one-half story, Second Empire style lodge built in 1874-75. The Quartermaster replaced the Second Empire style lodge in 1908 with a Four-Square made of brick. The Four-Square was reinterpreted in a post-World War II design in keeping with suburban house forms and this iteration of the Four Square design was used only in the Little Rock National Cemetery.

The contemporary, Four-Square lodge built in 1949 was two stories in height with the first floor of brick and the second story of wood frame. The foundations were concrete. The hip roof was covered with asphalt shingles and the chimney was brick. The lodge had a back porch, and it was repaired in 1952. The bathroom was improved with the installation of plastic tile in 1956 and the entire building was treated for termites in 1956 as well. Metal awnings were installed over the windows and doors in the 1957. Several years later, in 1962, two screen doors were replaced with aluminum doors and the Venetian blinds were also replaced at this time. In 1965 the office was paneled and the siding on the north façade was replaced. The lodge was painted periodically, with notations beginning in 1951 and continuing to 1967, about exterior and interior paint.

Photographs attached to the Veterans Administration maintenance records for the cemetery show double-hung sash windows glazed with six-over-six lights and wood doors glazed over the lock rail. Gutters, downspouts and splash blocks are evident in the photographs as well. There was also a one-story addition, with a shed roof, on the west (side) elevation. Likely this served as the

office, especially since the cast iron Gettysburg Address plaque is affixed to the north façade and a door opens into the addition from the north as well. A newspaper clipping in the maintenance file reported on plans for the new lodge, indicating it was to have seven rooms plus a bathroom. Work in the cemetery was under the supervision of the Tulsa Corps of Engineers, and the contractors were J.S. Davis and Sons of Fort Smith and M & L Construction of Little Rock.

Site Context: The Four-Square built in 1949 likely occupied the same location as the previous lodge, and was located near the main entrance facing the transverse drive that connected the entrance gates to the flagstaff. The lodge faced north toward the drive, with the service building, confederate burial section, and rostrum to the south.

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.

In the period from 1910 to 1950 another generation of the lodge form emerged. This phase of lodge architecture included several Neoclassical and revival-style designs. The standard plans developed in this era accommodated modern conveniences; for example, space for a bathroom became an integral component of the plan. In the lodges built to the earlier Meigs plan, alterations were necessary to retrofit lavatories in upstairs hallways and on the first-floor porches. Designs in this period also adapted to site-specific contexts, introducing a variety of architectural expressions to complement the geographic region of the cemeteries themselves. 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 Four-Square lodge at Little Rock, along with the others erected in that style, derives its significance as a collective example of an early twentieth-century house form adapted for use in the national cemeteries. The construction of the Four-Square lodges marks a point of departure from the long standing L-plan lodge.

Little Rock, Arkansas, was platted in 1820 and incorporated as a city in 1831. It was a manufacturing center, and strategic settlement in the Missouri Territory, then Arkansas Territory, and finally the state of Arkansas in 1836. The state convention voted to remain the Union and then two months later reversed its position. Union forces captured the city in 1863. Just outside of Little Rock on a former camping ground was a plot designated for burials. Within that cemetery, the government purchased a small portion to be reserved for military burials in 1866. Ground for the national cemetery was augmented in 1868 with additional parcels.

In 1884 an eleven-acre Confederate cemetery abutted the national cemetery, and in 1913 it was deeded to the Secretary of War from the city on the understanding only Confederate veterans could be buried in it. This restriction was lifted in 1938.

Both the lodge and its occupant had inauspicious beginnings in the Little Rock, Arkansas, National Cemetery. It was observed in 1869 that the superintendent was "worthless" and a "drunkard" and despite the presence of the lodge, the cemetery was an uninviting lot of headstones. However, the inspector noted the lodge and outbuilding were complete and work on

the enclosing wall was ongoing. The lodge was finished by March 1869; it was a one-story, brick building and had three rooms inside. One of the rooms was an office. The front and rear elevations were screened by a piazza and the roof of the main building projected over the piazzas, providing cover for the outside spaces. It was recommended in 1873 that railings be put up along these platforms to improve the appearance of the lodge. The following year, the inspector suggested that a kitchen be attached to the lodge, at the south end of the west piazza and connected to the tool house. This would increase the livable areas for the superintendent and his large family. The inspector's report indicated that the lodge measured 51' x 21' with the piazzas each 6' wide. In July the roof needed repair, and just six months later the building was destroyed by fire.

A contract for rebuilding the lodge was let in June 1875 to Miller and Delaney. The replacement building represented a shift in design, and views of appropriateness, from the Office of the Quartermaster General as the national cemetery system matured. Miller and Delaney constructed a one and one-half story building over a full basement. The second floor was tucked behind a mansard roof and lit by dormer windows. Above the slate-covered mansard was a shallow hip roof covered in tin. The foundations of the lodge were stone and the floors of the basement or cellar were concrete. Interior floors were wood. The wood doors were paneled. The walls and ceilings were plaster on lath. Early changes to the Second Empire style building were prompted by drainage problems, including the recommendation for a strip of molding to be added to the windowsills to help direct water away from the openings. By 1880 the upper windows and cellar floor needed replacing because of the dampness and discussion about drain pipes continued for several more years. Likely it was during this interval that a contractor identified as Murphy "wasted" money on drainage. In 1888 the periodic inspections noted a substantial crack in the wall and attributed it to the weight of the mansard roof rather than to any settling of the walls. Repairs to the interior plaster, tin roof, and basement floor were requested. By 1909 the survey of the cemetery pointed to the Second Empire style lodge as being dilapidated. It also noted the presence of an annex, built in 1892.

The Four-Square built in 1908 cost \$12,000 to construct. It was made of brick, on a stone and concrete foundation and the interior floors were wood. The low-pitched hip roof was covered in slate and featured an eyebrow dormer on the front façade. The lodge measured approximately 34' x 38'. Notes in the maintenance files record the installation of a water closet, wash basin, and bathtub in 1917, the installation of electric lights in 1925 and the connection to natural gas in 1931. Also in 1917, twenty-six screens and twenty-three window shades were put into place. The post-war lodge that followed the Four-Square cost over \$30,000 to build, and measured approximately 30' x 22' with a wing measuring about 27' x 12' and a porch (not pictured) measuring almost 8' x 12'. It had three bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. A notation in the maintenance file records the \$1685 expense for removing the old lodge and office.

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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.