

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
LOUDON PARK NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. MD-5-A

Location: 3445 Frederick Avenue, Baltimore, (Independent City), Maryland.

The coordinates for the Loudon Park National Cemetery, Lodge are 76.683404 W and 39.2722228 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 Loudon Park National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1885-86.

Builder/Contractor: William Roussey.

Description: The lodge for Loudon Park retained the three-room, L-shaped plan developed for the Second Empire style lodges, however, it assumed a Victorian-era cottage aesthetic with cross gable roofs, overhanging eaves, decorative bargeboards and brackets, paired double-hung sash glazed with two-over-two lights and operable shutters on the exterior. The millwork inside plus the built-in cabinet and corner stair contributed to the overall cottage-like characteristics of the building.

The principal elevation faces west toward the entrance drive. The building is two stories in height and was constructed of brick, complete with a water table. The chimneys were built of brick as well. Granite was used for the sills. Inside, the floors are wood, and the wood doors are paneled.

In the mid-1920s electricity came to the lodge, and by the decade's end, its heating system had been modernized as well. Work on the roof and the porch also took place at this time. The mid-1930s saw renovations of the lodge to upgrade the kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities, as well as to paint the office, replace two doors, and repair the remaining doors, the windows, and the screens. Pine floorboards were put down in the kitchen and a new radiator was installed in that space. A new hot water system was introduced. The pine floor did not last and was replaced with linoleum in 1939. Also in 1939 an entrance to the basement was opened and the wall between the lodge and the kitchen ell was filled. The following year congoleum was placed in the dining room; it was reinstalled in 1952. Routine maintenance occurred throughout the 1940s

and up to 1952 with projects such as painting, weather stripping, and minor repairs. These projects were all tracked in ledgers kept for the Veterans Administration.

Historic photographs from the maintenance ledgers show that the front porch was enclosed after 1909. With the kitchen addition, the L-shaped footprint became more of T and three gables punctuated the roofline along the south (rear) elevation. They also defined each interior space – the living room, dining room and kitchen – of the first floor.

Site Context: The lodge is located just inside the main entrance gates from Frederick Avenue on the north side of the cemetery. The building is east of the entry drive and connected to it by a sidewalk. The principal elevation faces west and the façade is distinguished by the entrance porch in the arm of the original L-plan design. In 1892 a stable was located off the southeast corner of the lodge. Today the building footprint is T in shape, with an extension to the east, and the site of the stable given over to graves.

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 Loudon Park lodge is significant as an extant example of the updated version of the definitive L-plan design that increased the building height to two full stories and changed the roof to a cross-gable. First executed in the plan for the San Francisco lodge, the lodge in Loudon Park followed the revised plan. Thus, the lodge represents an early attempt by the Office of the Quartermaster to accommodate shifts in living conditions as well as continued effort to adapt residential forms to the cemetery environment.

The national cemetery was established in 1862, and the inaugural burying ground was part of the Loudon Park Cemetery in southwest Baltimore. It was a private cemetery, and the federal government slowly acquired title to the soldiers' lots, beginning in 1874 and continuing through to 1903. The first interments were the remains of those who died in the hospitals located in Baltimore, Relay House and Elkridge Landing. After the war's end, those buried in Laurel Cemetery were re-interred in Loudon Park. By 1871 there were close to 1800 graves, plus the remains of 139 Confederate prisoners of war who died while held at Fort McHenry. At this time, the inspector for the Office of the Quartermaster General observed the cemetery was in poor condition, and the superintendent had been discharged. Likely this report prompted a building campaign on the premises.

Although the grounds were attended to, and the enclosure or wall was extended to include the new acreage, there was not enough room for a lodge on the grounds. The superintendent lived in rented quarters. The rented house was a frame building, described as having two stories and five rooms. There was an attic and cellar as well. A stable was also on the premises and available to the superintendent. All reportedly were in good condition in 1879. By 1883 the rented housing was at "an inconvenient distance" and it was recommended that a lodge be constructed. Yet the following year a rental was found opposite the main entrance; the rented house was called a "neat cottage" and cost \$18 per month. With the acquisition of more land, the Office of the Quartermaster General decided it was time to erect a lodge inside the boundaries of the national cemetery. Proposals were sought, and the bid of the Baltimore craftsman William Roussey was accepted. Roussey estimated costs for the lodge and cistern to be \$4268. After the contract was let, building materials were evaluated. Eschewing a sample of granite, the representative of the

Quartermaster favored using brick merely “as a matter of taste.” Rouseey’s numbers were based on using brick and this may have influenced the decision.

Care to locate the building in regard to the turnpike was taken, and the Quartermaster’s agent, William H. Owen, not only offered his opinion on brick or stone masonry but also provided a sketch to show how the lodge should be sited. His letter mentioned reversing the position of the living room and kitchen, to remove the kitchen from view and to present a dignified face to the turnpike. The lodge was built using an updated version of the L-plan design, and similar to those built in the earlier Second Empire style, this building had a full cellar and contained an office, living room and kitchen on the main floor. A porch filled the space of the L, and a small porch marked the rear door. Cemetery surveys in 1889 and 1909 reveal the lodge was two stories in height, had nine rooms counting the basement and no annex. There was an outbuilding for storage.

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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.