

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

MOUND CITY NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. IL-9-A

Location: Highway Junctions IL 37 and IL 51, Mound City, Pulaski County, Illinois.

The coordinates for the Mound City National Cemetery, Lodge are 89.1778 W and 37.08697 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 Mound City National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1885.

Builder/Contractor: Charles Lancaster.

Description: The L-plan lodge is one and one-half stories in height with a cross gable roof originally covered in slate. The foundations are concrete and stone, and the walls are brick. The principal elevation faces northwest and includes the entrance porch. The windows of the lodge are paired, and small ox-eye windows are placed high in the side gables. A rear porch extended the width of the building initially, but by 1909 a kitchen ell had been built.

Maintenance records from the Veterans Administration note that the enclosure of the front porch and pouring of a concrete floor in 1934. The following year, the wood porch was removed and replaced with concrete. The plumbing was reworked in 1937 and the bathroom and kitchen received new fixtures. In 1936, and again 1962, the heating system was upgraded. The building was completely painted between 1942 and 1945, copper gutters installed in 1941, combination storm and screen windows and doors installed in 1948, and roof repaired in 1957. Awnings were first placed on the west side of the lodge in 1949, and then used throughout in 1965. Venetian blinds were hung in 1966. The first floor of the lodge was redecorated in 1951 and the kitchen was redone in 1966. The service spaces were shifted, using the former tool room for the furnace and former coal room for the displaced tools, in 1948. It was noted that the center truss under the kitchen floor had decayed by 1969.

Site Context: The L-plan lodge is located in the south corner of the cemetery grounds and in proximity to the stone and cast iron entrance gates from Walnut Street/Ohio River Scenic Byway. The building is to the southeast of the main entrance drive, and faces northwest into the

cemetery landscape. The tool house shown on the 1892 map, just off the east corner of the lodge, has given way to a storage or utility building today.

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 Mound City lodge is significant as one of four lodges built according to the revised L-plan drafted first in 1885 and built in San Francisco. The lodge in Mound City was also built in 1885, and represents an early attempt by the Office of the Quartermaster to accommodate shifts in living conditions as well as the department's continued effort to adapt residential forms to the cemetery environment.

The cemetery had its beginnings in the Civil War. In the war era, several hospitals were located in Mound City, and many of the wounded soldiers were brought there for treatment. In Mound City there also was a naval yard, which brought more military activity to the area and, most likely, facilitated transporting the men to the hospitals. The national cemetery was established in 1864, the same year as interments began. After the war, remains of those buried initially in Cairo, Illinois, Belmont, Missouri, Paducah, Kentucky, and Columbus, Kentucky, were moved to Mound City.

In 1868 construction of the cemetery landscape within its picket fence boundary began with bids for a lodge for the superintendent and plans for graveled walkways, a flagstaff, and tool house. Proposals for the lodge were based on a complex masonry building – brick for the walls, stone for the foundations – according to the “usual plan.” The bids submitted all seemed high; one was written by a man associated with Adams Express, part of the railway, and another from a builder with ties to a brick manufacturer. Specifications for the lodge called for a one story building, with 11’ ceilings inside, wood floors, plastered walls (painted with three coats), six windows each with twelve lights and stone sills, and paneled doors. The roof was to be shingled and the overhang ornamented with brackets and cut rafter tails. By 1869 it was reported to the Quartermaster that the lodge was complete, and noted that the specifications omitted gutters. To resolve that oversight it was suggested that the cistern be completed and then gutters manufactured of tin be installed on the building. Also at this time, plans for a small tool house (6’ x 12’) with a shed roof were submitted. The lodge completed at this time had a linear plan and was one story. J.W. Carter of Cairo, Illinois, constructed the brick lodge for \$2190.50.

By 1872 reports from the cemetery began to note the dampness and general unhealthy conditions of living there. To mitigate the problem one option was to raise the lodge by about 5’; a sketch of a side gable building on an arcade suggests an alternative and a discussion of form, but no action was taken. In 1873 the lodge was described as an example of the “railway depot style” first erected in the cemeteries. It was one story in height, contained three rooms, one of which was an office, had a piazza, and a projecting roof. The three rooms, an office, a kitchen and a living room, made for tight quarters if the superintendent had a large family. To remedy this, it was proposed to the Quartermaster that a two-room addition made of wood be constructed. The addition would house the kitchen and dining room and could be placed at the east end of the lodge. This wood frame extension was approved and completed by July 1873.

Ten years later this remedy no longer sufficed. The lodge building needed overhauling, and the small shed was written off as dilapidated. Floodwater swept over the cemetery in 1882 and

damaged the infrastructure and gravesites. Rather than fix the lodge and the wood structures, opinion within the Office of the Quartermaster General leaned toward erecting a new lodge and to raising the ground level of the cemetery. The next two years were equally harsh on the cemetery ground as more water from the Ohio River washed over it. By November 1884, work to remove debris and prevent future flooding began. The ground level was elevated, and the existing lodge and its kitchen outbuilding were removed. The materials were going to be sold rather than salvaged, and a tent with a wood floor was pitched on the site for the new lodge. The tent served as a temporary office. The superintendent took quarters in a hotel and stored the office furniture in a room for several dollars a month. Funds for the lodge were anticipated with the next appropriation and so bids were solicited in spring 1885. The design for the lodge was described as being the same as that used in San Francisco (HALS No. CA-1-A) and Charles Lancaster won the contract. Lancaster estimated costs at \$3776.93. By October the lodge was nearly complete.

The lodge at Mound City followed the standard plan from the Office of the Quartermaster General but substituted a “steep” roof for the mansard of the Second Empire style, extended the rear porch along the width of the building and raised the upper story. The kitchen and office has wainscoted walls, the roof was covered in slate and porches in tin. The brick for the walls was made in the state. In 1888 a request for a closet was made and funds for re-pointing the mortar joints were budgeted for the following spring. Several of the window chords were broken and these were repaired. Lattice was recommended to screen the verandah. Although some discussion over a cellar – without outside access because of the flooding – occurred, there was no cellar noted in the inspection conducted in 1888. In 1902, a kitchen ell was constructed and, with it, the lodge assumed its modern form.

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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.