

## HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

### RICHMOND NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE

HALS No. VA-22-B

Location: 1701 Williamsburg Road, Richmond (Independent City), Virginia.

The coordinates for the Richmond National Cemetery, Lodge are 77.393299 W and 37.514919 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 Richmond National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1870.

Builder/Contractor: Kryan A. Murphy.

Description: The Second Empire style lodge is a one and one-half story brick building distinguished by a mansard roof. The principal elevation faces east. Sash windows light the first floor, while dormer windows illuminate the bedrooms on the second floor. The floor plan is L-shaped. Originally the lodge had three rooms per floor with a front porch tucked into the space at the confluence of the L-shape in the northeast corner of the building. Exterior doors from the office and the living room opened onto this porch. An ell was added to the west (rear) elevation in 1898 to expand the living quarters for a kitchen and dining room.

Maintenance records kept by the Veterans Administration reveal that the building was wired for electric lights in 1924 and improvements to its heating system came in 1927 and 1934. The systems were upgraded in 1957.

The ledger entries note a “major repair” in 1926 but do not enumerate those changes to the building. The WPA-era brought further alterations to the Richmond lodge with the creation of a basement under the living room, oak flooring in the dining room, repairs to the woodwork, and reconstruction of the brick chimney. The porch was demolished and a larger one built to replace it. The walls and ceilings were replastered, the kitchen and two bedrooms were painted, linoleum was put in the kitchen, a closet was added, and storm windows were installed on the second floor. Further work on the interior was completed in 1939 with the replastering of the living room, dining room, stairway, and hall. Wood floors were refinished. The gutters and downspouts were renewed. A decade passed, and the building was again painted on the interior and exterior. Venetian blinds were installed in 1948. Two years later the kitchen was “tiled and papered,” and

the bathroom updated. Storm doors and windows were installed in 1953. The slate shingles were removed in 1957, and inside, the tile was laid for the office floor. Paneling was put into the office in 1964. Elsewhere in the building, the interior doors were replaced in 1962, oak floors installed in two rooms (1957), and more painting was done (1952).

Site Context: The square cemetery lot is enclosed by a low granite and sandstone wall along the boundary lines. The main entrance is along the north side off of Williamsburg Road (State Route 60) and the internal drives once bisected the cemetery grounds into quadrants with the flagstaff at the center and the L-plan lodge just south of the entrance and west of the drive. The western half of the east-to-west drive or walkway has given way to burial plots. Service buildings were located off the southwest corner of the building in 1892, and a gable-roofed structure remains in-situ 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 Richmond lodge is significant as one of the first of the one and one-half story, L-plan lodges built in the national cemetery system. Edward Clark drew the plans in 1869, and variations of the L-shape, Second Empire style lodge would be built throughout the national cemetery system. Although the initial contract for the Richmond lodge dates to August 1870, the work was rebid and awarded to Kyran Murphy in 1871. Along with the Keokuk lodge, the lodge in Richmond is the earliest example of the type and the two buildings are the only two constructed using the initial version of the plans for a one and one-half story, Second Empire style, brick lodge.

The integral place of the Richmond lodge in the architectural history of the cemetery superintendent's lodges is akin to that of Richmond in this era. The Richmond National Cemetery was established in 1866, along with six others in the area. The cemetery is about three miles from the state capitol, and is located within the Confederates' fortification line for the defense of Richmond. The city fell to Union troops in April 1865 and General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox days later, on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Remains of fallen soldiers from both sides of the war were reinterred in the cemetery, exhumed from Oakwood and Hollywood cemeteries, Belle Island Confederate Prison, and from the farmland that became the battlefields of Cold Harbor and Seven Pines.

By 1867, the superintendent for the cemetery was housed in a temporary lodge, presumably made of wood-frame and consisting of two rooms on one floor plus a kitchen. The frame lodge was described to the Quartermaster General in 1869 as "uninhabitable." In September of that year, the inspector for the Quartermaster confirmed the building's poor condition. Plans and specifications for a new lodge were issued, but there were some discrepancies between the documents. The contractor inquired what was needed. For example, the plans called for a one and one-half story masonry building with a slate covered mansard roof with one porch but the specifications called for a projecting roof and two porches. [The Quartermaster's Department sent the contractors the new mansard-roof plan for a Second Empire styled building but the specifications for the old linear, three-room plan.] This prompted an exchange of letters between Meigs and Clark over the form the lodge should take and how to reduce construction costs. Changes made included the simplification of the window openings, with square heads rather than rounded, and cased windows and doors rather than molded. The lodge for Richmond was also constructed of brick masonry rather than stone. The architectural adjustments made for the Richmond lodge in 1869 mark a seminal point in the evolution of the design for the mansard-

roof type lodge, as well as for the gable-roofed lodges modeled on its L-shaped, three-room plan that the Quartermaster approved later in the nineteenth century.

Kyran A. Murphy completed the lodge for Richmond National Cemetery in 1870. However, there were problems with the slate for the roof because by 1873 the roof was leaking. Water came into the building through the joints in the slate tiles and caused interior damage to the plaster walls. The plaster had cracked and it had fallen in several areas. The Quartermaster General's office determined Murphy had installed the tiles incorrectly and recommended the tiles and flashing be removed, new boards laid and a larger tile (10 x 16) be used. In 1874 the work was done, but the tiles selected measured just 7 x 14 to be more in proportion to the scale of the roof itself. The following summer lightning struck the chimney. In 1876 some painting was done. In 1885, discussions about the landscaping of the cemetery necessitated the production of a plat. On this drawing is a floor plan of the lodge and outbuilding. The lodge is very clearly a Second Empire style lodge in the standard L-shape, three room design of the "Meigs plan" including a kitchen, living room, and office on the first floor. A porch filled the space of the L, and small back porch sheltered the rear entry that led into the kitchen. The rectangular outbuilding contained the tool house, carriage house, stable and privy. In 1889 the lodge was described as a one and one-half story building with an attic but no basement. It had a mansard roof and a piazza. By 1909 a one-story ell was added; this new space included a kitchen and dining room. The date provided for the expansion was 1898.

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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.