SAN FRANCISCO NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE
Presidio of San Francisco
1 Lincoln Boulevard
San Francisco
San Francisco County
California

HALS CA-1-A
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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HALS No. CA-1-A

Location: 1 Lincoln Boulevard, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California.

The coordinates for San Francisco National Cemetery, Lodge are 122.462811 W and 37.801142 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 San Francisco National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1885; remodeled 1929.

Builder/Contractor: Alexander Flood.

Description: Remodeled in the Spanish Mission Revival style in 1929 from the revised L-plan design of 1885, the lodge today is a one-story building with stucco-over-brick exterior walls and a low or flat roof hidden behind a parapet. Rounded red clay tiles over the projecting entries add to the Spanish Mission Revival aesthetic chosen for the lodge. The principal elevation faces southeast to the entrance drive. The foundations are stone and concrete. By 1946 the building needed some structural work.

Maintenance ledgers compiled by the Veterans Administration outline the work that was undertaken over the years, including the structural repairs required by the mid 1940s. The east wall was repaired, and to further reinforce the building, a concrete footing was placed under the northwest corner. Additional underpinning was completed in 1951 and again in 1955 to 1956. Stucco and painting projects were done concurrently. The front porch was enclosed in 1931, and the rear entrance was covered in 1935. Cosmetic changes included tiling in the bathroom (1939), window shades (1929), painting (1948), refinishing the floors (1961, 1967), and screen replacements (1967). Changes to the floor plan include the closing of a door between the living room and office in 1935. Six windows were replaced in 1960, and walls were patched in 1967.

Site Context: The lodge occupies a lot in the northwestern section of the cemetery and to the north end of the grounds in proximity to the entrance from Lincoln Boulevard. The entrance gates at Lincoln Boulevard were built in 1931. The principal elevation faces southeast to Portal Drive, and the enclosed entrance porch is to the east end of the façade. The south entrance, at the south end of the southwest side elevation facing North Drive and the burial grounds, was added

during the 1929 renovations at the same time the rear entrance to the lodge in its 1885-plan was enclosed. The earlier iteration of the lodge, constructed in 1885 to the revised L-plan, was oriented to the south and southeast as well. It was described as one and one-half stories, with six rooms plus a basement, and outside the enclosure. Likely this referred to its location across North Drive from the burial sections. Supporting structures, such as the comfort station, tool house, and office, are located northwest of the lodge and along North Drive.

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 revised L-plan lodge built at San Francisco in 1885 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 survival of the San Francisco lodge is especially significant because it represents the first departure from the definitive L-plan design, and then an equally important shift as the Quartermaster's office sought to integrate the living quarters of the cemetery superintendents into the trends shaping residential architecture in the twentieth century. The brick, revised L-plan lodge with a cross gable roof cost $4800 to build in 1885 and another $4329 to remodel in 1929.

The attention paid to the lodge is commiserate with the status of the cemetery and its ties to the oldest military post in the United States at the Presidio. Established by Spain in 1776, it remained in Spanish control until 1822 when it came under Mexican governance. U.S. forces took the Presidio from Mexico in 1949. The national cemetery was established in 1884 on nine acres that included the Presidio's historic burying ground. Work on the cemetery landscape began immediately with proposals for a lodge, enclosing wall, and gates. Since stone was the preferred building material, it was recommended to the Quartermaster General that prison laborers could work in the quarry and therefore reduce the cost of procuring the materials. Specifications for the lodge transmitted in 1884 included those for the one and one-half story, L-shaped plan, and copies of the plans and elevations were requested in March 1885. The lodge was accepted as complete in September 1885 with the notation that a privy would be necessary.

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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.