WILMINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, LODGE
2011 Market Street
Wilmington
New Hanover County
North Carolina

HALS NC-5-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. NC-5-A

Location: 2011 Market Street, Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina.

The coordinates for the Wilmington National Cemetery, Lodge are 77.620972 W and 35.774521 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 Wilmington National Cemetery from the U.S. Army in 1973 (Public Law 93-43).

Date: 1934.

Builder/Contractor: Unknown.

Description: The one and one-half story lodge in the Dutch Colonial Revival style is wood frame building on a concrete foundation. The upper level has stucco applied to the exterior and faux half-timbering, and its shape is determined by the gambrel roof. The gambrel was originally covered in tile. A dormer with six windows punctuates the roof and provides light to the second floor. The entrance on the east front façade is off-center, and accessed through the integral front porch. Inside, the walls are plaster on lath and the floors are wood.

Maintenance records for the lodge are thin, and it is unclear from the ledger photograph the kind of windows that were installed. Likely the windows were double-hung sash. The building was painted at intervals in the 1950s, the windows were repaired and new cords were installed, the screens and the kitchen door were repaired, and an iron handrail was put into place. In 1962 two aluminum storm doors were replaced.

Site Context: The cemetery grounds are divided by an internal drive running from north to south, and at the center of the drive is a landscaped circle surrounding the flagstaff. The Second Empire style lodge was placed in proximity to the main entrance on the south side of the property, west of the axial drive, and the present lodge was built in the same location in 1934. The east or principal elevation of the Dutch Colonial Revival style lodge faces the drive; its south side elevation is visible from Market Street. A low brick wall with iron fencing lines the perimeter.

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.

Of the twentieth-century lodge forms, the design in the Dutch Colonial Revival oeuvre was selected most often. Fourteen lodges were built using this plan between 1921 and 1934. The design called for a one and one-half story building with masonry construction at the first floor

and wood-frame gambrel roofs enclosing the upper floor. The building footprint was rectangular and included an enclosed porch and office in the front, a living room and stair in the middle, and a dining room and kitchen at the rear. The second floor contained three bedrooms and a bathroom opening off of a central hall. Three versions of the design were used. The first in four lodges erected between 1921 and 1928, with hollow core tile walls covered in stucco, shingled roofs and gable ends, and dormers two windows in width on the front and rear. The second version expanded the dormer from two windows to four, adding more light the upper floor. This plan was used twice, for lodges in Nashville and Chattanooga, in 1931. PWA funds paid for the construction of lodges in 1934, including eight built to a third rendition of the Dutch Colonial Revival design. In 1934, the building materials included a brick construction on the first floor and faux half-timbered or brick gables. The Wilmington lodge is an example of the third expression of the Dutch Colonial Revival design and cost $12,800 to build. It is significant as a surviving example of the type.

Although the Union naval forces controlled much of the East Coast, Wilmington harbor escaped and continued to supply the Confederacy through 1864. Fort Fisher guarded the entrance to the harbor, and Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory developed a system of mines and explosives to further protect Wilmington. Years of successful blockade running ended in early 1865 as a renewed effort of both the Union Army and Navy bombarded Wilmington with vigor and the city evacuated in February. After the war's end, those who died near the city on the coast or along the rail lines were reinterred in Wilmington National Cemetery. Land already appropriated for the cemetery was purchased in 1867; additional parcels were acquired in 1877 and 1953.

June 1868 correspondence with the Office of the Quartermaster General indicates that the construction of lodges in Wilmington, Raleigh and New Bern, was under consideration. In Wilmington, a temporary, wood frame lodge was built in 1868; it contained two rooms. A detached kitchen and storeroom was constructed shortly thereafter. The wood frame lodge was described within a couple of years as cold and "uncomfortable" in the winter. The lodge was demolished in 1874, but the kitchen and storeroom remained in service for many years. The kitchen and storeroom were used as the multi-purpose tool house, storage, and privy ("earth closet") until funds were available to replace it with a tool house made of masonry. In 1889 this had not yet been done and the building was described as a one-story structure with a peak roof. The walls consisted of upright boards battened together. Its wood construction, the inspector cautioned, would be dangerous in a fire.

The wood lodge sufficed for a number of years, despite recommendations in the early 1870s to simply take it down to make room for the anticipated, permanent lodge. Plans for the new lodge stalled until spring 1871. At that time proposals for a one-story, stone lodge were prepared, but the contractors were asked to provide estimates for adding another story and a mansard roof. These negotiations mark the shift from the three-room, one-story lodge into what became the full "Meigs plan," the one and one-half story, three rooms per floor, Second Empire style design. F.A. Gibbons provided an estimate of $550 for the additional costs associated with expanding the building. Gibbons bid on the lodge in Wilmington, but also for a larger contract that included lodges in Hampton, Virginia (HALS No. VA-6), and New Bern, North Carolina (HALS No. NC-

1). His total price was just under $3000 and was the low bid. The contract went to Gibbons in 1871, despite a disagreement over his work on the enclosing wall the previous year.

Gibbons was unable to fulfill his contract for either the lodge or the wall. The contract for the wall was cancelled, and Mr. Taylor – who held the bond guaranteeing the work – struggled to complete the work in 1873 and it was unknown when work could begin on the lodge in Wilmington. Plans, again, were discussed within the Quartermaster's office and no decision on where the old, wood lodge should be moved was finalized. Since stone was hard to procure locally some debate about using brick instead was indulged and two other contractors, Mr. Sweeny and J.C. Comfort (the latter having worked in Virginia), provided estimates within the range of the former contract price. However, in April 1874 a new contract for a stone lodge was awarded, this time to John Sinclair. His price was $4300 and he requested that he be paid in four installments.

Construction of the stone lodge was temporarily halted after the fire in Little Rock, Arkansas (HALS No. AR-2), in July 1874 prompted a reconsideration of the specifications for the partition walls by the Quartermaster. Furring out the walls was viewed as a fire hazard, and the preference for hollow partition walls made of masonry briefly prevailed. Sinclair, however, followed the specifications for nailing strips to the studs and in-filling with mortar. This built up the partition walls and also sound-proofed them. The walls and ceilings were lathed, and ready for plaster in February 1875, so the Quartermaster let him proceed rather than having him rebuild the walls. The lodge was completed in the spring despite a change in contractors, a change in plan, scale, and materials, and potential change in specifications.

In May 1886 it was described as being made of brown Seneca stone in the "regulation style" with a one and one-half story, mansard-roof, Second Empire design that included dormers and a floor plan of three rooms on the first floor along with a piazza. Two years later the inspector noted it needed painting as well as furnishings for the office. In 1889 survey of the cemetery provided a similar accounting of the building's appearance, but adding a room count (nine with the rooms in the cellar) and dimensions. On the first floor, the office measured 13 ½' x 15'; the parlor measured 12 ½' x 15 ½"; and the sitting room 13 ½" x 12". Rooms in corresponding locations above, and below in the cellar, shared these proportions. The lodge was about 40' away from the main entrance, to the northwest, and in 1892, a map recorded its orientation toward this entrance through the entrance porch at its southeast corner. The tool house was built to the north of the L-plan lodge.

Records of the Veterans Administration pick up the lodge's material history in the early twentieth century, but address the Dutch Colonial Revival style successor to the Second Empire style lodge that had built with such deliberation in 1874-75.

<u>Sources</u>:

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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.