

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, OLD AMPHITHEATER
Lee and Sherman Drives
Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington County ^{Arlington}
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1348-A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, OLD AMPHITHEATER
HABS NO. VA-1348-A

Location: Intersection of Lee and Sherman drives, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington County, Virginia.

Present Owner/
Occupant: U.S. Government

Present Use: Used occasionally for services when the Memorial Amphitheater is unavailable.

Significance: In 1868, General John Logan from the Headquarters of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) declared May 30th a day of remembrance for Union soldiers who had died in the Civil War. President Johnson supported this order by allowing federal employees to take a day of leave to attend the ceremonies. Thus, the first Memorial Day ceremony was held on May 30, 1868, taking place about 100 yards west of the Lee Mansion. Temporary stands were set up for the President and speakers and a separate one for the Marine Corps band. In 1873, the elliptical brick and wood pergola now known as the Old Amphitheater was built on the same site. Designed by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs, the pergola is architecturally significant as a prominent garden structure of the nineteenth century. The Memorial Day procession concluded at the Amphitheater for speeches by renowned political and military leaders. By the early 1900's the Old Amphitheater was unable to accommodate the growing number of participants, which led to the construction of a larger ceremonial structure, the Memorial Amphitheater, dedicated in 1920.

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1873. The Washington Evening Star on May 30, 1873 stated that construction on the Amphitheater began on May 2, 1873 and it was ready for use by the May 30th ceremony.
2. Architect/Designer: General Montgomery C. Meigs.¹ Born

¹Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Records Relating to Functions: Cemeterial 1828-1929, General Correspondence & Reports related to National & Post Cemeteries 1865-1890,

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into a prominent Philadelphia family in 1816, Meigs is remembered not only for his position as Quartermaster General of the Union Army, but for his significant engineering accomplishments. In 1836, Meigs graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the only engineering school in the country at the time. His goal, to be assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was achieved in 1837. For over a decade, Meigs works on a variety of projects for the Corps throughout the country.

In 1852, Meigs was assigned to Washington where he designed and constructed his most significant works. Among his accomplishments are the Washington Aqueduct system, which included the Cabin John and Rock Creek bridges; the original design of the United States National Museum (now the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institution), and the design and construction of the Pension Building (now the National Building Museum). He is also remembered for his supervisory work for the extension of the Capitol wings and new dome, and the extension of the Post Office building.²

His work on the Washington skyline came to a halt during the war. Meigs was appointed Quartermaster General of the Army from 1861-1882, during which period he played a major role in the development of Arlington Cemetery.

3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Government.
4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

Superintendent: Col. Curtis, for Depot Quartermaster
Gen. William Myers, U.S. Army
Excavating and Grading Grounds: Harvey Bell
Sodding embankment: Harvey Bell
Carpenter work: D.J. McCarty
Brick work: Carroll & Shaw
Plastering, stuccoing, and painting columns: Joseph
Beckert
Painting: James Hudson
Awning(cutting and fitting): M.G. Copeland

Arlington, VA (1875-1914) to Averyboro, Record Group 92, National Archives.

²Harold K. Skramstad, "The Engineer as Architect in Washington: The Contribution of Montgomery Meigs," Records of the Columbia Historical Society LXIX-LXX (1970).

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Making and setting Braces for supports for Rostrum: A.
Schneider
Bronzing(caps and bases of columns of Rostrum): James
Hudson
Gardener: D. Rhodes
Altar: William Struthers & Sons, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania.
Canvas tent: Charles Lawrence, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania.

5. Original plans and construction: The amphitheater was designed by General Meigs, Quartermaster General of the U.S. Army. No original 1873 plans have been found. The earliest plan found, dated 1877 and signed by Gen. Meigs, shows the positioning of the piers and placement of the rostrum. Because it was found along with a plan for an awning, it is assumed that this sketch was sent to Charles Lawrence who supplied a canvas tent for the amphitheater.
6. Alterations and additions: A marble altar was added to the rostrum in 1880.

B. Historical Context:

1. Evolution from private land to National Cemetery

The land where Arlington Cemetery now sits was previously the home of Robert E. Lee and the George Washington Custis Family. When Lee chose to join the Confederate Army rather than fight for the Union, he left for Richmond knowing he might never return to his Arlington estate. His wife, Martha Custis Lee, stayed at the house until the pressure to leave was too great. It was almost immediately after she left that the Union soldiers crossed the Potomac to take possession of the land and house, establishing their headquarters in the Lee house itself.

In 1861, not long after the Union takeover, the Lee property became the possession of the United States government. Under an adopted rule in the new tax law passed in 1862, it was required that payment by the property owner be made in person. Mrs. Lee was unable to pay the tax herself and therefore forfeited the house and land to the government. After the seizure, Meigs engineered a closed auction of the Arlington property where the Government was the only bidder. The Lee estate, "originally taken to pay off a \$92.07 tax bill, was put on the auctioneer's block at the assessed price

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of \$26,810 for all 1,100 acres and the buildings."³ As a result the government secured the entire property, buildings and all, for the exact assessed value, considerably less than its true market value. According to official records the property was reserved for Government use, war, military, charitable and educational purposes.⁴

In 1862, during the battle over the Custis-Lee property, Congress passed legislation authorizing the creation of a national cemetery system. Within the year, fourteen national cemeteries were established. As room for burying the dead became scarce in the battlefields, Lincoln ordered Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to secure extra burial ground in the immediate Washington area. Stanton turned this duty over to the Quartermaster General, Montgomery C. Meigs, to survey the area for possible burial sites. General Meigs was the first to suggest to President Lincoln that the Lee estate be converted into a military cemetery. During this time, soldiers were being moved from the crowded battlefield burial sites to the newly established national, post, and private cemeteries. Whether Meigs had a personal vengeance toward Robert E. Lee or was troubled by the fact the he left the Union to fight for the Confederacy, it seems Meigs made it his duty to prevent Lee from returning to his home in Arlington.

In 1864, shortly after the auction that sold the Lee property to the government, the 1,000 acre estate was split up. A parcel of 200 acres around the house was set apart and dedicated as a national cemetery for the burial of Union soldiers and sailors. Ironically, the first man buried there was a Confederate soldier who died at the hospital in Arlington. A considerable part of the land went to erect Fort Whipple, which later changed its name to Fort Myer. A third and smaller part of the Arlington land went for housing of the homeless and destitute freedmen and colored refugees in a "Freedman's Village."

In 1877, Lee family heir, G.W. Custis Lee, contested the ownership of the Lee property and buildings. He accused the government of stealing the property at Arlington which rightfully belonged to his family. The court agreed with Mr. Lee. Because it would have been impossible to relocate the bodies already buried on the site of the mansion, Mr. Lee

³United States, Army, Judge Advocate General, Military Reservations, National Military Parks, & National Cemeteries, (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1898) 240-242.

⁴Peter Andrews, In Honored Glory, Arlington National Cemetery, (New York: G.P. Putnams Sons, 1966) 20.

agreed to settle with the Government for \$150,000.

2. Memorial Day and the Amphitheater

On May 5, 1868, Gen. John Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the G.A.R., gave the order to establish a day of national remembrance for Union soldiers. Before this order, the Grand Army posts throughout the Union had adopted this ceremonial custom as a legitimate function of their organization. By consent, they chose the 30th of May as the day to pay tribute to their comrades.⁵ On this day flowers were to be placed on the graves of Union soldiers who had died in defense of their country. Section II of the General's Orders stated that these ceremonies should be carried on each year in honor of the military dead. However, it was the G.A.R.'s duty to honor only their fellow Union comrades on this day. The Adjunct General made a statement to this accord, giving the reasons for the separatism. He writes:

We strew flowers therefore on the grave of our comrades, and prevent their being strewn in the national cemeteries at the same time on the graves of such rebel dead as may be buried therein, not because we cherish any feeling of hate or desire to triumph over individual foes, but because we seek to mark in distinction and manner, the feelings with which the nation regards freedom, slavery, loyalty and treason, republican principles and those of a slaveholding oligarchy.⁶

The first Memorial or Decoration Day Ceremony was held at the Arlington National Cemetery on May 30, 1868. It was on this day that Secretary William G. Moore made a statement on behalf of President Andrew Johnson, that supported Gen. Logan's Order, that federal employees who wished to participate in the ceremonies be permitted to take a day of leave. This began the official Memorial Day holiday.

The first Memorial Day exercise was a momentous event. The procession started in Washington and came across the same bridge used by the Union cavalry during the war to seize the Custis-Lee Mansion. The ceremony started at the base of the flagpole in front of the Arlington Mansion, which was itself

⁵Karl Decker and Angus McSween, Historic Arlington, (Washington, DC: Decker & McSween Publishing Co., 1892), 98.

⁶E.F.M. Faetz, ed., The National Memorial Day: A Record of Ceremonies over the Graves of the Union Soldiers, May 29 and 30, 1889, (Washington City: Headquarter Grand Army of the Republic, 1870), 37.

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draped with flags. The procession preceded first to the Tomb of the Unknown and then other Civil War grave sites, paying tribute to their honorable comrades by decorating their graves with flowers. The procession concluded with a service behind the house where General (and future President) James A. Garfield gave the address of the day.

The following Memorial Day was a much larger celebration than the previous year. The 1869 Orders from General Logan stated that this ceremony would take place throughout the United States. Some of the other ceremonies in the area were held at Battleground National Cemetery near Fort Stevens in Washington and at the National Cemetery in Alexandria. There was not to be a specifically prescribed ceremony, but it would be left up to the post to determine a fitting service.⁷

Once again the procession started in Washington and crossed the bridge into Arlington. Horses and carriages, many of them loaded up with the provisions for the day, would arrive early to get a good spot out of the sun. Vendors were set up on the way to Arlington, selling cigars, ice cream, sodas and candy for the attendees to take along with them. Once across the bridge, the ceremonies started with a prayer just south of the mansion, again at the base of the flagpole. They then marched to the graves of the soldiers to place flowers in memory of their heroic efforts. The procession ended at a Grand Stand west of the mansion, "erected immediately in the rear of the Arlington Mansion near the entrance to the cemetery and opposite to the monument erected to the memory of the unknown soldier."⁸ It was said to have accommodated up to 400 people. This stage was set up to accommodate the President and military officials with a separate stage for the Marine Corps band.

The platform for the ceremony was decorated with drapes of silk flags and at the front of the stage spelled out in boxwood were the words "In Memoriam". Among the distinguished guests and speakers who sat on the platform were President and Mrs. Grant, General Sherman, officers of the G.A.R., and the Committee of Arrangements. Col. Faetz, a member of the Committee of Arrangements and an attendee of the 1869 Memorial Day service, found it "most appropriate that these ceremonies should be conducted under the auspices of the G.A.R., an association composed exclusively of those who bore arms for the Union, and who, of all others, have a full appreciation of

⁷Faetz, 8.

⁸Evening Star (Washington, DC), 30 May 1869.

the honor due the memory of their fallen comrades."⁹

Five committees under the G.A.R. were set up to organize and decorate for the services. The committee of arrangements was in charge of supplying the flowers that adorned the graves as well as the stage and ceremony area. Funds for Memorial Day decorations and flowers were first derived from contributions and from a \$2500 congressional appropriation. This continued until the passage of the Economy Act of 1933 when appropriations were eliminated.¹⁰ General Logan's Orders of April 12, 1869, described the area where the Memorial services took place:

The sacred spot designated for the principal scene of the national oration to the dead is favored by nature with exquisite beauty of landscape and panoramic view, and will be forever famous by the historical reminiscences of its past, by the pathetic suggestions of its present, and by its lofty inspirations for the artist and poet of the future.¹¹

The success of the Memorial Day ceremonies at Arlington led to the building of a permanent structure for the services. In 1873, an amphitheater and rostrum were built in the area previously occupied by temporary stands. The amphitheater was constructed in a matter of twenty-eight days and finished with only a moment to spare before the Memorial Day services on May 30, 1873. Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs was in charge of the design and construction of this new amphitheater. The Evening Star on that day gave a description of the new structure:

Today the Amphitheater was covered with an awning and draped with American flags, but in the course of a year or two, when the shrubbery and vines to be planted around it shall have attained their growth, it will be a picturesque feature of the cemetery.¹²

It was later described as resembling "in appearance the

⁹Faehz, 11.

¹⁰U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 74th Congress, Hearings Before Subcommittee No. 2, February 28, 1936, 12.

¹¹Faehz, 9.

¹²Evening Star (Washington, DC), 30 May 1973.

remains of some old Grecian temple."¹³

The amphitheater is formed by an elliptical earth berm around a sunken bowl-shaped area, with attention focused towards the rostrum centered on the north side. Supporting a wooden trellis, brick piers enclose an elliptical stone walkway. In its earlier years, the trellis and piers supported luxuriant grape and other vines along with the still existent wisteria bushes. The rostrum serves as a base for twelve ionic columns also supporting a wooden trellis. The rostrum is surrounded by an attached railing and is reached by four stone steps at either end. The floor of the rostrum consists of stone pavers over fill.

The rostrum, seating 300 persons, evokes the platforms used for public oration in ancient Rome. It was atop the stage at Arlington and others around the country that many inspiring Memorial Day speeches were made and great orators remembered. This was in the tradition of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the most widely known speech in America.¹⁴

In 1877, Charles Lawrence, a Philadelphia sailmaker, was commissioned to make a canvas tent to cover the amphitheater. It was made of U.S. Army Standard duck canvas to fit the area of the ellipse and rostrum. A note from the Quartermaster General's office stated "the [new] awning was to cover the arena, like a circus tent, to be supported by 2 poles in the arena and lashed by long ropes to pins outside the ring and trellis."¹⁵ According to the proposal for the job, the Government was to supply the poles, ropes, pins, etc. necessary to support the tent. There is a contemporaneous diagram sketch by General Meigs that corresponds with this request. This sketch was sent out to perspective contractors for estimates for the proposed job. Annual and monthly superintendent reports support the use of the canvas on a number of occasions, and it was also stated in the Evening Post on May 30, 1878, that a "new canvas covered the circular space" of the amphitheater.¹⁶

Previous to this tent, blue-and-white striped awnings were used to cover the sections of the trellis around the amphitheater and the rostrum. The Quartermaster General made

¹³Decker, 96.

¹⁴Decker, 100.

¹⁵Decker, 100.

¹⁶Evening Star (Washington, DC), 30 May 1878.

a note that "the awning of the dais was not lashed and several times blew aside to great discomfort of the President and guests."¹⁷ The paper also noted a canvas top in 1874, most likely this earlier awning that caused discomfort to the stage participants. Pictorial evidence of either awning, though, has not been found.

A more permanent addition was the marble altar designed by prominent Washington architect John L. Smithmeyer. Built in Philadelphia by William Struther and Sons, it was delivered to Arlington just in time for the services in May of 1880. On the front is carved a coat of arms with the words "E Pluribus Unum" (from many, one).¹⁸ Smithmeyer's original sketch for the design of the altar still exists.

There is no substantial evidence as to Meigs's intentions regarding the amphitheater. During the post-war period that Meigs was Quartermaster General, construction of new buildings followed certain standards. Historian Harold Skramstad characterized the attitude towards architectural design during that period by saying, "the pressure of quick erection argued for a functional, efficient, and economical approach toward architecture."¹⁹ The lack of original drawings, short construction time, and cost of materials suggests there was an urgent need for the structure, required by Memorial Day of 1873.²⁰ The classic rostrum was the focus of the design with the trellis serving as an enclosure, fitting the natural space and landscape.

3. The Setting for the Amphitheater

The naturalistic setting of the amphitheater invites comparison between the Arlington National Cemetery and non-military cemeteries of the nineteenth century, which generally

¹⁷Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Records Relating to Functions: Cemeterial 1828-1929, General Correspondence & Reports related to National & Post Cemeteries 1865-1890, Arlington VA (1875-1914) to Averyboro, Record Group 92, National Archives.

¹⁸Evening Post (Washington, DC), 30 May 1880.

¹⁹Skramstad, 278.

²⁰Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Records Relating to Functions: Cemeterial 1828-1929, General Correspondence & Reports related to National & Post Cemeteries 1865-1890, Arlington VA (1875-1914) to Averyboro, Record Group 92, National Archives.

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fall into two categories of design: the rural and lawn. The "rural" cemetery is best experienced at Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the landscape-lawn cemetery, by Spring Grove in Cincinnati, Ohio. The characteristics of the two design philosophies are combined at Arlington Cemetery, setting the stage for the pergola type amphitheater.

Before the establishment of military cemeteries in 1862, the garden cemetery was prevalent. Mount Auburn was the first great example of this type of cemetery, and was widely imitated. The idea for Mount Auburn was proposed by Dr. Jacob Bigelow of Boston at a meeting in 1826. He submitted a plan for a non-sectarian "cemetery composed of family burial lots, separated by and interdispersed with trees, shrubs, and flowers, in a wood or landscaped garden."²¹ Mt. Auburn Cemetery started as an experimental garden by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, with its cemetery as a separate entity. Later aware of the cemetery's dominance, the horticulture society turned their share of the land over for burial grounds.

There are a couple prominent similarities between Arlington National Cemetery and Mount Auburn. One is the relationship of the land to the city. David Schuyler reiterated what other writers have assessed, that "rural cemeteries stood as the pastoral counterpoints to the urban environment. Most obviously, the curvilinearity of the natural landscape contrasted with the straight lines of the gridiron city."²² Mount Auburn's garden landscape of rolling hills and winding paths is juxtaposed to the city of Boston as the Arlington National Cemetery is to the L'Enfant plan of Washington. Some topographical characteristics of the two cemeteries are also alike. Like Mount Auburn, Arlington had a steep knoll which overlooks the city. The Lee Mansion functions as the prominent hilltop figure of Arlington, overlooking Washington and the Potomac River; atop Mount Auburn's 136-foot hill is a tower giving a panoramic view of Boston and the Charles River. Although, they share these landscape characteristics, Arlington National Cemetery was not intended as a romantic, horticultural haven as the garden cemeteries of the previous years had been. Mrs. Lee's rose garden is the only spot that reflected this trend.

²¹Ann Leighton, American Gardens of the Nineteenth Century: For the Comfort and Affluence, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 136.

²²David Schuyler, The New Urban Landscape, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 53.

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Arlington National Cemetery also reflects the landscape-lawn plan. Started by landscape gardener Adolph Strauch in 1855, the lawn plan diverged from the cluttered landscapes of the rural cemeteries to create a more simplistic natural setting. An example of this plan type was Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Strauch redesigned the once cluttered landscape to give it a pastoral appearance. Strauch's plan was to limit marker size, thin out trees and shrubs and open up the cemetery landscape.

The first national cemeteries were primarily a modification of the landscape-lawn plan. Regulations were placed on the heights of gravestones to give uniformity to the view, unlike previous rural cemeteries where the visual line was lost in the jaggedness of larger monuments and markers and the overabundance of plantings. Simplicity and grandeur were the bases of the new military cemeteries. Frederick Law Olmsted, the prominent landscape architect, advised Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs in 1870 after Meigs's queries on plantings in new cemeteries. He suggested to Meigs that the "main object should be to establish permanent dignity and tranquility."²³ Although, larger monuments and markers can be found at Arlington National Cemetery, they are located only in specifically designated areas.

The Old Amphitheater would be a fitting inclusion into either type cemetery landscape. The pergola reflects the garden ideas of the "rural" cemeteries. Known more in a garden setting, the pergola brings out the naturalistic qualities of its surroundings. The classic style of the rostrum reflects the simplicity and grandeur of Strauch's landscape-lawn ideas. Strauch promoted the classical style for cemetery monuments to show strength and simplicity, stating that, "classical monuments had the cool sophistication that reinforced the beauty of the natural environment. They also reminded visitors of democratic institutions, such as the Capitol, which Americans had built in a similar style."²⁴

We can only assume that Meigs made similar considerations in choosing a style for the Old Amphitheater. The pergola design was inspired by both the landscape and the popular classical styles. As a pergola with vines and shrubs growing along the trellis, it was at its utmost peak of beauty

²³David Charles Sloane, The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 115.

²⁴Sloane, 104.

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at the time of the ceremonies in May. The vines would have had time to grow after the winter thaw and the flowers would be in bloom. The pergola was a popular garden structure throughout the nineteenth century, as were columns, obelisks, and other classically styled monuments. The openness of the pergola allows it to blend with the landscape, while the classical styling of its columns and other details convey dignity and grandeur characteristics of the military.

The order and peacefulness which characterized the early decades at Arlington National Cemetery was not lasting. By the early twentieth century, the number of internments increased significantly as the cemetery began accepting all military personnel as well as their immediate family members. Structures were built that reflected our new sense of self importance, brought on by victories abroad. The Memorial Bridge was built to aid traffic from Washington, with the approach to the cemetery being a broad boulevard through a grand Beaux Arts entry gate. A larger memorial amphitheater and chapel were built for the increase in services and the number of attendees.

The atmosphere at the cemetery changed with the dedication in 1920 of the new Memorial Amphitheater and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of World War I. With the expansion and the new orientation of the cemetery toward grand monuments and memorial structures, the bucolic setting of the Old Amphitheater passed. Rather than integrating with the landscape, structures were built to order and dominate it. Arlington National Cemetery "ceased to be a pastoral, semiprivate resting ground for the career military and instead became a national shrine."²⁵

Arlington National Cemetery grew from 200 acres that surrounded the Lee house in 1864, to the 612 acres it encompasses today. First acquired were thirty acres in the upper two corners of Fort Myer's south post. An additional 202 acres of the fort's south post were developed for burial use by the late 1980s. Today the preeminent visual impression of Arlington National Cemetery is that of long straight views of identical modest markers, arrayed in military precision across the landscape. The steep acreage behind the mansion, however, remains undeveloped and forested.

4. The Memorial Amphitheater

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Old Amphitheater had become inadequate, no longer able to handle

²⁵Andrews, 98.

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the growing number of people who attended the Memorial Day exercises. The Arlington Memorial Amphitheater Commission was created by Congress in 1908, and a \$5000 appropriation was given to secure and present more detailed plans for a proposed new amphitheater. Congress gave authorization for construction of the Memorial Amphitheater on March 3, 1913. The architectural contract being awarded to the prominent New York firm of Carrere & Hastings. Ground was broken March 1, 1915, and the corner stone was laid October 13, 1915. The building was dedicated on May 15, 1920.

The new structure, besides being larger and more substantial, has a permanence about it that is not found in the earlier pergola structure. Almost twenty years passed between the beginning stages and the dedication of the Memorial Amphitheater, compared to the urgent manner in which the Old Amphitheater was constructed. Nonetheless, the influence of the Old Amphitheater is evident in the design of the Memorial Amphitheater. Like its predecessor the Memorial Amphitheater is elliptical in plan, surrounded by a colonnade, and has a rostrum centered on one side.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Old Amphitheater consists of an elliptical, bowl-shaped, sunken open space surrounded by a pergola. The pergola, typical of Victorian-era garden structures, is constructed of three concentric rings of brick piers supporting a wooden trellis. In its earlier years, the trellis supported grape and other vines, along with the still extant wisteria bushes. In the center of the north side is a classically styled rostrum, reminiscent of ancient Roman orators' platforms. The rostrum serves as the base for twelve ionic columns which also support a wooden trellis.

2. Condition of Fabric: Fair. Settlement of the rostrum has caused the north face to bow out, necessitating repair. The brickwork has deteriorated in several locations. Pieces of the cast iron capitals are missing in several locations. The entire structure needs to be repainted to prevent further weathering of the wood.

B. Description of structure:

- Overall dimensions: Amphitheater: exterior 118' x 139'
and interior 68' x 96'.
Rostrum: 41.5' x 28.5'
north-south intercolumnation: 12.7'

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east-west intercolumnation: 10.4' for 1st, 3rd
bays; 17.4' for middle bay
Altar: 5.3' x 4.3' including the base

2. Materials: The piers in the amphitheater are brick with molded brick capitals. The piers support a wooden trellis. The tops of the piers are protected by square metal flashing plates (original documents indicate zinc and tin). The columns on the rostrum are constructed of brick covered with stucco, with cast iron bases and capitals. The rostrum floor is granite pavers resting on fill. Notes dating 1877 and 1881 indicate that there were problems with the stucco needing repair on the columns, with Meigs describing the method.²⁶ All wood, stucco, cast iron, and brick have been painted white.
3. Piers: A total of forty-six piers support the trellis of the amphitheater. Three piers along the southeast edge of the outer ring were damaged by a fallen tree and rebuilt using new bricks. The capitals of the damaged piers were restored in cast concrete instead of brick.
4. Trellis: The double girders consist of four 2x12's bolted together. The joist of the pergola are 2x6's, those of the rostrum 2x8's. The wood of the trellis has been replaced through the years as needed.
5. Gardening: In the past, vines climbed the piers and covered the trellis. Wisteria bushes, planted at the base of each pier and also at the base of the rostrum columns, still exists. A barberry hedge has been planted between the piers of the outer ring. Flowers have been planted around the elliptical walkway and along the south face of the rostrum and the grounds are well maintained.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Drawings: From the Records of Office of the Quartermaster General. Records Relating to Function: Cemeterial, 1828-1929. General Correspondence & Reports related to National & Post Cemeteries. 1865-1890. Arlington VA (1875-1914) to Averyboro. Box 6,7. Record Group 92. National Archives.

²⁶Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General. Records Relating to Functions: Cemeterial 1828-1929, General Correspondence & Reports related to National & Post Cemeteries 1865-1890, Arlington VA (1875-1914) to Averyboro, Record Group 92, National Archives Files.

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1. "Plan of Amphitheater at Arlington, VA". Signed "Designed by M.C. Meigs, Quartermaster General." Dated 1877.
2. Sketch of rostrum from front elevation, surrounded by details of the trellis. There is no signature or date.
3. Elevation sketches of tent size awning. Dated 1877.
4. Scale drawing of "Altar Desk for the Rostrum at the Arlington National Military Cemetery." J.L. Smithmeyer & Co. Architects. This drawing shows elevations and perspective of altar.

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the Old Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) division of the National Park Service, Robert Kapsch, Chief. The project sponsors were the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Technical Center of Expertise for Preservation of Structures and Buildings, Horace H. Foxall, Jr., Manager; and Arlington National Cemetery, Joseph Bunton, Project Engineer. The project was executed under the direction of Paul Dolinsky, Chief, HABS; Mark Schara, HABS Architect and Project Supervisor; and Catherine Lavoie, HABS Senior Historian. The project team members were Dana L. Lockett, HABS Architect, and Terra Klugh, HABS Historian.

ADDENDUM TO:
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, OLD AMPHITHEATER
Lee and Sherman Drives
Arlington
Virginia

HABS VA-1348-A
HABS VA,7-ARL,11A-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

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U.S. Department of the Interior
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