

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, ORD-WEITZEL GATE
(North Gateway)
Arlington
Virginia

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

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: The Ord-Weitzel Gate was northernmost entrance of the four leading into Arlington National Cemetery from the east. Today, pieces of the gate remain within the confines of Arlington National Cemetery, in Arlington, Arlington County, Virginia. The extant components are stored near the warehouses and ground maintenance area of the cemetery off of Ord-Weitzel Drive.

Present Owner,
Present Occupant,

Present Use: The United States government technically owns the Ord-Weitzel Gate because it is a part of Arlington National Cemetery. The gateway was used as one of the monumental entrance markers to the cemetery until 1971 when it was dismantled.

Significance: After the August 1814 fire, architect James Hoban was responsible for restoring the President's Mansion and nearby Executive Department office buildings. He used masons from Scotland to do the stonework. Several years later, Hoban employed the same stonemasons to carve the ornamental, Ionic porticoes gracing the north elevation of the State Department and War Department buildings.

In 1879, Montgomery C. Meigs initiated the transfer of the six columns from the north portico of the War Department building to Arlington National Cemetery for the construction of the Sheridan and Ord-Weitzel gateways. He did so to "[preserve] these historic columns, among which have moved the chief soldiers of the Army and the chiefs of the War Department during the last sixty years, and they have [since] furnished very handsome gates to the principal cemetery [of the United States]." As formal points of entry into the park-like cemetery, the gateways represented the influence of neoclassicism in federal America and its resurgence as a stylistic revival late in the nineteenth century.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Physical History²

1

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Annual Report 1879, p. 20; Congress, House, Report of the Secretary of War, 46th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Exdoc 1, *CIS Index* (1879-1889), vol. 1903, p. 230.

2

See HABS No. VA-1348-B for a more detailed explanation of this section.

1. Date of erection: 1818-20; 1879. Together with the four columns used in the Sheridan Gate, the two columns of the Ord-Weitzel Gate originally supported the north portico of the War Department building in Washington, D.C. The War Department building was constructed between 1818 and 1820; the stone masons who carved the six columns and Ionic capitals out of Aquia sandstone most likely were the same men who restored the President's Mansion (the White House) after the fire of 1814.

In 1879, plans for the north wing of the emerging State, War and Navy Departments building moved forward. At that time the Quartermaster General of the United States Army, Montgomery C. Meigs, requested that the stonework from the north portico of the old building -- about to be demolished to make way for the new -- be taken down and transferred to the National Cemetery he had established at Arlington, Virginia. Meigs wanted the columns because of their historical significance. He associated them with federal period Washington, D.C., and with the military leaders of the union. Once Meigs procured the columns, he had them raised in two monumental gateways leading into Arlington. The columns remained in place until the gates were dismantled in 1971.

2. Architect: The architectural and engineering designers tied to the creation of the north (Ord-Weitzel) and central (Sheridan) gateways into Arlington include the Quartermaster General, Montgomery C. Meigs; Corps of Engineers architect, Thomas Lincoln Casey; architect (in private practice at the time) John L. Smithmeyer; and the firm Charles A. Schneider and Son. All were based in the Washington, D.C., area. Smithmeyer and Charles A. Schneider and Son were responsible for the iron gates, while Meigs and Casey oversaw the transfer of the columns to Arlington.³ Once in Virginia, the Captain in charge of National Cemeteries, A.F. Rockwell, solicited equipment necessary to erect the columns and reported when the gateways were complete. It is not known who carved the urns, however.

3. Original plans and construction: The plans and construction of the Ord-Weitzel Gate historically has been attributed to the Quartermaster General, Montgomery C. Meigs. The Quartermaster claimed credit for the design and he, certainly, was the impetus for the creation of the monumental gateways. Unfortunately, except for the specifications of the iron gates, no copies of the plans or photographs of the drawings have been located at this writing. Similarly, the model of the gates has disappeared as well. That they existed is known through references to the said plans, photographs, and models made in the records of the Quartermaster General.

3

Casey was also working on the Washington Monument; see Aaron V. Wunsch, "Washington National Monument," Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Records, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress (HABS No. DC-428).

4. Alterations and additions: In 1880, the Quartermaster General commented that he had not yet seen a photograph of the north gate, and that it was worthy of being photographed.⁴ His completed gateway was not held in as high regard by others, however, for vandals “mutilated” the iron gates two years later.⁵ Again in 1890, maintenance of the gateways commanded attention. This time, authorities repaired, painted, and lettered the gate.⁶ Similarly, in 1902 the Ord-Weitzel Gate received two coats of paint and a new layer of gild. The estimated cost of the repairs was \$58.00.⁷ Heavy rains in 1906 washed out the road leading to -- and through -- the gateway. As a result, the iron gates sagged and would not close properly.⁸

By 1902, the names “Ord” and “Weitzel” were inscribed on the column shafts. This had been done under the direction of General Batchelder, who also had Temple of Fame constructed at Arlington from columns taken from an old government building. Batchelder used the sandstone columns from the old southern gallery in the Patent Office for the temple structure. Names inscribed into the Temple of Fame columns include Meade, Hancock, Garfield, McPherson, Reynolds, Thomas, Mansfield, Sedgwick, and Humphreys. In the cornice, it was Washington, Lincoln, Grant, and Farragut who received the honors. Batchelder did this as the Depot Quartermaster, acting under Quartermaster General Holabird in 1884.⁹ Perhaps the temple construction project was the impetus for adding “Ord” and “Weitzel” to the column shafts of the North Gate, memorializing two more of the Union Army’s leaders.

4

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Registers of Letters Received, 1872-1885, 1900-1902, vol. 8, Document No. 3440.

5

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Correspondence 1871-1889, vol. 13.

6

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Annual Report 1890, p. 200.

7

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Correspondence 1890-1914, Document file No. 85160.

8

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Correspondence 1890-1914, Document file No. 213212.

9

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Correspondence 1890-1914, Document file No. 85160; Records of the Office of the Chief of the Corps of Engineers, Record Group 77, DeGrange Index to Survey Notes & Related Data, 1793-1916, “Arlington Cemetery, Virginia,” (microfilm series 291, reel M1 703, roll #1); see also the Quartermaster General’s military reservation book, “Arlington Cemetery, Virginia,” section in Military Posts and Reservations (1904), pp. 575-576.

The Ord-Weitzel Gate was dismantled in 1971, by stone contractors Roubin and Janerio, Inc.¹⁰ Moreover, the location of the iron gates designed by Smithmeyer and crafted by Charles A. Schneider and Son is not known at this time.

5. Ord and Weitzel: The columns of the Ord-Weitzel Gate share a building history with the center gateway that was named for General Philip H. Sheridan. Behind the Ord-Weitzel Gate, however, was the section of the cemetery (Section 27) designated for the burial of colored soldiers. Perhaps this is why General Godfrey Weitzel's name was inscribed on one of the shafts. A graduate of West Point and an army engineer, Weitzel (1835-84) fought for the federal army during the Civil War, serving under General Butler during the capture of New Orleans. In May 1864, Weitzel became the commander of the 18th Army Corps, made up of black men, and when the corps was reorganized into the 25th Army Corps, Weitzel went with them as their commander. At this time, the corps were part of the Army of the James. They occupied Richmond, Virginia, in April 1865; the unit was discontinued in January 1866. After the war, Weitzel returned to engineering work for the army. He died in 1884.¹¹

At the same time Weitzel took command of the 25th Corps, General Edward Otho Cresap Ord (1818-83) replaced General Benjamin Butler as the General in charge of the Army of the James. Weitzel served as the chief engineer as well as leader of the 25th Corps; his counterpart, John Gibbon acted as commander of the 24th Corps. Both served under Ord's direction. Ord retired in 1881 from military service and died in 1883. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, section two.¹²

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

2. General Statement

10

Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon, Architects, "Relocation of the Ord-Weitzel and Sheridan Gates at Arlington National Cemetery," p. 4.

11

See "General Godfrey Weitzel, Federal Army" in Blue & Gray Civil War Generals, website accessed December 1999; the biography was compiled from The Civil War Dictionary by Mark M. Boatner, III; Centennial Album of the Civil War by Marvin H. Pakula; The Armies and the Leaders by Francis Trevelyan Miller; and The Civil War series by Time-Life Books. See also, Bruce Catton, The Army of the Potomac, 3 vols. (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1951-53) generally, as well as William A. Frassanito, Grant and Lee (/) The Virginia Campaigns 1864-65 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983).

12

See "Edward Otho Cresap Ord, Major General, United States Army" in Arlington National Cemetery, website accessed December 1999. See also, Bruce Catton, The Army of the Potomac, 3 vols. (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1951-53) as well as William A. Frassanito, Grant and Lee (/) The Virginia Campaigns 1864-65 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983).

1. Architectural character: The two columns taken from the old War Department building and used in the Ord-Weitzel Gate are examples of the Ionic order. Based on classical precedents, the orders of architecture consist of columns (base, shaft, capital) and an entablature (architrave, frieze, cornice). The columns and entablature act, structurally, as post and lintel construction and so became the basis of many building projects. The Ionic order is recognizable through its capital with large double scrolls or volutes; the Ionic order also usually has a fluted column shaft, a continuous frieze, and dentils in the cornice.

There are three orders associated with ancient Greece and two with classical Rome. These five orders represent an architectural canon formalized by the sixteenth century and followed today. The initial three, the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, were named for dialects of the Greek language and for a city, Corinth. The Roman orders were the Tuscan and the Composite. The orders remain unchanged, although motifs used to ornament them can be altered to convey the builder's time and place. The Ionic column capitals in the Ord-Weitzel Gate, for example, have an American rose nestled between each volute. Moreover, the capitals have four volutes. Originally, Ionic capitals had volutes only on the front and rear faces, with balusters on the sides; during the Renaissance period, Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552-1616) designed the Ionic order with four volutes in the capital. The Ord-Weitzel Gate reflects Scamozzi's tinkering with the model as well as American-specific ornament, and yet is recognizable as the Ionic order. Also taken from classical models are the funerary urns, singly appropriate motifs for this setting.

2. Condition of fabric: Damage sustained during the 1971 dismantling process prohibits a complete recreation of the gate. Although most pieces survive intact, the funeral urns and the top section of the Weitzel column have been badly damaged, perhaps beyond repair. Similarly, the tops of the Ionic capitals (abacus) show signs of lateral spalling; this happened because there was no protective flashing to divert water. Once taken apart, keeping the pieces in outdoor storage exposed them to an increased amount of dampness because it allowed water to penetrate all surfaces resting on the ground. The painted (exterior) surfaces of the columns, moreover, inhibited natural water evaporation. This, combined with the pitfalls of outdoor storage, contributed to the deteriorated condition of the sandstone seen today. The aforementioned paint is peeling, presenting a blistered surface, and the capitals are fragile with pieces breaking off to the touch. Vandals have spray-painted graffiti, mostly of a racial bias, over the various components of column shafts and urns.¹³

3. Description:

13

Site visit, March 1999 & Summer 1999; Also, please see Architects Group Practice, "Survey and Analysis for Reconstruction and Relocation of SHERIDAN and ORD-WEITZEL GATES Arlington National Cemetery," Report prepared for the Department of the Army Baltimore District Corps of Engineers, May 1974, pp. 1-4. The report casts doubt on the ability to reuse the urns and top portion of the Weitzel column; hopefully, though the parts can be preserved along with the other pieces of the gate.

1. Overall dimensions:¹⁴ The two columns, made of Aquia sandstone, of the Ord-Weitzel Gate stood about 11' apart. Between them swung two iron gates identical to those in the center gateway. Rising above the boundary wall, the column shafts were just over 23' tall (277" and 277 1/4" for the Ord and Weitzel columns respectively). The base of each column was 107" around and about 1' tall. The diameter of the top of the column base (directly beneath the shaft) was 34". The column base rested on a block, or stylobate, that was 48 1/4" square. Above the shaft was the Ionic capital and an urn. The funeral urn was 6'8" in height and was supported by a pedestal that was 29 1/2" square.

2. Foundations: Constructed as an integral part of the Seneca sandstone boundary wall,¹⁵ the columns in the Ord-Weitzel Gate stood on sandstone base blocks, or stylobates, measuring 48 1/4" square. These sandstone blocks rested on stone piers, which were part of the boundary wall. The iron gates, that opened into the cemetery, were attached to the base blocks and piers.

3. Structural system: Because they were free standing pillars, the Ord and Weitzel columns carried no load as traditional posts were built to do in post and lintel construction systems. Instead these columns served as monuments to the dead, a meaning symbolically expressed by the crowning funeral urns on top of each column. They stood up against forces of a compelling (rather than structurally compressive) nature. The height of the columns was obtained through the shafts; these were made of six drums stacked on top of one another.

4. Ornament: Like its counterpart, the Sheridan Gate, elements of the Ord-Weitzel Gate were painted white and the column shafts inscribed. Here, the each shaft received one of the names, "Ord" and "Weitzel," for two of the Union Generals who fought for the United States of America in the Civil War. The individual letters were lined in lead and painted black; each was 6" high.¹⁶ Other ornament came from the use of the Ionic order, with its volutes and American rose in the capital, and the funeral urns placed on pedestals above the capitals in lieu of an entablature.

Also providing ornament were the wrought iron gates, made in two folds to swing upon hinges and pivot steps from notches in the stone base blocks and piers. Motifs captured in the

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Measurements taken from Architects Group Practice, "Survey and Analysis (/) for Reconstruction and Relocation of (/) SHERIDAN and ORD-WEITZEL GATES (/) Arlington National Cemetery, Report prepared for the Department of the Army Baltimore District Corps of Engineers, May 1974.

¹⁵

Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon, Architects, "Relocation of the Ord-Weitzel and Sheridan Gates at the Arlington National Cemetery," Report prepared for the Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Support Services, 1973, p. 2.

¹⁶

Regarding the letters, please see Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Records relating to Function: Cemeteries 1828-1929, Arlington National Cemetery.

gates included scroll work, palmettes, rosettes, and sword and dagger trophy in the center. The specifications for the gates called for “[. . .]the very best American wrought iron, smoothly forged, [so that]the lines of the design [could] be expressed truly and in an artistic manner, and it is desired that these gates should be worked with a view of making them the best that American workmanship can produce.” Inscribed on the gates was “dulce et decorum est pro patria mori,” roughly translated as “it is sweet and noble to die for your country.”

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

4. Architectural drawings

Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

In the Administration Building of Arlington National Cemetery, the architectural flat files contain various maps of the cemetery, illustrating its development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On these maps, the roads leading to and from the gateways are delineated as well as the locations of the center and north gates into the cemetery.

National Archives @ College Park, Maryland.

In the records for Public Buildings and Parks, there are several plans for Arlington National Cemetery that show the entrance gates in situ. Although no plan specifically for the War Department building (1818-79) exists at the Archives, there are two plans of its counterpart on the northeast side of the White House. (The War Department building was on the northwest). This building was the old State Department building. It was razed to make room for the additions to the Treasury Building. The plans for the Treasury and the old State Department buildings also are located in the records for Public Buildings and Parks (Record Group 42).

5. Early views

Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

In the Administrative Building of Arlington National Cemetery, there are at least two reports written about the Sheridan and Ord-Weitzel Gates that include photographs (one each) of the gates.

Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.

The General Photograph Collection held by the Columbia Historical Society covers Washington between the 1870s and the 1990s. In this collection, there are several photographs and/or copies of photographs that capture the War Department building in situ. The historical society also makes available to researchers several published photographic sources. They include:

Kelly, Charles Seddarth. Washington Then and Now: Sixty Years of Photographs (Scarp Page 62 and 63)

Miller, Frederick M. and Howard Gillette. Washington Seen: A Photographic History, 1875-1965. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. (See p. 10)

Moore, Joseph West. Picturesque Washington: Pen and Pencil Sketches. Providence: J.A. & R.A. Reid, 1886. (See p. 190)

Reed, Robert. Old Washington D.C. in Early Photographs, 1846-1932. New York: Dover Publications, 1980. (See image nos. 162-188)

Reps, John W. Washington on View: The Nation's Capital Since 1790. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991. (See pp. 53-55, 70-72, 94, 112, 138, 149-150, 170-71).

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

In the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, there are several early views of the Executive Department buildings (State, War, and Navy). Several of these images are available through the on-line catalogue of Prints and Photographs, although copies must be paid for through the Library as usual. A plan of the War, State & Navy Departments buildings is included in Robert Mills Guide to National Executive Offices (1841) and a copy of this plan is available at the Library in Prints and Photographs in the "Washingtoniana" section. Xerox copies of the images found in the collections held at Prints and Photographs are in the field notes for reference purposes.

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"Arlington National Cemetery Master Plan." Report prepared for the Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Support Services, under the direction of the Norfolk District, Corps of Engineers, [1967]. Files, Administrative Building, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

"Arlington National Cemetery Master Plan (/) Technical Reports." Reports, n.d. Files, Administrative Building, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

Garrow & Associates, Inc. "Cultural Resource Investigations at Section 29 at Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial, Arlington County, Virginia." Final Report, September 1998. Files, Administrative Building, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

General Records of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 56, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

"John L. Smithmeyer." Files, Library, American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.

Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon, Architects. "Relocation of the Ord-Weitzel and Sheridan Gates at Arlington National Cemetery." Report prepared for the Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Support Services, February 1973. Files, Administrative Building, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

"Old Executive Office Building," Clipping file, Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, 1775-1927, Record Group 217, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

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Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Annual Reports 1879-1920, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Records of Brid. General Montgomery C. Meigs 1861-1879, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence files 1794-1915, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Correspondence 1890-1914, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, [U.S. Army], Record Group 92, Records relating to Functions: Cemeteries 1828-1929, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of Other Public Buildings and Public Parks in the National Capital, Record Group 42, Arlington National Cemetery, Cartographic & Architectural Records, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Records of the Public Building Service, 1801-1976, Record Group 121, Letters Received 1843-1910, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Rhodeside and Hartwell, Inc. "Arlington National Cemetery Master Plan." Report prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1998. Files, Administrative Building, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

"Smithmeyer and Pelz." Files, Library, American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.

"Twelve Property Inventories at Twelve Military Installations in Virginia." Review by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in partnership with the U.S. Department of Army Legacy Resource Management Program, October 1995. Files, Administrative Building, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

U.S. Congress. House. Additional Estimates of Appropriation, War Department. 50th Cong., 2nd sess., H. exdoc. 39. *CIS/Index* (1879-1889), vol. 2651.

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U.S. Congress. House. Contingent Expenses of the War Department. 47th Cong., 1st sess., H. exdoc. 11. *CIS/Index* (1879-1889), vol. 2021.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Contingent Expenses of the War Department. 46th Cong., 2nd sess., S. exdoc. 141. *CIS/Index* (1879-1889), vol. 1885.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Contracts for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1881. 47th Cong., 1st sess., S. exdoc. 51. *CIS/Index* (1879-1889), vol. 1987.

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7. Likely sources not yet investigated

Resources at Arlington National Cemetery need to be explored further. A more detailed search through the architectural flat files for drawings or illustrations is necessary as well as locating the maintenance records for the gates for most of the twentieth century. Similarly, some information may be stored in the Treasury Department's curatorial department such as photographs or drawings. These materials were not in the National Archives, and it is possible (though unlikely) that they are held by the Curator. In addition, the office of the Architect of the Capitol may have some information pertaining to the old War Department building and the columns; the records at the National Archives for the Architect of the Capitol from that time period did not have photographs, plans, or contracts.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation was undertaken in the winter of 1999 by the Washington, D.C., office of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), of the National Park Service. The principles involved were E. Blaine Cliver, Division Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief, HABS. The project was sponsored jointly by the Department of the Navy and by HABS/HAER. The documentation was initiated by Paul D. Dolinsky, with Catherine C. Lavoie, Supervisory Historian, and Mark S. Schara, HABS Architect. The report was written by Virginia B. Price, HABS Historian. Large format photography was produced by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Photographer.